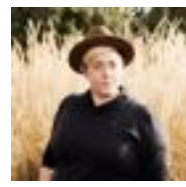


GENDER CRITICAL AT WORK





Linda Bellos had said she would be 'publicly questioning' some transgender politics
ROGER ASKEW

Linda Bellos barred in Cambridge University row

James Gillespie and [Sian Griffiths](#)

Sunday October 01 2017, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

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A leading feminist has had an invitation to speak at Cambridge University withdrawn amid concerns that transgender activists could oppose her.

Linda Bellos had been invited by the Beard Society at Peterhouse College and sent a list of dates – which were withdrawn after she said she would be “publicly questioning some of the trans politics . . . which seems to assert the power of those who were previously designated male to tell lesbians, and especially lesbian feminists, what to say and think”.

Ailish Maroof, the co-president of the society, which describes itself as a “gender and feminism” group, replied: “I’m sorry but we’ve decided not to host you. I too believe in freedom of expression, however Peterhouse is as much a home as it is a college. The welfare of our students in this instance has to come first.”

The prospect of laws to let men redefine their gender without a physical transition and then gain access to changing rooms and women’s refuges has angered many.

“I’m not being told by someone who a few months ago was a man what I as a woman can or cannot do,” Bellos said. Maroof declined to comment.



Heather Brunskell-Evans had been asked to give a talk this week on the subject of pornography and the sexualisation of young women

Barred academic Heather Brunskell-Evans warns of cowardice over trans issues

Lucy Bannerman

Thursday November 23 2017, 12.01am, The Times

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An academic who was no-platformed by university students after she discussed transgender issues on a radio show has attacked the “reprehensible cowardliness” of public institutions.

Heather Brunskell-Evans, a research fellow at King’s College London, who is also a spokeswoman for the Women’s Equality Party, told *The Times* that she believed such institutions were running scared from public debate, out of fear of offending the transgender lobby.

She had been asked by medical students from the Reproductive and Sexual Health Society at King’s to give a talk this week on the subject of pornography and the sexualisation of young women, at the college’s Guy’s Campus in south London.

But days after appearing on the *Moral Maze*, the Radio 4 series hosted by Michael Buerk, she was told that the event had been cancelled because of concerns that her views on “transgender health . . . would violate the student union’s ‘Safe Space’ policy”.

On the programme, panellists quizzed Dr Brunskell-Evans, and three other speakers, including two transgender activists and a psychotherapist, on the subject of “defining gender”.

The academic had argued in favour of transgender adults defining themselves “in whichever way they want”, but she questioned the advice being promoted to schools and youth groups by transgender organisations that positive affirmation was the only correct way to support children who expressed confusion over their gender.

She said: “If a child decides that it’s an astronaut, one can play along with this. One doesn’t have to moralise about it but quite clearly the child is not an astronaut. In fact it’s incumbent upon adults who are responsible for the welfare, psychological and social and medical, of children not to go along with this story.” It is understood her comments prompted three complaints from transgender members of the Women’s Equality Party, accusing her of “promoting prejudice against the transgender community”.

The party confirmed that it was investigating Dr Brunskell-Evans, who is the spokeswoman on violence against women and girls. It said: “The party has not silenced or sanctioned the subject of the complaint in any way. We are reviewing a complaint, in line with our constitution.”

Dr Brunskell-Evans said she feared “there’s something very dark going on. People who were male are now in the Women’s Equality Party dictating what the party spokeswoman should say on issues affecting women and girls. You could not write this.

“The cowardliness of institutional response is more than reprehensible. No one will speak out. Good people are standing back, doing nothing, as others get pilloried. Organisations and individuals are petrified to be seen as taking any other view than unequivocally endorsing transgender doctrine. It’s truly shocking.

“How has the trans lobby become so powerful that people, including those medical practitioners about to be qualified in the specific field of sexual and reproductive health, are unwilling to tolerate a talk from me on another topic?”

She added: “Truly, this language of violation and safe space is worthy of Orwell’s double think.”

Alexandra Tate, president of the Reproductive and Sexual Health Society, said the event had been cancelled “due to the short notice of these concerns being raised.

“We will endeavour to continue to host speakers whose opinions differ from convention, but in the future we will make sure measures are in place to allow them to be explored safely. We apologise to Dr Brunskell-Evans that we didn’t get these sorted in time for this event.”



Bath Spa University said the research had been rejected on methodological, not political, grounds

University trying to hound me out, says gender researcher

Andrew Gilligan

Sunday January 28 2018, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

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A researcher barred by Bath Spa University from studying people who regret having undergone gender reassignment says the university is trying to “bully” him out of taking it to court over the decision.

James Caspian, a psychologist specialising in therapy for transgender people, was told his subject was “potentially politically incorrect” and risked triggering attacks on social media.

Caspian said he tried to challenge the December 2016 decision in court, but was advised to use the university’s complaints procedure first. He said Bath Spa delayed the process so it was not yet finished when the case first came to court. As a result, his legal action was thrown out.

Bath Spa then applied for, and was awarded, costs of just under £5,000 against Caspian. He has offered to pay the money at £200 a month but has received what he describes as a “nasty” and “aggressive” email from the university’s solicitor demanding immediate payment.

Caspian, who is now trying to raise money for a fresh legal challenge on the CrowdJustice site, said: “This is obviously a tactic to get rid of me. They have breached the most basic tenets of intellectual freedom of inquiry and are now trying to shut me down by bullying me about the money.”



Natacha Kennedy asked people to list academics deemed to be transphobic

Trans Goldsmiths lecturer Natacha Kennedy behind smear campaign against academics

Lucy Bannerman

Saturday September 08 2018, 12.01am, The Times

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A transgender lecturer orchestrated a smear campaign against academics across the UK in which universities were described as dangerous and accused of “hate crime” if they refused to accept activists’ views that biological males can be women, it can be revealed.

Natacha Kennedy, a researcher at Goldsmiths University of London who is also understood to work there under the name Mark Hellen, faces accusations of a “ludicrous” assault on academic freedom after she invited thousands of members of a closed Facebook group to draw up and circulate a list shaming academics who disagreed with campaigners’ theories on gender.

The online forum, seen by *The Times*, also revealed that members plotted to accuse non-compliant professors of hate crime to try to have them ousted from their jobs. Reading, Sussex, Bristol, Warwick and Oxford universities were among those deemed to have “unsafe” departments because they employed academics who had publicly disputed the belief that “transwomen are women” or questioned the potential impact of proposed changes to gender laws on women and children.

Ms Kennedy said that the list was necessary so students could avoid accepting a place on a “dangerous” course.

Aimee Challenor, the former Green Party candidate who used her father as her election agent even though he was facing charges of raping and torturing a ten-year-old girl, for which he was later jailed, was among those who responded to Ms

Kennedy's post of August 14 to the Trans Rights UK Facebook group, with suggestions of who to blacklist. All the named academics were women.

Members of the group claimed that the philosophy department of the University of Sussex was "clearly an unsafe environment" because of the presence of Kathleen Stock, a professor who has argued against redefining the category of woman and lesbian to include men.

"File a hate crime report against her, and then the chairman and vice-chair," advised one. "Drag them over the f***ing coals."

Rosa Freedman, an expert in human rights law at the University of Reading, had also upset activists by saying that biological males should not have access to a women's refuge. One activist said she tried to lodge a complaint but was told that Professor Freedman had a right to free speech. "I'm replying a little more strongly and using the words 'hate speech' a few times," she told the group. Another activist suggested: "Use the words . . . 'So Reading University supports staff who use hate speech against students?'"

Professor Freedman told *The Times*: "We are talking about the aggressive trolling of women who are experts. I have received penis pictures telling me to 'suck my girl cock'. This is straight-up, aggressive, anti-woman misogyny. In no way have I made the space unsafe. I find it deeply distressing that an academic would set out to smear my name and impugn my reputation, simply because I put forward a perspective, based on robust and specific evidence, with which they disagree. That is not academia. That is silencing people.

