

The Nuclear Unicorn

One Woman's Quest to Accidentally Destroy Us All

Go

- [Home](#)
- [About Me](#)
- [Contact Me](#)
- [The Political Cartoons](#)

[Posts](#) [Comments](#)

- [Uncategorized](#)
- [Feminist Theory and Criticism](#)
- [Life Story Stuff](#)
- [Gaming](#)
- [Management Stuff](#)

[← Pledge Drive Without the Tote Bags](#)
[Lest We Forget →](#)

An Open Letter to Kate Bornstein

November 17, 2010 [51 Comments](#)

Dear Auntie Kate, (can I call you that?)

I have had more than a few reservations about your gender theory for quite a while now but have held my tongue for a variety of reasons. Yet as I read through [your latest op-ed in Out magazine](#), *The Trouble With Tranny*, I was profoundly troubled. I came to a point where I realised I just couldn't stay silent any more because of the venues in which you're promoting a certain kind of theory that is, perhaps despite your good intentions, very transphobic. If I haven't already lost you, allow me to explain.

You begin the article with fond reminiscences about your time with Doris Fish, a prominent drag queen, whose views regarding trans women you characterise in the following way:

"I was afraid of her raw sexuality, but bowled over by her courage. Doris was amused by my quest to become a real woman." (Emphasis mine)

"Like me in the late '80s in San Francisco, the majority of MTF transsexuals just wanted to live their lives as closely as possible to whatever their notion was of "a real woman." They considered drag queens beneath them. The drag queens were amused by the MTFs pursuing the dream of real woman."

Let me be the first to say that the disparaging of crossdressers and drag queens on the part of transsexual people is, yes, quite morally wrong and represents internalised transphobia. It evokes that hierarchy of

legitimacy that too many people of all backgrounds buy into in order to buttress their stability and position in a world that is built on domination. Yes, it's wrong. I am not more legitimate than a crossdresser, no DQs do not make me "look bad" and I call out any person who claims such. The problem lies with a society that will not learn about us and lumps us all together as one blob of freakish bad, and not with any individual member of our diverse community.

All of this said, I get the distinct sense that you feel more 'enlightened' and 'evolved' now and agree with Doris Fish in her 'amusement.'

Auntie Katie, let me reveal to you a bit of truth here. Willing to listen? Good:

I did not transition to be a "real woman"- that's a useless concept, and a fairly sexist/transphobic one. I transitioned to be *a* woman, *my kind* of woman, *the kind of woman I want to be*, and that involves expressing myself as I am, as a whole person, in ways that break gender stereotypes as much as 'caters' to them. I'm not alone in this. A lot of trans women out there feel exactly the same way, and as we've unlearned our internalised transphobia and misogyny we are becoming all the more proud to be unique types of women, not archetypes of women. This leads rather nicely into my next point to you. You say the following:

"Years earlier, when I went through my gender change from male to female, I glided through life under the commonly accepted assumption: I was finally a real woman! That worked for me until I ran into a group of politically smart lesbians who told me that I wasn't allowed to co-opt the word "woman." Woman was not a family word that included me. My answer to this exclusion was to call myself a gender outlaw: I wasn't a man, I wasn't a woman."

Here you're making exactly the same, utterly fallacious mistake that too many "meanies" (as you might call them) make. Your experience was thus and so, therefore we all must be such.

Here is a bit more truth- I know, work with, and study the work of politically smart cis lesbians and queer women who would utterly balk at the idea that a trans woman "co-opts" the term "woman." They are increasingly part of mainstream feminism, from the street to academe, they and their trans sisters would without a moment's hesitation label such thinking outdated and transphobic. Why? Because how exactly are you going to break apart patriarchal gender norms if you cede "man" and "woman" to biologically essentialist definitions? If you say it's not possible for someone assigned male at birth to truly be a woman, you're not being a gender outlaw, you're being gender riot police. I don't think you'd look very good in a black helmet and gas mask, Kate, so I invite you to reconsider your stance on these issues for the benefit of us all.

Because right now, you're not helping by delegitimising people's identities. By making womanhood more diverse, trans women are also in the vanguard of disrupting normative notions of womanhood and in case you were not aware, Kate, feminists do internalise gender norms as well; it's what makes it so easy to take biological-essentialism for granted, as you yourself appear to do.

There is no question that you're absolutely correct that it's important to name yourself outside of known and common terminology if you so choose. It takes courage and a lot of perseverance to do this, and I am proud to call those people my siblings in struggle. We're in this together. So why do you forget that, Kate? It is not my business to say your gender is illegitimate, and snarkily quote people who have no idea what it's like to have your experience comment on it and pass it off as wisdom. How would you feel if I said with a whiff of smugness that I knew a trans woman activist who was amused by people "pretending" they could be something other than male or female? You'd feel hurt, marginalised perhaps, misunderstood and used. You might feel like they were stepping on you and your well-lived life in order to score cheap political points.

So, think on that. I do not have to attack or undermine people whose identities go beyond male/female. Why must you insist on attacking your trans brothers and sisters? *We are not your enemies and we are not the ones who are holding you or The Cause™ back.*

You say the following near the end of your article:

“Labels aren’t all that bad when they’re used consciously, but a major downside of using labels to describe an identity — even the labels we wear proudly as badges of courage — is that labels set up us-versus-them scenarios. The next generation of gender outlaws is seeking to dismantle us-versus-them. As a people, none of us deserves to hear the words “You’re not welcome here,” or “You’re not good enough,” or “You’re not real.” My Goddess, we just have to stop saying that to each other, all of us whose identity somehow hinges on gender or sexuality. We have to stop beating up on each other. The Sydney drag queens and transsexuals knew that when they came up with the word *tranny* to encourage mutual respect.”

You are telling me, Kate, that I am not real, good enough, or even welcome because of my gender, and you condescendingly tell me and many of my sisters that our feelings about the word “tranny”- which are very complex- are invalid. By the Goddess I believe in, yes we do *indeed* need to stop saying such things to each other, but I have never told you that you’re not real. More power to you in your gender. Fact is, though, I’m an outlaw too; just ask the people who don’t accept my gender for what it is (like yourself), or the politicians who seek to legislate against us as perverts, or the media personalities who liken us to Ewoks and the like.

What a “real woman” is, that’s something that’s determined by the lived experience of every woman on the planet- including trans women- and that’s a set that “diverse” can’t describe, whose vivid difference is a chromatic wonder that words have but the poorest power to illustrate. I never sought to be “real” except in the sense that I wanted to be the real *me*, who just happened to be a certain kind of woman. One who is now part of that limitless mosaic. I work with plenty of people who identify as men or women, or something else altogether who have made it part of their life’s mission to work on making the world a better place for all of us, no matter what your gender is.

