

If transgendering is a thing, then so is cisgendering

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Abstract

Anti-trans sex essentialist activists love to pretend that “transgender” is a verb for the same reason anti-gay activists like to pretend “gay” is also a verb. If being gay or trans is a mere matter of behavior rather than selfhood, then people can just stop the behavior that makes them gay or trans. This is [...]

Article



Anti-trans sex essentialist activists love to pretend that “transgender” is a verb for the same reason anti-gay activists like to pretend “gay” is also a verb. If being gay or trans is a mere matter of behavior rather than selfhood, then people can just stop the behavior that makes them gay or trans. This is the basic idea behind anti-gay and anti-trans conversion therapy. Nevermind that this belief

about gay and trans people is toxic and regularly produces dead gay and trans kids or that every major medical, scientific, and psychological organization repudiates conversion therapy.

Nevertheless, TERF and other sex essentialist activists promote this deadly understanding of the trans experience. Part of the way they do this is by promoting language that normalizes the notion that “trans” is a verb:

- Right Wing: “Transing”
- TERF: “Transgendering”
- Hate Group: “Transgendering”
- TERF: “Transgendering”

If trans can be a verb, then cis can, as well. For instance, how does it change the way we view “cisgender” if we were to use the term in the way TERFs and other sex essentialist activists use “transgender”?

- “Medical cisgendering of trans and intersex children”
- “Cising trans and intersex children is child abuse and should be punished”
- “The cisgendering of trans and intersex children: gender eugenics”
- “Stop the cisgendering of trans and intersex children”

If TERFs and other sex essentialist activists get to say “transgenderism” in the news, do trans and intersex people get to complain about “cisgenderism”? If trans people are supposed to be an ideological -ism, can cis people also be an ideological -ism, or does that only apply to non-cis people?

If TERFs and other sex essentialist activists get to academically debate someone who “transgendered”, do trans and intersex people get to academically debate someone who “cisgendered”? If trans people are supposed to be a past-tense action identified by an -ed, can cis people also be a past-tense action identified by an -ed, or does that only apply to non-cis people?

Is the non-cishet experience merely a lifestyle? Are LGBTQIA people verbs? Is not being cishet mean that you’re not human in the way that cishet people are human? The rhetoric we use to talk about the experiences of non-cishet people defines the way we think about them and if you’re not okay with the dehumanization of non-cishet people, then it’s time to call it out, especially when news platforms normalize it.

TERF: “*force trans children to undergo puberty!*” *Stop giving bigots who want to harm kids access to your platform. There’s decades of peer-review science on our side & then there’s Susana’s bigotry. “Transgendering” & “transgenderism” @timescall? #Maskoff, eh?*
pic.twitter.com/tzcLQGNh4s-- transadvocate (@transadvocate) February 24, 2020

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