"The idea that writing about women's rights automatically becomes a hate crime in some people's eyes is ludicrous. All it has done has made me more determined to write about this, in a respectful way that allows other perspectives to come through, and not just the views of those who shout the loudest."

Professor Stock said: "What would make a philosophy department unsafe is if its academics weren't allowed to challenge currently popular beliefs or ideologies for fear of offending. Deliberately plotting to have my department lose students, or to have me dismissed, through covert means, is surprising behaviour from a fellow academic." Both professors praised the support that they had received from their universities.

Last month Brown University, the Ivy League institution in Rhode Island, was accused of cowardice by leading academics in the US after it caved into pressure on social media to pull a piece of research from its website that had concluded that social contagion could be a reason why clusters of young people were identifying as trans.

Professor Stock said: "It is head-scratchingly bizarre how so many public organisations, many of them ostensibly progressive, have capitulated to passive-aggressive, emotionally blackmailing, and sometimes even outright threatening behaviour from trans activists, often online."

One member of the Facebook group, Sahra Rae Taylor, stood by her contribution to the list. She said: “That way we can advise people applying that ‘if you want to study law, then don’t go to these places’. Which would allow them at least to avoid being taught (and marked, and under the influence in some way) by a transphobic douchebag.”

Ms Kennedy, who describes herself on Facebook as a “stropky, bolshie transgirl with attitude who hates the Tories with a passion”, refused to comment. She represented Goldsmiths during trans awareness week in February.

It confirmed that she was an employee but would not explain which department she worked in or why she appeared to be listed twice in the staff directory: once as Mark Hellen, in the department of educational studies, and secondly as Natacha Kennedy, who is named in equality and diversity reports. Both profiles appear to be active.

It also remained unclear why an academic paper on Ms Kennedy’s specialist subject of transgenderism in children, published by the *Graduate Journal of Social Sciences* in 2010, cited two co-authors: Natacha Kennedy and Mark Hellen.

Neither Ms Kennedy nor Goldsmiths would clarify whether the paper was by two individuals or the same person. A spokesman said: “Goldsmiths prides itself on its inclusive community and is committed to the values of freedom of speech within the law.”

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NEWS

13th October 2018

Backlash as Edinburgh University Rector Ann Henderson accused of transphobia over tweet



Ann Henderson (right) holding a silk suffragette banner

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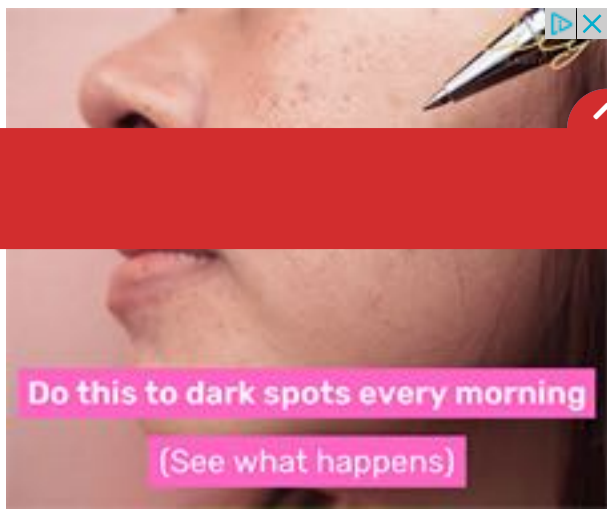
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The new Rector of [Edinburgh](#) University has been accused of transphobia, after retweeting details of a meeting to discuss changes to the Gender Recognition Act.

The university newspaper Student and Edinburgh University Students Association condemned the message, claiming the organisations behind the event were hate groups.

Edinburgh University said Ann Henderson, who officially became rector on October 6th, was tweeting in a personal capacity and added that it the



However these comments have led to a backlash from feminist campaigners and academics, disputing that Ms Henderson's actions were transphobic and warning of "McCarthyism".

The event Ms Henderson, a long-standing **Labour** and feminist campaigner retweeted was a drop in meeting in Westminster this Tuesday titled "How will changes to the Gender Recognition Act [GRA] affect women's rights?"

It gave the time and place for the event, inviting all MPs to drop in, and urged women with concerns about the legislation to contact their MP asking them to attend.

The meeting is promoted by the organisation A Woman's Place UK, and supported by the groups Fair Play For Women and Transgender Trend, but Edinburgh Student accused all three of being transphobic.

The Sabbatical Team at Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA) said the same group had been responsible for distributing transphobic flyers and stickers on campus and added; "After raising the issue of these materials and organisations with the Rector in a recent meeting, and hearing her recent speech purporting to support LGBT+ students at the university, we are shocked that the Rector continues to support these organisations on Twitter.

"The university needs to be a place where transgender students feel supported and respected, and as a representative for staff and students, the Rector's actions are unacceptable."

A spokesperson for the University of Edinburgh initially said the Rector had posted the links in a personal capacity and said it did not tolerate transphobia.

by Taboola

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However pressed on whether Ms Henderson's tweet was viewed as transphobic, in a new statement the University said: "We have received informal complaints about Ann Henderson's recent activity on twitter; we have also received expressions of support for her.

"We strongly believe both in the freedom of speech; and a zero tolerance policy towards transphobia. We will continue to give this current set of allegations careful consideration."

The criticism has provoked an angry response, including from Herald columnist and former Edinburgh Rector **Iain Macwhirter**, who said the University should have more clearly defended its Rector against the charge of transphobia. "It should defend freedom of speech on campus and disown this smear," he said.

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Oxford professor says 'academic freedom' is under threat after he is accused of running transphobic Twitter account



An University of Oxford professor has said 'academic freedom' is under threat after being accused of running a transphobic Twitter account

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By **Oscar Quine**

28 OCTOBER 2018 • 7:11PM

An University of Oxford professor has said 'academic freedom' is under threat after being accused of running a transphobic Twitter account.

Professor Michael Biggs, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Fellow of St Cross College, made the comments after a story appeared in The Oxford Student newspaper on Friday which claimed he was using a pseudonymous twitter account to post offensive transphobic comments.

The account @MrHenryWimbush is registered to a Yahoo! email that is believed to be connected to Professor Biggs's official Oxford university email address.

One tweet from the account reads: "Transphobia is a word created by fascists, and used by cowards, to manipulate morons".

Screengrabs of tweets seen by The Telegraph also state that "the odd thing about transitioning is that it makes you LESS attractive".

Professor Biggs did not say explicitly that the account - which was suspended yesterday afternoon by Twitter - belongs to him and he could not be reached yesterday for comment.

After he was approached for comment by student reporters, Professor Biggs published a statement on his website in which he outlined his stance on transphobia.

"It is not transphobic to discuss the merits of legislation or to debate theories about sex and gender. Dictionary definitions such as 'woman: adult human female' and 'lesbian: female homosexual' are not transphobic. Nor is it transphobic to call the convicted rapist Karen White—who was placed in a women's prison—a man," it read.

Who is Karen White?

Karen White, 52, who was born a man, used the guise of wanting to change sex to convince the authorities to place her in a women's prison where she sexually assaulted two female inmates.

White carried out the attacks at New Hall women's prison in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, while being held on remand accused of a knife attack on a neighbour and raping two women.

Leeds Crown Court heard how she used her "transgender persona" to put herself in contact with vulnerable women.

White, formerly known as David Thompson, had a history of sexually offending which stretched back to 1989 when he indecently exposed himself to a nine year old boy near a children's playground.

Other than changing her name and wearing wigs and women's clothing, White made no effort to embark on gender reassignment.

Asked to specifically comment on the university's policy on transphobia and harassment, he pointed to the university's "progressive tradition... such as ending the regulation of sub fusc according to sex."

He said he did not believe: "that gender identity supersedes sex, any more than I believe that Jesus was the son of God. Therefore I oppose any attempt by the University to establish an official doctrine on gender, just as I would oppose the imposition of a single religion or one particular position on Israel-Palestine. The enforcement of orthodoxy—often disguised as 'diversity'—would destroy the University's very foundation: academic freedom."