But with that project comes a need for respect that we all recognise. The word “tranny” is something that, yes, does belong to the community of trans women and male crossdressers/DQs that it is most often used to describe. Do we all agree on its use? Hell no. But many of us respect boundaries, many of us know it’s still a loaded term whose meaning is variable. Whatever its origins, where I’ve seen it used in the discourse is by cis people who are out to wound us. Some of us reclaim it for sure, but it is *our word*.

“Saying that FTMs can’t call themselves *trannies* eerily echoes the 1980s lesbians who said I couldn’t use the word *woman* to identify myself, and the 1990s lesbians who said I couldn’t use the word *dyke*.”

Then, if I may be so bold, why do you agree with those people exactly? Because that’s what one gets upon reading this article. [There are trans men themselves who have explained quite clearly why it’s uncouth for trans men to use the term “tranny”](#)- because it’s not really theirs to reclaim any more than it’s the place of suburban white kids to reclaim the N-word. Reclamation is a site of power that comes from inverting and taking back a word that’s been specifically used to harm you. That’s what gives certain people ownership of certain terms.

To quote Asher Bauer at some length on this subject:

So I hear the T word from supposed allies. And of course, one can always hear it from haters.

But I also hear it from other trans people, particularly other trans men. And that pisses me off.

Look, as a self-identified fag, I am all about reclaimed language. Taking a brutal slur and wearing it like a badge of honor is an act of tremendous power. I absolutely encourage all those who have been burned by the T word in the past to go ahead and brand themselves with it if they desire. So no, it's not reclaimed hate-words that I have a problem with. My problem is with some of the people who think they have a right to the word 'tranny' at all.

Let's clear one thing up right now: while "tranny" is undoubtedly a transphobic slur, it has not been applied to all trans people equally. As I have said before in this column, it is a word that has been primarily used against trans women, drag queens, and other male-assigned people who present in female or feminine ways. It is just not used in an equivalent way against trans male types.

He understands the need for respecting specific circumstances, you should be able to as well. Tranny can, in a certain sense, be a family word of sorts. But please respect people who are part of that family and ask not to be called that in something as broad and general as a call for submissions that you want to be *inclusive*. There's a welter of words to use: trans*, transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfuck, and so on. The idea of "summarising it all" under the word "tranny" is both silly and ignorant of history. It's as absurd as calling all gender non-conforming people "fags" as a super-heading, or "dykes". It ignores a history that says 'this word has been used to describe a particular group.'

Yet despite going on at length about how and why you and Mr. Bear have a right to the word "tranny" that my own lived experience and that of my sisters cannot inform or critique, you then say:

"It's time to reclaim more than names. It's time to reclaim the moral high ground."

You do not reclaim the moral high ground by:


- Defining away peoples' identities.
- Pooh poohing them when they tell you to please be a bit more respectful.
- Quoting people who don't belong to their experience-group as authorities on their lives (Doris Fish and your patriarchal lesbian friends).
- Saying we need to name ourselves and then attacking people who do precisely that.

This is a running theme in a lot of your writing, and it is unfortunate; it erases and it hurts. Here's your "tribal grandchild" saying to you very plainly, beseeching: stop hurting me, Auntie.

Please.

Sincerely,


Quinnae Moongazer/Nuclear Unicorn

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Filed under [Feminist Theory and Criticism](#) Tagged with [Feminism](#), [Kate Bornstein](#), [Trans Issues](#), [Transphobia](#)


51 Responses to *An Open Letter to Kate Bornstein*

1. Pingback: [An Open Letter to Kate Bornstein at Questioning Transphobia](#)

2.  [Kate Bornstein](#) says:
[November 17, 2010 at 8:22 pm](#)

OK. You make a whole lot of good points. I could quibble with a few of them, but your letter to me is by and large an intelligent, compassionate, non-snarky analysis of my use of the word tranny. I'll stop using the word. It has never been my intention to knowingly cause a rift in the trans community. And you've made it clear to me that I've been doing just that by using the word tranny as cavalierly as I have been. I'm sorry. I'll try my best to stop using it. I'll write a blog about it when I've got more of a brain, but I'll get a tweet out right away. And yes, you may call me Auntie Kate. I will positively burst into tears if you don't. love & respect, Auntie Kate

[Reply](#)

o  [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 17, 2010 at 9:31 pm](#)

Kate,


Thank you kindly for taking the time to both read and reply to this post. I very much appreciate the fact that you are reconsidering your use of the word 'tranny' in a way that reckons with the lived realities in our community. It does warm my heart to see that you're willing to listen.

I also, however, strongly invite you to consider the first half of my article. What I said about identity was important. I am, of course, happy that through all these years you have found yourself. But just as your epiphanies lead you to realise you were neither a man nor a woman, so too did mine lead me to see myself as a certain kind of woman. Neither of us is better than the other because of that, or more innately transgressive or more intrinsically radical. That's the other half of the call for fraternity here. 😊 It's something else I very much hope you consider.

Again, thank you for stopping by,

Quin

[Reply](#)

■  [Kate Bornstein](#) says:
[November 17, 2010 at 10:05 pm](#)

Quin,

Good to be in touch. Thank you for accepting my apology. As to the rest, you do make good points. But I think it's more of a dinner or apres dinner conversation—in person or by skype, as convenient. Fair?

xo

Kate

[Reply](#)



- [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 17, 2010 at 10:39 pm](#)

Certainly fair enough. If you want to see other responses to both phases of my post (the issue of superior gender identity and the issue of the T-word) I encourage you to look at Questioning Transphobia (with an open mind that understands why some trans people might be upset with your writing).

Anyhow, I'll email you. 😊



- 3. [Oraibi](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 1:30 am](#)

This was a good post. Thank you for writing it.

[Reply](#)

- 4. Pingback: [What's in a name? « Natasha Curson – a trans history](#)



- 5. [Lizzy Levitt](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 2:22 pm](#)

I would no more call anyone, or define anyone as a tranny than tell them they were from mar's. The TG women I know are woman, yes they come from a different set of experiences than I do, so there womanhood might be worn a little different, then so do women raised in africa in a village of 100 people. We are all women, and all wear it in different ways.

