

Let us be free to debate transgenderism without being accused of 'hate speech'

Researchers and theorists who question the practice of transgenderism are subjected to campaigns of intimidation.

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Criticism of the practice of transgenderism is being censored as a result of a campaign of vilification by transgender activists of anyone who does not accept the new orthodoxy on this issue. A [recent Comment is free piece](#) by the transgender activist Roz Kaveney, headlined "Radical feminists are acting like a cult", criticises a forthcoming [radical feminist conference](#), at which I was to be a speaker, on the grounds that I and "my supporters" may be guilty of "hate speech" for our political criticism of this practice.

Though Kaveney's comments about me are comparatively mild in tone, the campaign by transgender activists in general is anything but. This particular campaign persuaded Conway Hall, the conference venue, to ban me from speaking on the grounds that I "foster hatred" and "actively discriminate". On being asked to account for this, Conway Hall appeared to compare me to "David Irving the holocaust denier". The proffered evidence consists of quotes from me arguing that transgender surgery should be considered a human rights violation - hardly evidence of hate speech.

For several years there has been a concerted campaign via the internet and on the ground, to ensure that I, and any other persons who have criticised transgenderism, from any academic discipline, are not given opportunities to speak in public. I have not yet spoken in public about transgenderism, but do speak about religion and women's human rights, about pornography, and about beauty practices.

Whatever the topic of my presentation, and whether in Australia, the UK or the US, transgender activists bombard the organising group and the venue with emails accusing me of transhate, transphobia, hate speech, and seek to have me banned. On blogs, Facebook and Twitter they accuse me of wanting to "eliminate" transgendered persons, and they wish me dead. One activist has created an image of a pesticide can bearing a photo of me and the slogan "kills rad fems instantly". These activists threaten demonstrations and placards against me at any venue where I speak.

What is clear is that transgender activists do not want any criticism of the practice to be made. They do not just target me, but the few other feminists who have ever been critical. [Germaine Greer was glitterbombed](#), a practice that can be seen as assault and can endanger eyesight, in Sydney this year, though it is many years since she said anything critical of transgenderism.

Psychiatrists and sexologists who are critical of the practice are targeted too. Transgender activism was successful in gaining the [cancellation of a London conference entitled Transgender: Time for Change](#), organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists' lesbian and gay special interest group for May 2011. When, in 2003, US sexologist Michael Bailey published a book, *The Man Who Would Be Queen*, which argued that transgenderism was a practice based on sexual fetishism, he became subject to a campaign of vilification, which included placing photographs of his children on a website with insulting captions. The effect is to scare off any researchers from touching the topic.

There are many aspects of the practice which bear investigation, including the history and social construction of the idea of transgenderism, the recent increased identification of children as transgender, the phenomenon of transgender regrets, that is those persons who consider they have made a mistake. Given that the drug and surgical treatments have now been normalised and are increasingly embarked upon by young lesbians and sought out by parents for young children, it is most important that the rights of researchers and theorists to comment and investigate should be protected.

Instead, they are subjected to determined campaigns of bullying, intimidation and attempts to shut them down. The degree of vituperation and the energy expended by the activists may suggest that they fear the practice of transgenderism could justifiably be subjected to criticism, and might not stand up to rigorous research and debate, if critics were allowed to speak out.

The Guardian avait laissé le 25 mai 2012 la parole à un TransActiviste anti-féministe :

- [Roz Kaveney: Radical feminists are acting like a cult](#)