Earlier this month, he was one of 100 signatories of a letter written to The Guardian newspaper which raised concerns over proposed governmental reforms to the Gender Recognition Act and the "suppression of proper academic analysis and discussion of the social phenomenon of transgenderism".

Dr Clara Barker a lecturer at the University of Oxford who is a trans woman and vice-chair of the Oxford University LGBTQ+ Advisory Board told The Telegraph yesterday that these "allegations certainly raise issues around Professor Biggs ability to treat students fairly and have knock-on effects in terms of teaching".

"He's been very vocal in the papers and other printed media at the moment in a way that does seem to show a viewpoint on trans people which isn't necessarily very inclusive and positive while at Oxford University we have a policy to make sure that everyone feels as included as possible," she added.

Oxford University spokesperson said that the university could not comment on individual cases and that it had to be careful to "balance both free speech and alleged incidents of harassment".

The university said in a statement: "The University aims to create an inclusive trans-friendly culture, workplace and learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, where all transgender people are treated with dignity and respect.

"We aim to provide a professional and consistent service so that all trans members of the University feel welcome, safe, valued and supported to achieve their potential and contribute as a member of the University.

**Higher education**

UK universities struggle to deal with 'toxic' trans rights row



▲ Prof Rosa Freedman says Reading University has been 'faultless' in supporting her, while others fear being seen as illiberal. Photograph: Linda Nyland/The Guardian

Anna Fazackerley

Tue 30 Oct 2018 06:15 GMT

Last Tuesday morning, an angry student shouted at Prof Rosa Freedman outside the students' union at Reading University. She was a "transphobic Nazi who should get raped", he yelled.

Freedman packed up and went home. She felt shaken and, "for the first time on campus, afraid of physical violence".

The abuse didn't come out of the blue. Freedman, professor of law, conflict and global development at the university, is one of a number of feminist academics expressing concerns about proposed changes to the [Gender Recognition Act](#) that would make it easier for trans people to have their preferred gender legally recognised. Freedman says she has been treated like a "pariah" by some academics, students and trans activists as a result.

Fortunately, she says, her university is taking the student's verbal assault "very seriously" and has been "faultless" in supporting her right to debate these difficult issues. But she says many other institutions, terrified of appearing illiberal, are failing to follow suit.

A fortnight ago, Freedman and 53 other academics wrote a [letter to the Guardian](#) questioning the proposed introduction of self-identification for gender reassignment. They said that critical academic analysis of transgenderism is being suppressed.

Trans activists and academics supporting trans rights, including [some feminists](#), [disagree](#), saying it is trans people who are in the minority, under attack and fighting to be heard. They say they would welcome a properly evidenced discussion but that feminists such as Freedman are unfairly trying to position them as extremists, which "will have the effect of shutting down the debate".

Freedman entered this highly charged debate in August, when she disagreed with other feminists in a Facebook group called the [Women in Academia Support Network](#). "I was watching them attacking another woman academic for voicing some difficult questions," she says. "They were saying, let's get her fired. When I tried to defend her I was told I was committing structural violence against the group and I was transphobic and I wasn't welcome."

Transgender issues cut across many academic disciplines including law, gender studies, philosophy and history, and so the issues are natural ones for academics to discuss. Freedman is focusing on the Gender Recognition

Act as part of her job as a law professor with expertise in human rights. “I am deeply concerned by how the conflation of sex and gender is leading to subjugation of women and is undermining the specific protections guaranteed to women under international and national human rights law,” she says.

As well as many abusive comments on Twitter, she has been shown a written request from an academic at another university asking for her to be blacklisted from giving any papers or attending events in their law school. Colleagues have also told her that Reading University has received written and verbal complaints about her views from its staff and students, and from people outside the university.

Earlier this month Freedman gave a talk on the United Nations Human Rights Council at Essex University. Prior to it, students there called for her to be barred from campus and her talk cancelled.

Kathleen Stock, professor of philosophy at Sussex University, who has been critical of trans self-identification as part of her work on feminist philosophy, has been publicly labelled “transphobic” by Sussex students’ union. The union put out a statement about her saying: “We will not tolerate hate on campus, and we will do everything in our power to protect our students.” She says the union and some students have sent emails asking her head of school and other senior managers to condemn or publicly disassociate themselves with her views, and students have protested against her on campus.

She says: “It is a failure of our education system that it produces young people who think superficially about these issues; who think it is all about emotion, and who can’t tolerate different points of view from theirs.”

Despite calls from students and trans rights activists for her to be fired from Sussex, Stock feels confident she will keep her job. In July, Sussex’s vice-chancellor, Adam Tickell, issued a [public statement](#) about her case saying: “I hold a deep-rooted concern about the future of our democratic society if we silence the views of people we don’t agree with.”



▲ A placard against Professor Kathleen Stock at Sussex

But Stock says she knows academics at other universities who are “terrified of being fired” for their views on this subject. She wants UK universities to follow those in the US that have adopted the “[Chicago \[University\] principles](#)” on free speech. This is a commitment to allowing free debate on campus, even if other people at the university think someone’s views are “offensive, unwise or immoral”.

Stock says: “I can deal with strangers behind pseudonyms saying horrible things on Twitter, and, up to a point, with young, inexperienced students condemning me. But what I can’t understand is academics going out of their way to shame me.”

Debbie Epstein, professor of cultural studies in education at [Roehampton University](#), says many feminists are afraid to voice any view about the gender recognition proposals. “I grew up in South Africa under apartheid and was involved in politics from my teens, and not since I left there in the 1960s have I been as scared of speaking out as I am on this issue now. I have seen the toxicity of this debate and how other academics have been treated and that is frightening.”

Mary Leng, a senior lecturer in philosophy at the University of York, says many philosophers are strongly supportive of self-identification of gender. “That is, of course, fine. What is disappointing is that when they attack you they generally don’t respond to your arguments or address them, they simply say that it is dog-whistling that is indicative of an underlying bigotry.”


Selina Todd, professor of modern history at Oxford University, agrees. Recently one delegate cancelled their place at a humanities conference she was due to speak at when they saw her name on the agenda. “It was because the person was concerned that ‘transphobic’ views would be expressed. I assume that this referred to my gender-critical stance.” The conference had nothing on the agenda that was connected to the subject.

But Stephen Whittle, professor of equalities law at Manchester Metropolitan University and the founder of trans rights group [Press For Change](#) says: “Trans academics have mostly tried really hard not to accuse, and certainly not to ‘no platform’ anybody. Yet these voices are making trans people look like the extremists. Sadly, it will have the effect of shutting down the debate.”

Whittle, who was born female and has campaigned for transgender rights since the 70s, says: “For years, trans people worked really hard to get a seat at the table. I feel like we are being pushed away again by this supposedly feminist backlash.”

He adds: “As trans people, we understand how mad an idea gender reassignment seems. I can’t explain to you why when I was 10 I knew I should have been a boy. But people are forming judgments without the faintest idea how we actually feel.”

A spokesperson for Stonewall, the lesbian, gay, bi and trans campaign group, said [their research](#) showed universities needed to do more to ensure trans students felt safe and included. The research, published in April, showed more than a third of trans students faced negative comments from university staff in the past year, they said.

 [Education](#)

Jenni Murray pulls out of Oxford talk after students try to 'no platform' her over 'transphobic' comments



Jenni Murray has pulled out of a talk at Oxford University CREDIT: RII SCHROER

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By **Camilla Turner**, EDUCATION EDITOR

7 NOVEMBER 2018 • 5:14PM

Jenni Murray has pulled out of a talk at Oxford University after LGBTQ+ students claimed that she is “transphobic” and attempted to “no platform” her.

The veteran BBC broadcaster and Women’s Hour presenter was due to speak this Saturday at an Oxford History Society event, as part of their “Powerful British Women in History” series of events.

But on Wednesday Murray told the History Society that she is no longer able to attend the event due to “personal reasons”.