[Reply](#)



- 6. [Kate Bornstein](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 3:39 pm](#)

Quin and all, it's me again. I pulled down my blog post saying I'm not gonna use the word tranny any more. I tried, and it didn't work. I'm more than ever interested in dinner with you soon, Quin. I know your post is a lot more than the word tranny, and I'd like to understand what you're saying. It's taken me over 15 years of writing to say what I've felt I've needed to say. It's going to take more than a couple of blogs to reconcile any differences. But I think our conversation has the possibility of continuing fruitfully, I do. So, Quin I'll email you my contact info and we'll take it from there.

continued love & respect

Kate



- 7. [Dianna](#) says:

[November 18, 2010 at 4:44 pm](#)

I transitioned in the middle 1980s, as Kate did. I transitioned within the same cultural expectations that Kate did. I experienced many of the same issues, discussions, as Kate did. I have been a very Out GLBTIQ activist, for almost thirty years, as Kate has been.

The fundamental problem I have with Quin's writings here, is that Quin is trying to read history as if it all happened just "yesterday".

Quin notes that Kate's comments are 1980s writings, and yet evaluates Kate's premises in light of what all that has happened since.

Quin, and others who would take Kate to task, need to understand Kate's writings in their proper historical perspective;.

Kate, and I, and many other trans and GLBT activists, did ALL that we could, thirty years ago and ever since, including huge education efforts in an era when no one wanted to understand, in an era when in many cities we could be put in jail for simply being out in public, in a gender role other than the one expected by our [apparent] genitalia of birth.

If you need to evaluate Kate and/or her writings, and others who also did the hard work 30 years ago, evaluate her and others of her era, in terms of the freedoms and education which have allowed you to now have the freedoms you espouse.

[Reply](#)



o [V](#) says:

[November 18, 2010 at 8:45 pm](#)

And much respect to you for all that you've done. But was the freedom you fought for the freedom to never have anyone, or any LGBTQ activist, or any younger person, disagree with you? Was it the freedom to have progress stop with you and the world stay static after that? I'm not sure I understand what's inherently wrong about disagreeing with someone who has done important work.

[Reply](#)



■ [Kelley Winters](#) says:

[November 19, 2010 at 1:48 pm](#)

Hi V, I don't think suppressing disagreement was what Dianna was saying. She raised an important issue about historical context. Like Dianna, I encourage everyone involved in social movements to understand their history and the evolution of language, social identity and broader context within those movements.

I think Quin's major points were in response to Kate's recent editorial in Out.com and quite valid. However, Dianna's point about the historical foundation upon which we stand today is important for all of us.

[Reply](#)



■ [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:

[November 19, 2010 at 2:25 pm](#)

I replied to Dianna just now and I hope that you both will understand where I'm

coming from. 😊 “Historical context” are two words I often juxtapose in a myriad of different discussions about politics, and so I am well versed in its importance.

Dianna’s comment, however, simply said those words without further expanding on the idea and seemed more upset that I had criticised Kate Bornstein than anything else. I have made substantive criticism and I will accept it in return. But I think that V was quite justified in interpreting Dianna’s comment as it stood as something a bit silencing: “I did important things therefore mind your place!” For the younger generation, you might be able to see how that comes off as a bit... unreasonable.

As you yourself pointed out about my piece:

Most of all, Quin, I think you are right about the legitimacy of trans people, who identify as women or men (or both or neither), in our affirmed roles. Lesbians (or straight women) born of cis-privilege who perpetuate the transmisogyny of Raymondism are neither smart, politically constructive, nor representative of most lesbians I have met.

That’s *exactly* what I was trying to say! And thank you for agreeing with me about that, because that’s really the essence of this letter. So I don’t understand why Dianna seems to think I’m missing something historical here, because that’s really what this is about, which is a very *contemporary* concern.

If you have some insight on the historical context I’m missing I more than welcome your views on the subject!



o [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 2:19 pm](#)

Dianna,

I sat on this comment for a while because I wanted to make sure I responded to it as clear headedly as possible and to be as fair and reasonable as I could about it.

The simple truth is this: Kate Bornstein, yourself, and many others have said and done great things in the history of our people, through feminist and gender activism, and that deserves to be recognised. Ethically speaking, however, I cannot say that renders Bornstein or anyone else immune to criticism. The fact is she has said and continues to say things that are very problematic and that are transphobic particularly to the community of trans women and other trans feminine people, which I find deeply unfortunate. That’s not an issue of something she said 30 years ago but has since disavowed; this is something she’s standing behind up until this very moment.

Her history and fame also invest her with a responsibility. If I screw up on this blog, odds are a microscopic number of people will even notice. But some of the ideas she promotes have had a wide ranging effect on trans women in various countercultural spaces. She has helped provide the intellectual legitimacy to certain cis feminists and other members of the queer community to treat trans women as inferiors, as illegitimate, as invaders or pretenders, and she tries to buttress that with her own experience of having transitioned away from a binary identity.

History or no history, that is a contemporary and still all too relevant fact. Kate's comments were not just 1980s writings as you put it, they were penned in 2009 and were republished this past week with her enthusiastic consent.

What you say is no different from those who say that we should never criticise the government or the armed services because they "protect our freedom" and/or "your freedom to say such things." It is a fallacious and oppressive argument that attempts to foreclose discussion in an unreasonable way. Whatever good Kate has done does not render her immune to criticism. In your comment you did not really specify how I ignored the historical context of her words or how I am reading history as if it happened just yesterday. Kate's comments are not isolated monads stuck somewhere in the mid 80s, they're still very much a part of the present discourse, not disavowed, and still having a negative impact on trans women.

If you would like to engage with me on a deeper level about that, I fully welcome it.

~Quin

[Reply](#)



■ *Shipoffools* says:

[December 31, 2010 at 9:01 am](#)

Hi,

I'm from the generation between Kate's and yours, I think, so I have a feeling of understanding both positions and also that I begin to understand where the conflicts come from.

I didn't read Dianna's comment as meaning that nobody should criticise Kate Bornstein because of her status. The time when Kate transitioned and later became a transgender activist was very different, and thus required different strategies. During the last 10 years, there has been a tremendous backlash in many areas which is hard to comprehend for many people who have been adults before. That backlash has necessitated a very different kind of activism which sometimes clashes earlier strategies.

While in the mid to late 90s, in a climate of relative freedom, it made sense to reclaim words like tranny or fag(got), in today's climate I choke on them. Bil at Bilerico has written about how he chokes on the word faggot, and I'm not sure if he would be happy with trans men (who used to live a lesbians or straight women) reclaiming that word. In a similar vein, queer and transgender theories about the deconstruction of gender made complete sense at a time when *all* genders were questioned. But in today's hypernormative climate with rigid binary genders, it would be highly dangerous to deconstruct trans people's genders.

