

The Hate We Fight Abroad, The Ignorance At Home

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Abstract

In the context of the “war” for our equality, trans-people have to fight the war on two fronts. There’s the kind of hatred that is espoused by morally corrupt people on the right wing conservative side (the “abroad” part of the fight). It’s found at places like Pat Dollard’s blog. On a post about a [...]

Article

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We are seen as “icky”:

“As Tony Snow would say ‘Just plain icky’”

We are kept alive by illegal aliens:

“.....and this is NOT what the majority of Idahoans is for. In fact, this thing is flat out lying about being accepted in the community. The only reason it is even still alive is due to a large (mostly illegal) hispanic community who’s only concerns are acquiring and keeping their welfare checks coming in every month!”

and violence is suggested:

I’m in Idaho, and I neither support or condone this crap. In fact I sincerely hope this abomination is run over by a beet truck(multiple times) and has to taste it’s own blood!

There’s a certain amount of hateful transphobia that exists in the world, but what’s really floored me is the kind of ignorance that exists at home (in the LGBT community). Over at SistersTalk, I found “Is a Straight Guy in a Dress Considered Transgender?” It’s amazing frustrating that someone who is an ally is so ignorant that they ask:

- Is it possible that this guy is a closeted transgender person?
- What’s the probability that this guy really IS a heterosexual male who just gets his rocks off dressing like a girl and stalking women in the ladies room?

- Do transgender people have to deal with this type of behavior creating negative stereotypes of transgender people?

I can't believe I have to answer these questions, but in case we have readership that are lesbian and really ignorant of transgender people, I'll answer her questions here:

1. She said that a patron of a bar she was at was "stalked" going into a bathroom by a heterosexual man in a dress. She then asked if the guy is transgender? First thing I'd ask is what does this person's gender identity or sexual orientation have to do with anything? If anyone (gay, straight, or bisexual) goes into a restroom and sexually harasses/assaults a person, they are guilty of a crime!
2. I sometimes think that many women are as blind to men's hyper-masculine/homophobic culture as most men are to institutionalized misogyny. The odds of a heterosexual guy dressing as a woman to "get his rocks off" are close to zero. In male culture a feminine man of any kind is often the target of ridicule and abuse. To dress as a woman would be to utterly humiliate themselves.
3. Yes, because we live in a rape culture, for most cisgendered women:

Transgender=man=penis=unsafe

The reality is that in places where "public accommodation" legislation has passed, NOT ONE PERSON has used the law to try and commit a crime. If we are using crime as a yardstick for transgender access to bathrooms, consistency is key. We really shouldn't allow priests or lesbians to teach or gay men to be around Italian fashion designers.

But it's not just the lesbian community. Even people in the transgender community are ignorant. I posted about Autumn Sandeen's ignorance concerning the words cisgender/cissexual here. In a rehash today she posted "Cisgender And Cissexual Terminology - A Get-Along-Go-Along Moment", saying:

"As many of y'all know, I've had problems in the recent past with how the terms cissexual and cisgender -- as opposite terms to the terms transsexual and transgender respectively -- have been used at here at Pam's House Blend. These two cis-related terms that were envisioned as neutral terms are very easily modified by other descriptors -- both for good and for ill. Here at Pam's House Blend, I've seen cissexual and cisgender turned into weaponized terms by the descriptors connected to the cis- terms. But at the same time, I've seen the terms used in a neutral fashion."

The lesson that Sandeen needs to learn is simple: any word can be "weaponized." If I say "you throw like a girl!", should we discontinue use of the word "girl"? As George Carlin once said:

It's the intention behind the words that makes them good or bad! The words are completely neutral! The words are innocent! I get tired of people talking about bad words and bad language! Bullshit! It's the context that makes them good or bad!

She concedes that the word can be used for good and that she'll begrudgingly use it:

"Like or hate these two cis- terms, these cis- terms are here to stay. For my part, I'm going to be that get along-go along kind of trans person regarding those two terms, and use these as neutral terms when these terms fit what I'm trying to communicate."

What is apparent to me this Labor Day weekend is that there's still a lot of education work that needs to be done.

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