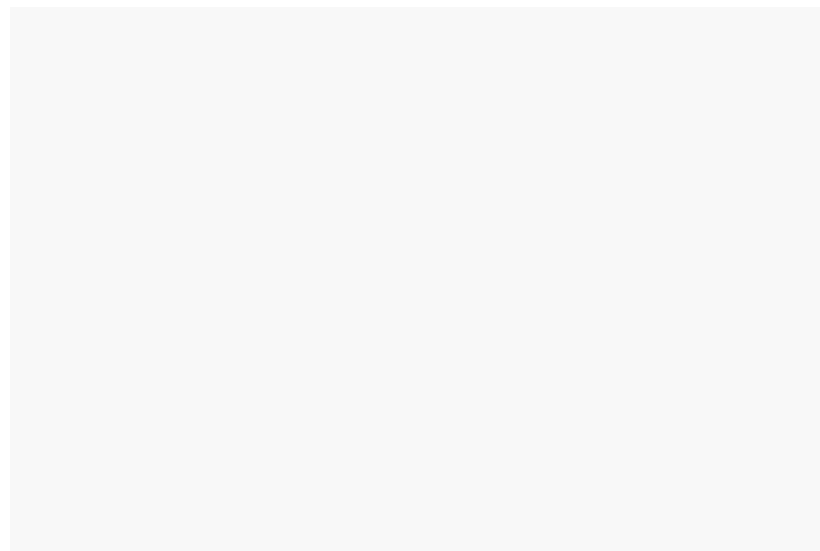
Earlier this week, three student groups wrote a joint letter urging their peers to “publicly condemn” Murray’s views and “if possible, cancel the event”.

The LGBTQ+ campaign and Women’s Campaign, both of which are run by Oxford University’s student union, as well as the LGBTQ Society have all signed the letter.

They say that “inviting publically transphobic speakers to the university, without challenge, further marginalises and unnecessarily compromises the welfare of trans students and staff”.

Students claimed that Murray “explicitly transphobic comments” in a newspaper article last year, in which she argued that trans women who have lived as men “with all the privilege that entails” do not have the experience of growing up female.

The students’ letter contains “trigger warnings” for “Terfs”, which stands for Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists, and is generally used as a derogatory term to describe those who believe that “identifying” as a woman is not the same as being born a woman.



The veteran BBC broadcaster was due to speak this Saturday at an Oxford History Society event CREDIT: ROBERTO RICCIUTI

It can also be used to refer to people who are deemed to hold transphobic views. The letter also carries a warning for “transmisogyny”, a term used to describe those who are both transphobic as well as a misogynist .

Murray has previously said that she “made very clear” in her article that she “fully support the right of trans women to be accorded the respect and protection I would demand for any human being, regardless of sex or gender”.

Last year, the same student groups called on Oxford’s literary festival to ban Murray, who had been invited to speak about feminism and women’s history.

A History Society spokesman said: “Jenni Murray was invited for her prominent role as presenter of BBC Radio 4’s Women’s Hour, as well as for her historical writings. As a society we condemn any transphobia and do not necessarily endorse the views of our speakers. Jenni Murray has since cancelled the event for personal reasons.”


An Oxford spokesman said that the university is “committed to supporting the University’s transgender students and staff and to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes equality and diversity”. They added: “We are also committed to freedom of expression” and said the event would have been “entirely suitable for a student society”.

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Apparently I am too dangerous to be let loose on innocent students. News to me

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JOANNA WILLIAMS



17 NOVEMBER 2018 · 8:17PM



"It seems that, in the eyes of student protesters, there is no distinction between words and violence; words are violence." CREDIT: BRIAN SNYDER

I was shocked last week to discover that I oppose the survival of women. As a woman, I've always been quite keen on survival, but members of the Intersectional Feminist Society at King's College London think otherwise, and who am I to disagree?

In their petition calling for me to be "no-platformed" from a university event I was due to speak at, they argued I was "someone who opposes women, trans and non-binary people and their well-being and survival", making me too dangerous to be let loose on innocent students.

Both the petition and a later statement from King's Students' Union, exemplify how free speech on campus is under threat today.

I accepted an invitation from the Department of War Studies to speak about the importance of academic freedom many months ago, but it was only the day before the event that some students, clearly lacking any sense of irony, began their petition.

"We ask you to redact her invitation, cancel the event and publish a public apology," they demanded. (I think they might have meant "retract".)

The Students' Union statement argued that there was a "high risk" my advocacy for freedom of speech will result in "attacks on transgender people" (I have written critically of the MeToo movement and the impact of transgender policies).

Let's put to one side the fact I wasn't planning to talk about gender. This presumed direct link between defending free speech and attacks on transgender people suggests a very low view of King's students: are they really so suggestible that my words will turn them into a violent mob?

It seems that, in the eyes of student protesters, there is no distinction between words and violence; words are violence.

Their argument that "there is a line between sharing a view and advocating for the dismissal of an entire demographic" is technically correct, even though it suggests I am a genocidal maniac.

However, it's hardly a "line" that separates sharing a view from inciting mass murder – it's a gaping chasm.

Still, the implication that I had blood on my hands ("not supporting women, trans- and non-binary people kills, and Williams knowingly endorses this") certainly helped gather the signatures.

Just days before my talk had been scheduled, Dame Jenni Murray withdrew from speaking at Oxford after students denounced her as transphobic for arguing trans-women are not, and never can be, women.

Being invited to speak at a university is a privilege and the prospect of intellectual challenge is part of the enjoyment. But dealing with petitions and protesters is hard work: I understood Murray's decision to withdraw.

Pedants are quick to point out that, if someone chooses to withdraw from a debate, then they have not been censored. The BBC's Reality Check recently concluded that when it comes to no-platforming speakers or banning books, "the numbers of incidents uncovered is small". This was enthusiastically shared on social media by those eager to portray alarm about campus censorship as a Right-wing plot to undermine universities.

Yet this focus on technicalities misses the bigger picture: there is more than one way to close down debate. When speech comes to be seen as harmful, particularly to minorities, then it is perceived as only right to remove potential risk.

Speakers are threatened and intimidated until, in Murray's case, they withdraw. If they do not, then demands for security guards, "safe space" monitors or a neutral chairperson put obstacles in the path of those wanting to host speakers. Invitations are rarely issued to those not deemed completely safe.

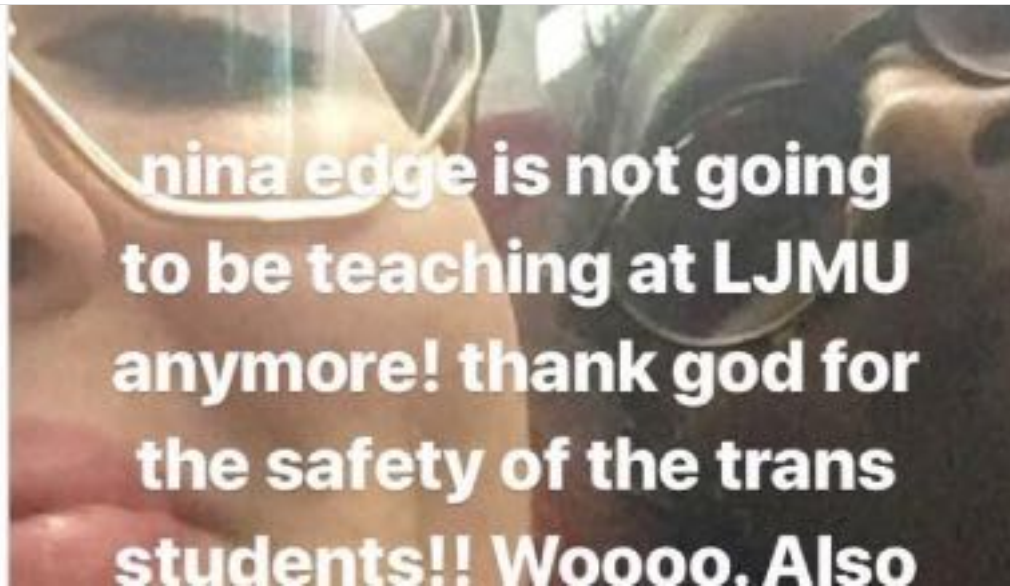
Unfortunately, none of this can be written off as mere student shenanigans. Where the campus leads, the rest of society follows.