I fully understand your frustration with older people who cling to gender deconstruction as a valuable theory; I also get that people who have spent most of their adult lives in different circumstances see it as politic regression to give up reclaiming tranny or deconstructing gender. I'm really not sure what to do about this. There is no complete right or wrong with both, I think. It's just important that we try to stay in touch with each other and understand better what's going on here.

[Reply](#)



8. *LeighAnne* says:

[November 18, 2010 at 6:54 pm](#)

Dear Miss Quinnae,

Thank you so much for writing! And for such thoughtful insights!

There are, of course, many of us who never passed thru the drag community, or endured the bullying of other feminists, on our way to becoming “real women.” We simply took the more traditional path, thru girlhood.

Yes, it was a major bother to be saddled with a boy’s name and regular haircuts, but as tough as middle school was, many of us survived it with identity intact and went on to become young women, and now, older women.

Kate Bornstein doesn’t speak for us, of course, and for the longest time it seemed to me that she had simply gone off the rails, but I now understand that Kate was pushed, by “a group of politically smart lesbians,” and that her wanderings, and her writings, were not merely the product of a great enthusiasm for new postulates, but a long, painful struggle to define herself while being bullied by others, whose views she respected.

So please go easy on Auntie Kate. She has had a difficult life, and has finally found a sense of herself and a sense of belonging, something we all seek. That she makes the entirely understandable mistake of believing that she speaks for the rest of us is, I’m afraid, endemic to those who have gathered a large group of followers. It is even encouraged by many, who look about for a “transgender spokesperson,” as if we were all members of the same club. Silly, but so true.

Warm Regards,
Auntie

[Reply](#)



- [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 7:18 pm](#)

Thank you for your kind response. 😊

It is, of course, hard to be genuinely hateful of Kate Bornstein, at least for me, as she is disarmingly cute and charming. I do not like conducting armchair psychoanalysis of anyone, but I do sense that while she errs in significant ways her motives are genuine and that she is, as you say, looking for a sense of community. I just find it sad that she’s had to do this with people that get a rise out of being cruel to binary trans folk.

It’s all the sadder because there’s so many wonderful people out there, and so many brilliant different types of feminisms that will not ask me to check my womanhood at the door. In the coming months I will be speaking more to her, and I will do my best to keep all of this in mind while still gently encouraging her to see things a bit differently.

But I know that in many ways she’s caught up in circumstance as much as the rest of us are, and I know she is not, at heart, a bad person.

Thank you for making me step back and think.

Also, you're an auntie too, are you? *winks*

[Reply](#)



■ *ShipofFools* says:

[December 31, 2010 at 9:18 am](#)

Dear Quinnae, me again-

I think this is exactly the point:

"It's all the sadder because there's so many wonderful people out there, and so many brilliant different types of feminisms that will not ask me to check my womanhood at the door."

These wonderful types of feminism didn't exist throughout most of Bornsteins (and my own) adult life. Rather, it was Bornstein and others who *created* an environment where these types of feminism became possible. Without her, none of the lesbian feminist theorists and activists I know would ever have started dealing with trans women. Never ever.

You have no idea how bad it was, and imagine coming out in the context of Raymondism and existing within it for decades without any place to go. I'm a gay trans guy who came out in the 80s, but I have seen how trans women were treated by lesbians during the 80s and 90s. To pave a road for lesbian trans women into those communities was no small feat. If asked at the time, I would have said it's impossible.

All this is not to stop any political or theoretical criticism of Bornstein's work, I don't agree with all she wrote myself. But I think for a fruitful and constructive discussion it's important to understand the context better.

[Reply](#)



9. *Waihili* says:

[November 18, 2010 at 7:20 pm](#)

Excellent. Thank you!

[Reply](#)



10. *Kori Michele* says:

[November 18, 2010 at 8:34 pm](#)

This was a really enlightening post and I'm really glad I read it. I'm young and don't have a whole lot of sexual identity-related vocabulary or history under my belt, so I don't know that I could add here any comment that would contribute too much to the discussion.

I was confused about the "problem with the word Tranny" until I followed your comment back from Kate's blog and found this. I think it might be really helpful if she linked this blog post as part of her discussion and her reaction- reading this made me understand how much more is being disputed here.

When you quoted Asher Bauer and elaborated on "families" is when I got a handle on what was being discussed. That it's not Kate's personal use of the word "Tranny" that is hurtful, but her platform on which she seemingly preaches *everyone's* freedom to use it- and *that* alone is just an *example* of way she speaks (and others speak) that is damaging in the way it generalizes the queer experience.

Hopefully that was part of what I was meant to take from this discussion.

I think Kate helps a lot of people, and (I almost wrote “but”, then decided that it doesn’t have to be exclusive of) I think that your letter was a really smart challenge to her. I hope you do get to talk in person as she seems to hope, and also what whatever you talk about can be shared with us somehow!

I am slowly and carefully seeking to unlearn my phobias and the languages and actions that hurt because of my misunderstandings of history, context, and human nature. I’m glad that there are so many people that I can continue to learn from.

Though the reclaimed words were not the topic of your letter, after reading these discussions, I’m reevaluating the way I use some of the words I’ve been using, and I think I understand now why I shouldn’t be using them. Just because I’m queer doesn’t mean I can use the words that my relatives worked so hard to own proudly. I’m going to return the words “dyke” and “fag” to those whom I took it from without a full understanding, apologize to them and only reconsider them when I know enough to understand not what they mean, but what it means when I say them.

Thank you,
-A Niece

[Reply](#)



o [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 8:48 pm](#)

Kori,

I think you have a lot to add to the discussion. Vocabulary is useful and liberating for a welter of reasons as it provides you with manifold means of naming your world and your experiences in it, but you’re still living what I bet is a fascinating life that has left you with stories to tell; stories that matter and that are part of the warp and weft of this community. 😊 So, never doubt yourself, hun- just always be open to new ideas.

Also, yes, you read me exactly right, that is what I was trying to say. Chiefly that her use of the word ‘tranny’ was an issue in large part because of what was imported with it, the *way* she justified it, and the broader politics of trans-ness that she espouses which I feel are unfair and erasing.

Kate Bornstein does help people, no question, and I think that the non-binary voices that have been helped by her should also be heard; indeed, they have been. But I am uneasy with the fact that in order to create a safe space for non-binary folks, she should marginalise the binary trans people as insufficiently transgressive or outlaw. In other words I want her to put a bit more thought into some of the things she says- even if, as she states, she already has.

I think you’re definitely on the right road to thinking critically about your life, the meaning of your experience, and the language you use to talk about it. That’s something that will serve you very well, trust me on this. 😊 Because if you can think deeply about that, you can think deeply about yourself- and there is nothing more valuable out there for a trans person in a deeply uncertain world. Self-reflection is critically important.

I like also that you excised the word ‘but’ on reflection from your sentence that began “I think

Kate...”. 😊 You’re already know how to deconstruct either/or binaries! It’s awesome isn’t it?

::hugs:: You take care now.

You’re more than welcome,

Quin

[Reply](#)



11. [chelsea goodwin](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 9:30 pm](#)

My Spiritual community is the Theatre of Transgression and the Radical Fairies. My closest friends are Drag Queens, which is my culture even after 15 + years of post-op life. I have not intention to stop using the word Tranny because it is what I am caused by the people I trust the most, the people that I know love and accept me for who I am.

I am puzzled that so much of the Lesbian/Feminist community (so called) rejects us, Radical Fairies in my experience bend over backwards to make us welcome and treat us with genuine love and respect and even admiration. I prefer to be with people who show me love, I’m funny that way. Speaking of love, that’s what I feel for you Kate, lots of warm fuzzy love.
Chelsea

[Reply](#)



- o [chelsea goodwin](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 9:32 pm](#)

Let me try this again. I have no intention to top using the word Tranny because it is what I am called by the people I trust the most. I don’t understand why the typos above happened. I stand by the love part. chelsea

[Reply](#)



- [chelsea goodwin](#) says:
[November 18, 2010 at 9:49 pm](#)

and the same to your charming partner. of course

[Reply](#)



12. [Ann Amoli](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 2:22 am](#)

Oh yeah, I like your critique very, very much. I have long since become weary of Bornstein’s presumption that gender difference or identity can just be explained away (to say nothing of Bornstein’s recurrent apologetics to lesbian chauvinists, as if trans women require their approval before we can be allowed to be considered to be women). Maybe Kate Bornstein identifies as neither a woman or a man —- bully for Kate, then — but if so, Bornstein would be wise to not presume to speak for us trans folk who do identify as members of our chosen gender.

[Reply](#)



13. [Del LaGrace Volcano](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 3:11 am](#)

An interesting and informative early morning read that has caused me to reflect upon my own use of the word, 'tranny' in a mid 90's film I made called PANSEXUAL PUBLIC PORN aka The Adventures of Hans & Del. It's about myself and friends, primarily the FTM Austrian artist Hans Scheirl, going into gay male cruising grounds to have sex with the presumably cisgendered gay men we find there. At one point I am trying to explain to an older gay gentlemen that we are not 'just' men, and I refer to ourselves as 'trannies'. He assumes we are male to female rather than the other way around. I thought this was simply because at that point in time almost no one knew about the FTM experience but now, thanks to this posting, I know more about the history of the word. I had never thought about this term as belonging more to MTF experience than FTM. I do believe that when it's used by 'norms' (my preferred term for cisgendered nonqueers) it is disparaging but when used by people of trans experience for me, it feels fine. Just as I would never use the word fag or dyke when in the company of 'norms' I would also never use the word tranny. However, I'm not 100% clear what the problem is. Is it that some FTMs use the T word to refer to themselves? That Kate uses it and thinks it's okay? (I haven't read her blog yet.) Quin, are you saying that it should only be used within the 'family', that is if you are off MTF experience and then only with each other? Or not at all, ever?

For the record meeting and becoming friends with Kate was instrumental to the development of my own identity as a 'hermaphrodyke'. I am trans because I used to be perceived as female and I am now perceived as male. I am intersex and intergendered, socialized as a dyke, rather than a lesbian and dyke is a word I love and never want to abandon just because it is used by some ignorant people as a term of abuse.

[Reply](#)



- [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 11:25 am](#)

Wow, Del LaGrace Volcano! A pleasure. ::bows::

To reply to your interesting comment I should say a couple of things. One, my post was about a good deal more than the word 'tranny' - my discussion of that was really more to use it as an illustrative example of the broader issue I was charting in the first 2/3rds of the letter. To be honest, while there are a couple of people out there who might do this, I'm not about to police the use of 'tranny' among everyday trans folk- trans women, trans femme, DQs and male CDs in particular- because I won't interfere with their process of reclamation.

I would never say that it should never be used ever, as that's impractical and also quite a privileged thing for me to say.

My letter was talking quite specifically to Kate Bornstein whose discussion of the T-word seemed to miss a lot of other context, even as she correctly identified a particular historical dimension of the word's etymology, she missed a lot of the *contemporary* reality behind it and was empowering cis people to think that the word's okay, cute, funny, and just fine to call any ol' trans person whenever they wanted.

I do believe that since the term has a specific history within the community of trans women and other femme identified trans people that the colonisation of it by trans men has... an offensive whiff to it, for the reasons that Asher Bauer pointed out. Reclamation works when the word has been weaponised against you and others of your experience-group. Not when it's filched from someone else.

Really what I was trying to get her to do was to look at the totality of the situation regarding 'tranny' - but I am not about to wade into millions of social interactions going on right this moment and say what others can and can't say. 😊

Kate Bornstein has, evidently, been quite the wonderful help to many people. Unfortunately, based on my own community experience a lot of trans women in particular have felt left out and used by her- too much of what I read from her seems to be externalising her own transition from woman to non-binary onto the rest of us, and poking fun at us for our lack of enlightenment. All I'm trying to do is to get her to share the love a bit.

[Reply](#)



- [Del LaGrace Volcano](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 1:26 pm](#)

This is slightly off subject but thought I would bring it up nonetheless because if not here, then where?

I've been noticing that at many queer events, from Queertopia in Sweden this past summer, to almost all academically oriented conferences I've attended and even at a recent conference in Bilbao, called Bodies, Sexualities & Genders, there are virtually no transwomen in attendance. In Bilbao there were a few fantastic transwomen that I love and admire but still, compared to the amount of masculine identified trans or gender queers, MTF spectrum people are always in the minority. Kate Bornstein and Susan Stryker are the usual suspects (no disrespect, I love them both) and I wonder if what is being said here about 'sharing the love' is down to the fact that only a few MTF spectrum women are given (or take?) the spotlight? Let us also remember that for many, many years FTMs were completely marginalized within the nascent trans movement AND the same super stars get trotted out over and over again. I wonder how much this says about the trans community's ability to grow and nurture leaders? I wonder how much it says about celebrity culture that permits only a few 'exceptions' to the rule to exist. Does this make any sense to anyone?