People appointed to public office, such as Toby Young and Sir Roger Scruton, can now routinely expect everything they have ever written to be pored over for phrases that could possibly be interpreted as offensive by someone, somewhere. The demand to no-platform has migrated from the student union into media and politics.

In the end, thanks to the courage of the War Studies team at King's, my talk went ahead without disruption.

Higher education should be about confronting challenging ideas but, having lobbed rhetorical hand grenades in from the sidelines, the students disappeared.

Apparently, they needed to protest against the Israeli ambassador, who is considered even more despicable than me.



Zarina Muhammad and Gabrielle de la Puente tweeted as The White Pube that Nina Edge, a lecturer, had lost her job

Lecturer's job fear after raising trans concerns

Rosemary Bennett, Education Editor

Tuesday October 30 2018, 12.01am, The Times

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A lecturer who raised concerns about self-identifying trans women being given access to vulnerable women in prison fears that she will be hounded out of her job after campaigners encouraged her students to complain to the university.

Nina Edge, who lectures at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) art school, raised the issue on Twitter but was accused of transphobia.

The prison service apologised on October 11 after a transgender sex offender placed in an all-female prison sexually assaulted two inmates. One of Ms Edge's tweets read: "My concerns are not about trans-women. They're about predatory dangerous men who prison governors have stated are lining up waiting to identify as female so they can access women's spaces to attack them. It's info from the prison services. Please don't shoot the messenger."

Her main accusers were Zarina Muhammad and Gabrielle de la Puente, a pair of artists known as The White Pube. They said yesterday that Ms Edge would no longer be teaching at LJMU and thanked everyone who had emailed the university to complain. "Thank God for the safety of trans students," they said.

Ms Edge is understood to be seeking clarification from the university about her job. LJMU said that it was a matter for the human resources department.



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Scottish schools transgender event cancelled amid fears for speakers' safety

An Edinburgh University event discussing how gender issues are taught in Scotland's schools has been cancelled amid claims that the safety of women speakers and attendees was at risk.

By [Gina Davidson](#)

Tuesday, 3rd December 2019, 2:22 pm



The research seminar on schools and gender diversity, organised by the university's Institute for Education, Teaching and Leadership, was due to be held next week, but despite plans for increased security staff, the event has been postponed.

Academics, teachers and student teachers, education policy makers, politicians and parents had been invited to attend the seminar which would discuss "complex, sensitive and often controversial issues" around "gender diversity and supporting gender-nonconforming and transgender-identifying pupils in schools".

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Organisers had arranged the event in light of the Scottish Government's plan to produce new schools guidance on supporting transgender pupils, after it [announced that previous advice](#), written by charity LGBT Youth, was to be replaced as it risked "potentially excluding other girls from female-only spaces".



An event to discuss new schools guidance on trans issues at Edinburgh University has been delayed because of safety fears.

The event was set to discuss what the new guidance should look like and how "curricula, pedagogies, pastoral care and safeguarding practices" should be developed to ensure all children and young people can "interrogate gender norms whilst ensuring that gender-nonconforming and transgender-identifying pupils are safe, supported and included in schools".

Speakers included Professor Michele Moore, head of the Centre for Social Justice and Global Responsibility at London South Bank University, Stephanie Davies-Arai: Founder of Transgender Trend and Dr Shereen Benjamin a senior Lecturer in Primary Education at Edinburgh University, with the chair being Rosa Murray, the Institute's depute head.

However, the event was branded "transphobic" by the university's Staff Pride Network which [wrote to management](#) in an attempt to have it stopped. In a blog members of the Network said the seminar would have a "harmful impact" on the "trans and non-binary community at the University."

One of the Network's members, Dr Katie Nicoll Baines, also urged EventBrite, the online ticketing site, to take the seminar from its website, claiming on Twitter that it was "actively platforming speakers with a history of transphobic hate speech" and encouraged people to register for the event, to prevent genuine attendees from being able to get tickets.

Yesterday, a source at the University said the organisers had originally tried to invite LGBT and transgender organisations to take part "to look at what research is telling us and find a way forward", but they had refused to "share a platform" with the other speakers.

"Then there was an attempt to sabotage the ticketing system, and the university management was involved but they did not do so. The organisers were going to be too hostile an environment for the event there would be nine security guards they were going to have a list of speakers or attendees - most of whom



"It has made many women academics feel unsafe on campus and that they are on their own."

It is the second event which has seen the university caught up in the increasingly heated row over transgender rights and women's rights as politicians seek to reform legislation around gender recognition.

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At a previous event in June, which saw human rights lawyers and leading UK feminists discuss the future of women's rights, one of the speakers, author Julie Bindel, was verbally abused, "lunged at" and almost "punched in the face", by a transwoman as she left the building in Edinburgh's George Square.

[Read More
Feminist speaker Julie Bindel 'attacked by transgender person' at
Edinburgh Univ...](#)

A Crown Office spokesperson said: "After full and careful consideration of all facts and circumstances the case was dealt with by way of an alternative to prosecution."

Direct Measures can include warnings; social work diversion and other diversion schemes; fines up to £300, compensation orders up to £5,000 and work orders up to 50 hours.

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Members of the University's Staff Pride Network had previously resigned en-masse because the women's rights event went ahead, but the organisation has since relaunched.

In its blog on the now-postponed event, it says: "The Staff Pride Network Committee are relieved the event is not going ahead at this time and we are working with the University to provide a safe, inclusive environment for ALL staff and students to work and study."

A statement from Edinburgh University said: "The decision to postpone the research seminar entitled 'Schools and Gender Diversity' was taken by the organiser. We understand the organiser intends to

reschedule early next year.

"The University will continue to support colleagues in expressing views even when the subject might be considered challenging by others in our community. We are clear that the University should both be a safe place for discussion and that freedom of expression is essential."



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Angelos Sofocleous

What happened when I was banned from a free speech debate on campus

From magazine issue: 16 February 2019

It's clear that our universities have a problem with free speech. We've recently witnessed students at the University of Oxford not only protesting Steve Bannon's appearance at Oxford Union, but attempting to prevent others from even attending the talk. Only last week, Peter Hitchens had a talk he was due to give cancelled at the University of Portsmouth because the university felt that this would not chime with the students' union's LGBT+ month. I've also fallen foul of this tendency towards censorship on campus: when I shared a *Spectator* article in November asking 'Is it a crime to say women don't have penises?', I lost my position as president-elect of humanist students as well as my role as assistant editor of Durham University's philosophy society's undergraduate journal, *Critique*. So I was looking forward to addressing these points at a panel event this week on 'free speech on campus' organised by the University of Bristol free speech society. Unfortunately, I've now been de-platformed.

Bristol students' union refused to accept me as a speaker, forcing the free speech society to cancel their invitation to me in fear that my presence might spark protests. The SU went on to claim that "public disorder is highly likely."

No matter where you lie on the political spectrum, it is deeply worrying that people are being banned from talking at events – and students deterred from coming into contact with particular points of view. This censorship and tendency for banning raises big implications about the aims of the groups or institutions who advance such tactics. What's more, it's obvious that this fear of debate is only getting worse on Britain's campuses. After all, nothing could provide a more ironic indication of the current status of social justice orthodoxy in academia than preventing a speaker from talking at an event on 'free speech on campus'.

So what's the real reason for this fear of voices that don't conform to the norms of political correctness? Increasingly it looks like those who would seek to prevent such speakers from appearing on campuses do so because of their own shortcomings. Could it be the social justice groups mobilise against individuals or groups they don't know how to respond to? Whether that is the case, it's hard to know without the debate actually taking place. But one thing is clear: universities are letting down their students.