[Reply](#)



- [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 1:41 pm](#)

I think it is possible. After all, Bornstein is telling her audience (which is primarily made up of the people you describe) what they want to hear. Unfortunately too many genderqueer people like to define themselves against "conservative" trans women, and within the queer/feminist movements masculine people are more likely to be accepted because of the long standing patriarchal association of masculinity with neutrality, power, and autonomy (as opposed to the stereotype of femininity's association with specificity, weakness, and dependence). That's my theory, to

which there are some notable exceptions for sure, but broadly speaking we remain (as Julia Serano put it very ably in the title of her pathbreaking book) “Whipping Girls”.

There are a welter of issues that pile up. Trans women are more likely to be unemployed, turned out of their homes, more likely to be rejected by organisations that are supposed to help women, and are more likely to face a chilly reception in academia. A lot of us, I think, get the intuitive sense that claiming subjectivity as a woman, and/or being femme is something that does not win you friends and allies in The Movement. The femmephobia is, to me, an artefact of deeply internalised patriarchy that feminism still needs to collectively question. I am fortunate in that I am finding acceptance and community in my university’s Women and Gender Studies Department, of course. I think that the younger generation is a bit more open and accepting of trans diversity than their forebears were.

I certainly intend to be a trans woman in academia myself. 😊 But given everything that’s out there I think it’s just that a lot of trans women feel spat on and undermined. To say nothing of the fact that a lot of us mysteriously disappear- I don’t think it’s a coincidence that the crushing majority of transphobic hate crime victims are trans women, unfortunately.

The issue here is a very complicated and multifarious one, and it’s hard to discuss it without making generalisations and perhaps doing the same thing that I’m accusing Kate Bornstein of and I hope very much that nothing I said was offensive. But it is what I’ve read and observed, as well as heard from other trans people.

Edit: I should also add that while many of us don’t hit the conference/convention scene we do have a large and growing presence on the Internet. 😊 Quite a few of us are writing online.



14. [Kelley Winters](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 4:43 am](#)

Kate, I’ve loved and admired you more years than vanity will allow me to admit. And Quin, you are a gem and have raised points that are very much on target. I would love to join you both at that dinner. I have evolved my use of terms of social identity, human phenomenon and diagnostic nomenclature over the years, based on input from mentors like Dianna and from critically thinking younger folks alike. I have used ‘tranny’ as an in-the-family thing in the past, but I was so incensed by the Ticked-Off movie and those who defended it that I stopped. I’ll have to confess that I made an exception for Amy Pohler in her impersonation of Christian Siriano on SNL— it was just too funny.

At the National Women’s Studies Association conference last week, I raised issues that parallel some of Quin’s in a piece called “In Celebration of Human Gender Diversity.” I argued that the traditional debate of gender essentialism vs strict constructivism is a false dichotomy borne of a cis-centric faith in the infallibility of assigned birth sex. Both are refuted by the broad diversity of gender identities and expressions that exist within our communities. You can hear an excerpt on the [TransFM.org site](#).

Most of all, Quin, I think you are right about the legitimacy of trans people, who identify as women or men (or both or neither), in our affirmed roles. Lesbians (or straight women) born of cis-privilege who perpetuate the transmisogyny of Raymondism are neither smart, politically constructive, nor

representative of most lesbians I have met.

[Reply](#)



- [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 11:14 am](#)

Ms. Winters, thank you muchly for this intriguing comment. Your second paragraph puts me in the mind of some readings that I've been doing about the "equality versus difference" debate in feminism, and its close cousin that selfsame social constructivism vs. bio-essentialism debate. They are indeed, at the end, false dichotomies. It might be too simplistic and catering to the status quo to then offhandedly say it's a mixture of both, but I feel that each plays its role at different social locations in our lives. My birth biology might have left me with some hinting predispositions, but social forces could have pushed me in any number of ways. In my case I blossomed into a woman. 😊

Thank you very much for speaking at that conference, and I'll be sure to listen to that excerpt. As a trans woman trying to break into academia it cheers me to know that the NWSA is willing to listen to ideas like this. Linda Nicholson's 1994 Signs paper "Interpreting Gender" (and yes, yes, regular readers might notice I can't stop talking about it, but it's very good) is a great place to see a lot of compelling thinking laid out about this very subject of constructivism versus essentialism. You might like it.

Thank you for all the work you're doing, Ms. Winters. Your activism is inspirational and necessary, and I am flattered you stopped by. Also, thank you for your kind words here and for responding to the whole piece. I find the debate over the word 'tranny' is a kind of black hole that swallows up all other discussion oftentimes.

Hear hear to our cis lesbian feminist friends who get it, too. ::winks and raises glass::

[Reply](#)



- [Kelley Winters](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 1:28 pm](#)

Thanks for your kind words, Quin. –and friends just call me Kelley 😊

Our panel session at NSWA was hosted by Dr. Joelle Ruby Ryan, and it was a truly wonderful discussion. I really enjoyed the conference and was delighted to see it here in Denver.

[Reply](#)



15. [catkisser](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 7:04 am](#)

I applaud this blog entry. I'm a woman who transitioned about ten years after Kate and Kate's appearances on several talk shows (back when she was a woman) helped me tremendously. I got to meet her in Columbus Ohio around the time I had just transitioned. I am a binary woman who has never had a problem with gender outlaws or drag queens. But that said, the gender deconstructionists

are the ONLY group that has ever questioned my womanhood. I'm also an historian well aware how tied to trans (of all types) the word "tranny" is to seminal organizations, movements and events in trans (all types) history and refuse to give up the word that never started life as a pejorative.

I am also a lifelong, dyed in the wool feminist who is working to promote a new (old) model of feminism that rejects all hierarchical thinking, expand culturally the meaning of "woman" and promote the equality of value of women's natural strengths as opposed to the idea women need to be just like men. Frankly, I oppose gender deconstruction based on it's out and out erasure of women.

Quin, you've taken shots at me for commenting here in the past. You and I aren't really all that far apart you know.

[Reply](#)



- o [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 11:04 am](#)

Catkisser,

I am grateful for all positive commentary here. However, much as I wish it weren't true I'm afraid you and I are rather far apart on various issues. The difference between you and me is that while I am annoyed at non-binary erasure of trans women and trans men, and scornful of academic trends that attempt to reify this as a moral good, I do not simply mirror the hate and say "oh yeah, well nuh uh, *you* don't exist!" You have in your writings attacked and scorned "TGs" as some kind of immoral crusade, and even attacked other trans women (like myself) for calling ourselves women without having had SRS. You then go further and support the same transphobic cis feminists that Bornstein does (quite unsurprising you two agree there, albeit from opposite ends) and say it's perfectly okay for them to discriminate and to regard trans women as men. I still remember that awful metaphor you used about the camel's nose poking under the tent.