Universities are supposed to be places where young people get their views challenged, have the opportunity to change their worldview, and face criticism for their beliefs, especially the most deeply-held ones. But the way that universities and student unions are succumbing to the demands of a surprisingly small minority is damaging academic debate. It is also harming research, dialogue, and the healthy exchange of ideas upon which our universities depend. We are damned if we deny people their freedom to even debate freedom of speech. And whether we are on campus or not, we will all end up paying the price for the troubling attacks on free speech that are becoming more common at our universities.

Angelos Sofocleous is a philosophy student at Durham university

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Open University forced to cancel conference following threats from the transgender lobby



The Open University was forced to cancel a conference on prison reform

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By **Camilla Turner**, EDUCATION EDITOR

20 MARCH 2019 • 4:41PM

The Open University was forced to cancel a conference on prison reform following threats from the transgender lobby, it has emerged.

Over a hundred delegates had already bought tickets for the two-day event in May, which was co-organised by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS). But earlier this month, attendees and speakers were notified that the conference had been called off.

The CCJS, an educational charity, has been accused of “transphobia” for its stance that transgender female prisoners should be incarcerated separately from female prisoners.

“The Open University faced quite significant pressure from transgender activists. They received a number of emails where some of the language was extraordinarily overheated,” a source told The Telegraph.

“They were effectively being threatened with demonstrations and disruptive activity, possibly in the conference hall itself, and some kind of picket line or protest outside the conference.”

Last month, the CCJS released a statement on transgender prisoners which said that prison service has “a duty to provide fair, decent and respectful provision for trans prisoners”.

It went on: “Given the current state of the prison system, in the case of trans women prisoners, we consider that this can best be achieved through the provision of accommodation that is separate from female prisoners.”

[The CCJS statement was released following the case of transgender prisoner Karen White, a convicted rapist and paedophile who was born a man but used a transgender persona to attack female prisoners in a women's prison.](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/11/transgender-prisoner-born-male-sexually-assaulted-female-inmates/) [\(https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/11/transgender-prisoner-born-male-sexually-assaulted-female-inmates/\)](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/11/transgender-prisoner-born-male-sexually-assaulted-female-inmates/)The prison service has since apologised over failings in the case.

The organisation came under attack from transgender activists who claimed that their recommendations support “state-sanctioned murder”, a reference to the cases of transgender prisoners in male prisons who have committed suicide.

After the conference was announced, it is understood that activists who had targeted CCJS turned their gaze to Open University by threatening to disrupt the event.

[All universities have a legal duty to uphold freedom of expression and speakers should not be banned because they “offend, shock or disturb” students, according Government guidelines published last month.](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2019/02/02/university-speakers-should-not-banned-just-offend-shock-disturb/) [\(https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2019/02/02/university-speakers-should-not-banned-just-offend-shock-disturb/\)](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2019/02/02/university-speakers-should-not-banned-just-offend-shock-disturb/)

The higher education watchdog, the Office for Students, can intervene if there were a pattern of cases where there was evidence of a failure of governance on freedom of speech.

The CCJS said in a statement: “We are saddened to announce that the conference, Prison Abolition in the UK, planned for 23 and 24 May, has been cancelled.

“Unfortunately, one of our conference partners has, in recent weeks, been subjected to concerted pressure by those intent on disrupting the conference. In the circumstances, they felt they had no option but to pull out.”

The organisation added that the circumstances that led to the cancellation of the conference highlight “the deep need for a movement grounded in inclusive, respectful dialogue”.

Meanwhile a spokesman for The Open University said it cancelled the conference due to concerns that discussion “was moving away from its main, originally intended, focus – to debate the past, present and future of prison abolition”.

Dr Jane Hamlin, president of The Beaumont Society, a transgender support group, said that the experience of trans prisoners is varied.

“Some people accept the conditions they are in, possibly because they are not receiving abuse. Others have a dismal time because they receive abuse and sometimes violence,” she said.


“Clearly it’s a tricky situation. But we hope that where trans people want to get on and serve their sentence, they can be in suitable accommodation. If that’s a trans woman who doesn’t have a history of violence then they should be in the women’s estate.”

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Imperial College professor issues 'grovelling apology' for promoting articles questioning transgender lobby



Professor Simone Buitendijk, Vice-Provost (Education), at Imperial College London CREDIT: IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON

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By Izzy Lyons

31 MAY 2019 • 5:11PM

A Vice Provost at Imperial College London was left issuing a "grovelling apology" for sharing articles which questioned the transgender lobby on social media.

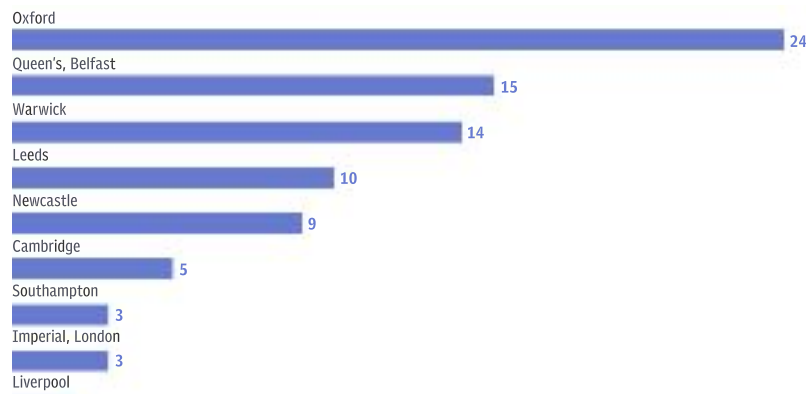
Prof Simone Buitendijk, Imperial's Vice Provost of Education, apologised for causing "hurt or anxiety" after students noticed she was sharing articles and liking pages on Twitter that they said were "transphobic".

More than 80 students signed a letter urging her and the college to "publicly respond" to their concerns. Prof Buitendijk then vowed to "stop all engagement" with the accounts the students took issue with.

One accusation related to her following the account Transgender Trend, a group that describes themselves as a parent support network "concerned about the current trend to diagnose children as transgender".

The group's founder, Stephanie Davies-Arai, refuted claims that they were transphobic, adding: "The students found out she was following our page on Twitter and that she liked some of our tweets. It looks like they were monitoring her account."

Top universities where students request gender change on student record 2016-2018



In another tweet cited by the students, which Prof Buitendijk has since deleted, she shared what she described as "a good piece on gender self identification and women's rights" from the Spectator in October 2018.

"It is a free speech issue," Ms Davies-Arai said. "She has an absolute right to read and share what she wants and to speak in a personal capacity."

In a statement that was released in light of the letter, Prof Buitendijk said: "Although I support the freedom of academics to follow and engage in debate in all areas, including on social media, on this occasion I now realise that social media is not the correct forum for such sensitive debates."

"I have elected to stop all engagement with these accounts and apologise for caused to members of our community."

Imperial College London said they are committed to the "inclusion of trans people in our community," adding: "We are pleased that a significant body of students has expressed support for the trans community in response to this issue."



Transgender

This article is more than 1 year old

Edinburgh LGBT+ committee resigns in row over speakers at feminist meeting



The campaigner Julie Bindel, who spoke at a panel discussion, was allegedly verbally abused and lunged at by a transgender activist after the meeting. Photograph: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

Libby Brooks *Scotland correspondent*

Thu 6 Jun 2019 19.36 BST

All 12 members of Edinburgh University’s staff pride network committee have resigned after accusing the university authorities of “failing to take a stand against transphobic hate on campus”.

The committee claims the mass resignation was prompted by the university’s attempts to censor its opposition to a feminist meeting, held on Wednesday evening, which included speakers who have previously been critical of proposed reforms to transgender rights.

After the meeting, the campaigner Julie Bindel, who spoke on the panel, was allegedly verbally abused and lunged at by a transgender activist.

She said she had been left “shaken”, believing her attacker “would have punched me full in the face” had university security guards not intervened. But Bindel said she believed the protester did not represent the transgender community. “This is not in their name,” said Bindel, who was speaking at a panel event discussing the future of women’s sex-based rights and organised by a long-standing staff member.