So, if I may take a step back and correct something for the record here, unless those beliefs of yours have changed dramatically and been disavowed, we're really not that close at all, I'm afraid. I do not, nor have I ever believed, that women or men have "natural" strengths that are not forged and warped by society. I am a woman, I am woman, but that means a whole bunch of things that are decidedly not innate to me because of my gender.

These are not "shots" at you so much as me simply telling you what *you actually believe and have said in the past*, and my responses to you along those same lines. If you want to discuss that like an adult, my door is always open as it is to Kate Bornstein. I find it amusing that you two do the same things, just as mirror images of one another. She promotes the moral superiority of non-binary life, you promote the unreconstructed biological, binary essentialist vision of gender that's actually at the heart of transphobia.

Le sigh, what a world.

[Reply](#)



16. [Renee Thomas](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 9:08 am](#)

Thanks Quin,

For starting a needful and thoughtful dialog. The nuance and complexity of trans lives, like all complex sociologies, is a dynamic and evolving construct. That we can have conversations like this is certainly a healthy and helpful development. What drives us to transition is a field of speculation that consistently challenges and fascinates me. I find, in reviewing the recent research work of Dr. Eric Vilain and Dr. V.S Ramachandran that we do indeed flirt with a kind of genetic and neuro-biological essentialism the boundaries of which are still being charted. Before meme formation and the construction of trans narrative we confront an essential state which I have described in my writing as: *The Predicate to Transition*. it's the confluence of the two, origins and unfoldings, that proves so intriguing.

Ah M'bonny Kate,

It's grand to hear from you. Hope you are well and the book is proceeding apace.

Best All,

Renee

[Reply](#)



17. [chelsea goodwin](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 10:38 am](#)

go on youtube. check out a video called saliva Tranarchy. you'll be glad you did. 😊

[Reply](#)



18. A says:
[November 19, 2010 at 11:36 am](#)

I thought this was endearing... but alas the controversy continues. Perhaps it is not without problems, but who the hell is? And, reading Auntie Kate, I do not get the sense that she attempts to speak for everyone, so lets not censor the way she (and so many others) speaks for herself. Debates? Fine. But id still like to think we're family. She wrote that once in a book for me—a signing in Northampton after a performance I treasure. Its one of my most prized possessions. If my home were burning it'd literally be one of the 5 things id take from the house.

Perhaps ill write more when i have the time/space/energy/insight, but re “they were amused at my transition” bit. I dont read this as inherently transphobic to say. I think its the reality or what did and does happen. So we packaged it into some humor and made it accessible in a different way. How many of us have friends who do and say some really shitty things during our transitions? But we love them. They love us. We roll our eyes at each other. Make jokes. Push each other to do and be better. I think that's what Kate is doing too. Id hate to diminish the outlaw in our discourse(s), ya know?

[Reply](#)



- o [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 11:48 am](#)

I think that dismissing what I (and many other folks) are trying to do as “censorship” is more than a little demeaning. If we are family then I would like for Kate Bornstein to stop selling out trans women. I don’t see starting that dialogue as censoring.

Now, as to the “amused” bit, it’s one thing to quote someone and then say “that wasn’t right” - it’s another to do as she did, which was quote Fish and then go on at some length in a way that suggests that as she got older she came to agree with the ‘wisdom’ Fish set forth, and that the breaking point was when she encountered feminist transphobia and decided that that minority of cis women was “right.”

That’s not something a member of any family I’d choose to be a part of would tell me.

I am quite aware that for a lot of bois, trans men, FTM identified folks, and genderqueer people, Bornstein has provided a space for legitimacy. Yet she, like you do in this comment, turned it into something of a zero sum game. You’re telling me that I’m “diminishing the outlaw” in our discourses simply because I’m defending myself against her transphobic conception of trans women. Where and how, exactly am I engaged in this diminishing? I am not trying to take anything away from anyone. I am encouraging her to stop overgeneralising her experience of transition in such a way that de-legitimises trans women and feminine-identified people, and asking her to stop using us at our expense.

She never says that because she’s not a trans woman she can’t comment on our experience by saying we’re not really women. She routinely uses her past experience of transition to claim dual subjectivity as a genderqueer person and a trans woman, and then tell every cis person in range of her mic that trans women are fake and chasing an illusion. That is what grinds my gears.

To say such is not censorship, nor is it to diminish the outlaw.

It is a simple matter of keeping my self respect, defending the people I love, and ensuring that since she has access to such a wide audience that she is being *accurate* in her characterisations.

[Reply](#)



- *chelsea goodwin* says:
[November 19, 2010 at 2:44 pm](#)

Let’s face it. All of this comes out of the horrible way a bunch of transwomen got treated by a buncha Lesbians several decades ago. It started with the purge of transwomen from Michigan and other Lesbian/feminist venues and when an ex-nun named Jean O’Leary kicked Sylvia Rivera off the stage at the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade and the parade indeed purged the Drag Queens (self defined at the time) as well as transwomen from the parade for a while.

From the experience of doing TRANTigone with a group of fabulously talented human beings that evolved into the Theatre of Transgression I’ve seen first hand that the current generation of Genderqueers is capable of levels of creativity, openness, community building and loving accross boundaries that seemed so important to so many people in the seventies and eighties that have no meaning at all when we form communities based on Art and Spirituality and leave the identity politics somewhere on the scrapheap of history where they belong.

Special thanks for Kate for her kindness and support of TRANTIigone and all the

wonderful photos she posted from the show.

Also if Justin Bond ever produces Galli Blonde: A Sissy Fix again and you can possibly see it you just must. It is so beautiful and sexy and moving and liberating. We have all been damaged by femme phobia, transphobia and homophobia. I know we can agree on that. I'm trying to set the best example I can for our young people of healthy self love, self respect, pride in identity not as part of a group but as individual creative spiritually aware beings, and especially am dedicated to doing everything possible to protect our upcoming generation from bullying and suicide. By comparison with this important work, rehashing the sex wars of two generations ago seems sad and pointless.. We have so much to learn from our young people. It really is time for us to let them lead and either help them or get out of their way.

Love to all,
Chelsea

[Reply](#)



■ [Quinnae Moongazer](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 2:54 pm](#)

Love right back at you, Chelsea.

Although I should say a couple of things. I'm 23. I'm not exactly part of that group that actually *fought* the sex wars and this blog is not an attempt to relive old glories; it's (among many other things, including a slug farm) an attempt to negotiate with the *aftermath* of those battles. I'm very happy to set it all aside, as long as you're not asking me to set aside my dignity or womanhood in the process.

Either way, thank you for commenting. 😊



19. [chelsea goodwin](#) says:
[November 19, 2010 at 2:44 pm](#)

love is the answer

[Reply](#)

20. Pingback: [the plains of Blogistan | Being Drusilla](#)

21. Pingback: [No Designation » Follow up for Kate](#)




22. [Ellie](#) says:
[November 20, 2010 at 9:38 pm](#)

I think what you wrote here took a lot of guts and courage and I totally side with everything you said. Except I don't think Kate is transphobic at all. Just comes from a different world/point of view...

[Reply](#)

23. Pingback: [The Thang Blog » Tuesday Links](#)


24.  [bonze blayk](#) says:
[December 14, 2010 at 2:05 pm](#)

Dang, I'm going to read this, but I simply *cannot restrain myself* from this comment, without having read the source, or the whole of your response...

But I did read Kate's *Gender Outlaw* a couple of months back, and came to the conclusion that...


I'm a *Gender In-Law*.

[Reply](#)

 [chelsea](#) says:
[December 14, 2010 at 2:21 pm](#)

I just re read *Gender Outlaw* as well. i'd forgotten just how incfreditibly awsomelly good it really is. I especially like that Kate is always so all inclusive and speaking to everybody not just one insular community or part of a community. Happy belated Channakuj, Happy Yule, etc.

[Reply](#)

■  [bonze Anne Rose Blayk](#) says:
[December 22, 2010 at 11:26 am](#)

chelsea:

"I especially like that Kate is always so all inclusive and speaking to everybody..."

Well, there's kind of a *problem* here... she's not just speaking *to* everybody, but speaking *for* everybody; e.g., she states:

I have found an underground of male-to-female gender outlaws which already has its own unspoken hierarchy...

... [list of the groups] ...

... Very few groups exist, however, that encompass the full rainbow that is gender outlawism, and sadly, groups still divide along the lines of male-to-female and female-to-male gender outlaws.

Gender Outlaw, p. 67-68 (hardback edition)

In her list of the hierarchy of status perceived by many transgendered folk, the ranking is: Post-op > Pre-op > Transgenders > She-Males > Drag Queens > Out Transvestites > Closet Cases. I agree with Kate that this kind of ranking is stupid and harmful, and that fundamentally all the binary gender-fic/a/tion to which people are subjected is *idiotic* and does not actually represent *reality*.

The problem is that *in reality* we're all located somewhere within a bimodal distribution

of gender-fied psychological tendencies, and that this is (evidently) strongly influenced by variations in the androgenation of the human brain... and thus, few people are capable of practicing “gender fluidity”, and the psychological rigidities of others are not *merely* the result of indoctrination, or force of habit...

... and that especially includes those with *extremely* severe Gender Incongruence, who DO NOT WANT to be drafted into Kate’s categorical band of “gender outlaws”... for example, the HBS (“Harry Benjamin Syndrome”) crowd protest ferociously at their unwilling inclusion under “the transgender rainbow”, precisely because *they’re not gender deviant*.

And with regard to trans men... are they crazy, or what? OK, they’re not, but I only understand their feelings (or lack thereof ?-) in an *intellectual* way... well, that’s because I *am* a *gender In-Law*...

thanks!

“Somebody’s Crazy Aunt”... bonzie anne

PS: I just came up with the term “androgenated”, found it is in fact a term in use in biology, and love it: sounds like *hydrogenated*. Does *androgenation* sound like a Good Thing ?-)

[Reply](#)



25. [bonze Anne Rose Blayk](#) says:
[January 7, 2011 at 7:45 am](#)

I’ll quote from Kate’s article again, though I don’t mean to single her out:

No matter what ideas you might have about transsexuals or drag queens, if you were M headed toward F in any fashion at all, you moved into, through, up and out of the drag queen community.

I am most desirous that in the future, people will become more honest with themselves (and others) and rather than using the term:

community lkə'myoōnitēl

noun (pl. -ties)

1 a group of people living together in one place, esp. one practicing common ownership : a community of nuns.

- all the people living in a particular area or place : local communities.
- a particular area or place considered together with its inhabitants : a rural community.
- (the community) the people of a district or country considered collectively, esp. in the context of social values and responsibilities; society : preparing prisoners for life back in the community.
- [as adj.] denoting a worker or resource designed to serve the people of a particular area : community health services.

... they will employ instead:

clique *klēk; klikl*

noun

a small group of people, with shared interests or other features in common, who spend time together and do not readily allow others to join them.

... because it seems to me that 99% of the time that the motivation behind use of this implicitly imperialistic terminology is that some *clique* wants to assert control of a *community*, or in a broader sense, to draft others unwillingly into membership in their “*community*” so that they can “represent them” and supplant their voices with their own (think ‘T’ in “GLBT”, or the “mentally ill” in NAMI).

[Reply](#)



26. [chelsea goodwin](#) says:

[January 7, 2011 at 8:00 am](#)

For what its worth I'm not sure I agree with the idea that all m-f people go through the Drag Queen Community. Such a community does exist, and in fact even though I've been post-op since 1995, I remain a part of it by virtue of the fact that I still perform in Drag Shows. To be a post op transsexual (once certain financial conditions were met, of course) I had to count backwards from 100. To be a Drag Queen, I have to write and deliver comedic patter, devise fantasy costumes and make-up that have nothing to do with the way everyday women look on the street and everything to do with practicing a sort of show business shamanism.

These days the prevailing definitions of ‘community’ for purposes of this conversation seem to me to be either ‘market segment’ and/or ‘group of voters to be dragooned into supporting a Democratic party which may or may not give a damn about any of us. I'm just sayin’

Hope all have a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. cheers.

Chelsea

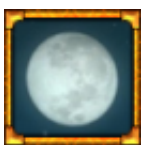
[Reply](#)

27. Pingback: [With extreme reluctance: I The Accidental Beard](#)

Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

Quinnae Moongazer



Yes, I am the moon. The entire moon. Be very afraid of what I think or you can kiss your precious tidal cycle goodbye.

Well, actually I'm a unicorn. A nuclear one. Funny how life works out, eh?

If you're wondering how this mythical creature entered the atomic age you need look no further than my first post (or the About Me section.) Everything else is a load of full frontal trans feminism and slugs. Lots

of slugs.

November 2010

M T W T F S S

1 2 3 4 5 6 [7](#)

8 9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 [17](#) 18 19 [20](#) 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28

[29](#) 30

[« Oct](#)

[Dec »](#)

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- [Border House](#)
- [Genderbitch: Words of a Transgirl](#)
- [I Hate You All](#)
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- [January 2011](#) (1)
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- [September 2010](#) (4)
- [August 2010](#) (5)
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- [March 2010](#) (1)
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