In their resignation letter, seen by the Guardian, the staff pride network committee says it raised concerns about Wednesday’s event but claim it



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university that has allowed hate on its campuses and failed to take a stand against it.”

The Guardian understands that the university decided to take a one-year break from the Stonewall Index, a thorough benchmarking tool for employers to rate their progress on inclusion, because of its heavy administrative burden, but remains open to rejoining next year.

A spokesperson for Edinburgh University, which hosted a major conference on international transgender rights at the end of May, expressed regret at the resignations and said that senior managers had offered to meet with the committee to discuss their concerns. “The university places great importance in the staff pride network and its valuable job in representing the university’s LGBT+ community.”

Bindel, who underlined that she had been talking about male violence, not transgender issues, at the event, said a person had approached her as she was leaving the George Square lecture hall around 7pm, and shouted abuse.

Bindel expressed her gratitude to the security staff, who had earlier swept the lecture hall before the event and attended a peaceful protest by transgender activists which had dispersed by the time Bindel was leaving.

Bindel’s alleged abuser identified themselves on Twitter as a trans woman who uses the name Cathy Brennan. They tweeted: “Truth of the matter is that I did not raise a fist. I attempted to push past security so I could speak face to face with a person who has caused great harm to trans people across this country.”

They added that they would not respond to requests for further comment unless they were offered “the chance to write a full opinion piece in my own words”.

Bindel told the Guardian she was regularly abused in this manner and that she did not intend to involve the police. “I know these people do not represent transsexual people, who suffer daily discrimination and are appalled at this,” she said.

The Edinburgh University row reflects broader tensions around proposed changes to gender recognition legislation in Scotland. The Scottish government was last month forced to [clarify its stance after leaked emails](#) suggested that Nicola Sturgeon was “out of step” with her party.

Lucy Hunter-Blackman, another panellist and an Edinburgh University researcher who has been critical of proposed changes to the next census around the question of biological sex, said she “condemned the assault on one of my fellow speakers”.

Describing the atmosphere at the event as positive, she added: “We were pleased that some of the protesters felt able to come in and listen and ask questions and hope they feel we responded seriously and honestly. The discussion offered a glimpse of what a better debate might look like.”

● The headline and standfirst were amended on 6 June 2019 to better reflect the content of the article.



A petition to remove Michele Moore from her post at the journal *Disability and Society* received more than 800 signatures

Journal editors quit in protest over ‘transphobic’ academic

Emma Yeomans

Wednesday June 26 2019, 12.01am, The Times

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Editors of an academic journal on disability have resigned in protest at an executive’s alleged transphobia.

A petition to remove Michele Moore, an academic at the University of Essex, from her post at the journal *Disability and Society* received more than 800 signatures, and four editors have resigned over her stance.

Professor Moore has written about trans issues and co-authored the book *Transgender Children and Young People: Born in Your Own Body*. She recently supported a letter to *The Sunday Times* criticising the role of the LGBT+ charity Stonewall in delivering a diversity and inclusion programme. Members of the journal’s editorial board claimed that an article by two Sheffield academics who advocate for trans rights was blocked from publication.

Phillippa Wiseman, a sociology research assistant at the University of Glasgow, claimed on Twitter that accepted submissions were removed because they disagreed with Professor Moore’s views.

She said: “That the journal is in any way associated with ideologies of discrimination and oppression is unacceptable and goes against the very heart of the disabled people’s movement. There is no justifiable narrative that allows for removing submissions that have been accepted because they are not in line with those of the executive editor.”

Disability and Society, which was founded in 1986, explores the rights and inclusion of disabled people. Its Current Issues section invites “interesting, controversial or even polemical” contributions of a less formal nature. Several editors said that a submission to this section exploring trans rights was accepted then later blocked.

Jen Slater, one of the article’s authors, tweeted: “After initial acceptance, *Disability and Society* refused to publish the piece in their Current Issues section, claiming that we aimed to cast disability studies in a bad light.”

Another academic, in a resignation letter posted to social media, said that she was concerned that Professor Moore’s supporters were using her position at the journal’s helm to bolster her credibility as an expert on transgender issues.

Angharad Beckett, of the University of Leeds, also wrote: “The journal has a long history of being a forum for debate — heated at times . . . I firmly believe it was a mistake not to publish that piece and allow such debate to take place.”

After the letter was published in *The Sunday Times*, Professor Moore told the newspaper: “Somebody has to say we will talk about the potential harm of transgenderism of children, as many with autism or other social learning problems are being caught up in this.”

Jessica Vivian, a director at Taylor & Francis, the journal’s publisher, said: “Having seen both the petition and social media discussion online, we are working with the journal’s editor and board to put into place a review of the journal’s editorial policies.

“This is to ensure that the publication process is inclusive and transparent at all stages, and set within a robust framework. Our focus remains on ensuring the journal continues to challenge, debate and publish research from across the full spectrum of views.”

Professor Moore failed to respond to request for comment.

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Selina Todd, a professor of modern history at Oxford, has expressed concerns

Professors bullied into silence as students cry transphobia

Feminist academics say that organised groups are using university complaints procedures to stifle debate on campus

Ewan Somerville and [Sian Griffiths](#) | The Sunday Times

Saturday August 17 2019, 6.00pm, The Times

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More than a dozen academics, including several leading feminist professors, fear their freedom of speech is being silenced by students complaining they are transphobic.

They include Selina Todd, a professor of modern history at Oxford, and Kate Newey, professor of theatre history at Exeter. Rosa Freedman, professor of law conflict and global development, is believed to be under scrutiny at Reading University, and Kathleen Stock, professor of philosophy, has faced several formal complaints organised by students at Sussex. Some of the women, along with other academics, say questioning of transgender policies is being censored on campus.

Typical LGBT policies adopted by universities include the use of gender-neutral pronouns such as them/they and “ey” and “zie” as well as support for gender-neutral lavatories and changing rooms for those transitioning. Some universities also support the idea that people should be able to self-identify as male or female.

Todd initially faced a complaint backed by a Facebook petition about comments she had made on social media. That grievance was dismissed by Oxford university. Now, however, she has been told by students she will face a campaign in the autumn for her to be sacked.

“It is intimidating and isolating,” Todd said. “The view of these activists is that anyone who feels themselves to be a woman should be allowed to call themselves

such. Questioning that desire is seen as hate speech that could be harmful. To me that is censorship.”

Stock says she has faced several “formal complaints against me organised by students, using public student Facebook groups to co-ordinate activity”. Now she is compiling cases of other academics who have had to defend themselves to their employers.

“I know of at least a dozen cases of students complaining to university managers about lecturers’ alleged ‘transphobia,’” she said. “In the face of this, it is tempting to many to just keep their heads down — including me. Yet this is a disaster. We desperately need scrutiny of emerging social, legal, medical, and sports policies in this area.”

Freedman is understood to be under investigation after students and members of the public alleged that her social media activity made her a danger to trans students. The academic denies transphobia. When contacted this week, she declined to confirm or deny whether proceedings were ongoing at her university.

Newey was placed under the microscope last year after students complained about tweets she had posted about the rights of women. “The university jumped straight to a formal complaint procedure,” she said. Several months later it decided against disciplinary action.

“It was stressful. I was told I couldn’t talk to anyone about it,” Newey said.

At Huddersfield University, a PhD researcher is under investigation after a student complained that his Twitter account was “transphobic”. Jonathan Best, 49, denies the allegation and says the complaints procedure is being used to stifle his academic freedom. “I am being bullied into silence,” he said.

Associate professor Chloë Houston, 39, who lectures in early modern drama at Reading University, escaped a formal investigation, but says her superiors had to address allegations from students that she was “breaching a safe space” for trans students simply by her presence.

“I only learnt about the complaints when the students concerned tweeted about having met the head of department . . . with concerns my department would no longer be a safe space for trans students,” she explained.

A spokesman for Huddersfield said it would be inappropriate to comment. Reading, Oxford, Exeter and Sussex universities said they were obliged to investigate any complaints, particularly in relation to discrimination and the equality act, and supported fostering a diverse and trans-friendly culture.



Raquel Rosario-Sanchez, 29, a PhD student from the Dominican Republic, complained to the university about being bullied by a trans student 18 months ago

‘Bullying by trans student at Bristol University could cost me my visa’

Ewan Somerville and [Sian Griffiths](#) | The Sunday Times

Saturday August 24 2019, 6.00pm, The Times

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A Bristol University postgraduate student who made a complaint of bullying against a transgender student has faced a barrage of abuse and even “masked protesters” when she attended disciplinary hearings.

Raquel Rosario-Sanchez, 29, a PhD student from the Dominican Republic, complained to the university about being bullied by a trans student 18 months ago.

The harassment started two months after she arrived to begin her PhD at the university’s Centre for Gender and Violence Research, when she agreed to chair a meeting for the Woman’s Place UK group on campus, she said.

It escalated after formal disciplinary proceedings were launched by the university against the transgender student following Rosario-Sanchez’s complaint. Activists organised a series of protests, urging followers to give the PhD student “hell”.

Rosario-Sanchez said she had been threatened with violence and told she would have eggs and milkshakes thrown at her. She has also been called “heinous scum”.

“I no longer feel safe on campus. Most people who are subject to abuse by trans activists stay silent because if you file a complaint you undergo the campaign of threats I have experienced,” she said.

The university took more than a year to investigate. No disciplinary action was taken.

Last week The Sunday Times reported that around a dozen academics at universities including Oxford and Reading fear a silencing of their freedom of speech by students complaining they are transphobic.

Rosario-Sanchez's PhD supervisor, Dr Emma Williamson, the head of the university's Centre for Gender and Violence Research, said: "As members of staff, we cannot advise students to have confidence in the university's complaints procedures if they do not deal with complaints in a timely, safe, transparent and fair way. I do not know what I can say to a student in future who is making a complaint about being bullied and who is fearful of their safety."

Rosario-Sanchez says she has fallen behind in her PhD and missed her progress review because she was so stressed, which means she has missed the academic requirements to receive funding from the Dominican Republic. Without a scholarship she expects to either lose her visa or be forced to take out a large loan to pay for her studies. She said: "It took tremendous effort from all my family to help me get here. I remember being with my mum, so full of hope about coming to the UK to study. Someone stole my future and the university let them."

The University of Bristol said: "We believe that every effort has been made to support Ms Rosario-Sanchez. Matters relating to individual disciplinary cases are confidential, therefore we are unable to make further comment."

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Meet the academics hunted down and hounded out of jobs for having the 'wrong' thoughts



Kathleen Stock, a professor of philosophy at the University of Sussex, CREDIT: ANDREW CROWLEY/TMG

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By **Margaret Driscoll**

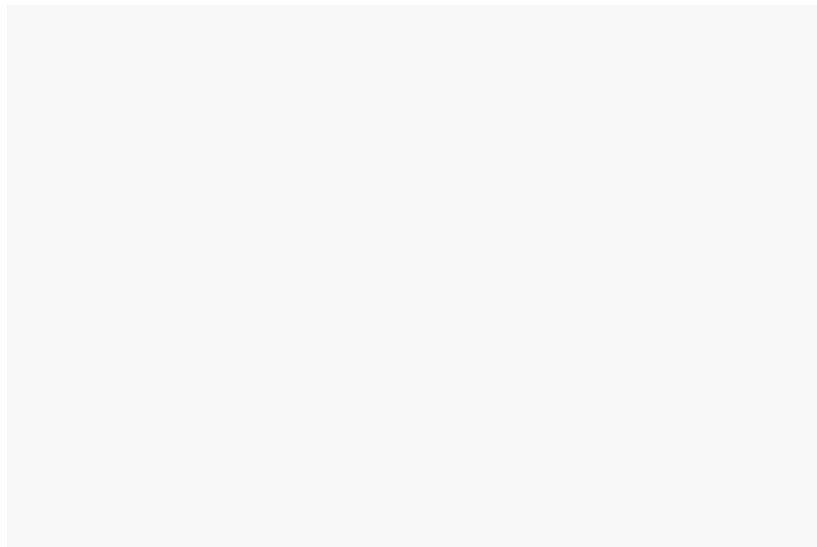
13 SEPTEMBER 2019 • 7:00PM

When Kathleen Stock pressed “send” on a blog about the gender recognition act last summer she knew she was pressing a detonator. The government was consulting on whether legally changing sex should be a matter of feeling – self-identification – rather than surgery and emotions were already running high. Angry accusations of transphobia were hurled at those, like Stock, who questioned or opposed the idea that men who felt like women could simply declare themselves female and claim all the consequent privileges: access to women-only changing rooms, or being allowed to appear on women-only shortlists or sports teams. A high-profile professor of philosophy at the University of Sussex wading in was bound to raise temperature.

The fight soon came her way: students brandishing a placard reading “Transphobia now in STOCK at Sussex”, a condemnation from the students’ union refusing to tolerate “hate” on campus, attempts to have her fired and a stream of abuse online. What she did not expect was to uncover along the way a deep-rooted seam of fear and intimidation spread through universities nationwide that is, she says, now stifling academic debate.

As soon as she published her own opinion – questioning the validity of self-identification – she began being contacted by colleagues who told her they agreed but dared not say so publicly for fear of ruining their careers. Most were women, some with children and most on short contracts they could not afford to lose.

“It’s shocking,” she says. “It’s insidious. It’s about conversations in the corridor, being called in by your head of department and told you’re putting the the university at risk, or quietly being dropped from a board of academic advisors.”



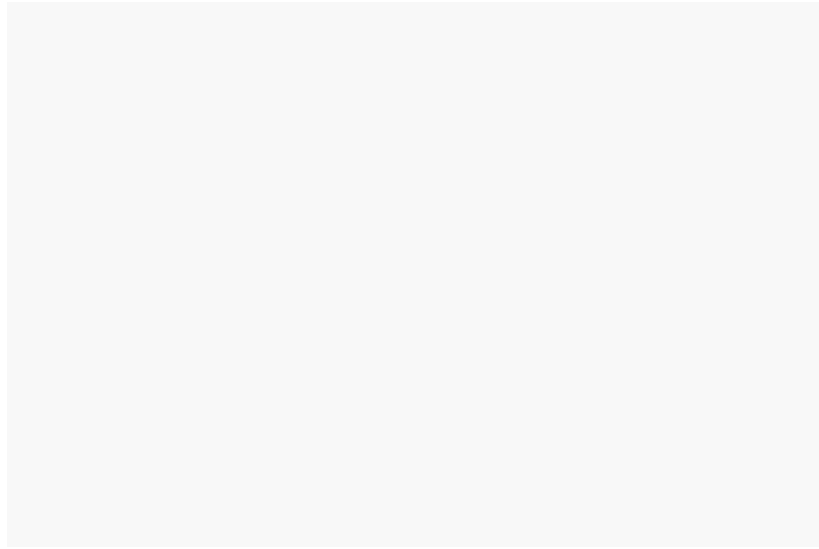
Many academics are feeling censored for simply wanting a debate CREDIT: SELIMAKSAN/ISTOCKPHOTO

There have been a number of attempts by trans activists to knock high-profile academics from their pedestal. [Germaine Greer](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/03/01/bristol-university-students-seek-ban-terf-speakers-question/) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/03/01/bristol-university-students-seek-ban-terf-speakers-question/> was among the first to be **no-platformed** <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/05/03/universities-no-platform-controversial-speakers-will-face-government/> at Cardiff university back in 2015 when students objected to her stance on trans women. Selina Todd, professor of modern history at Oxford’s musings on trans matters on Twitter prompted a complaint backed by a Facebook petition. That grievance was dismissed by the university but with a new term dawning she faces an Autumn campaign to have her fired.

The academics Stock is championing now have no such profile, nor such robust support from their universities. “The deep irony is I’m no one,” writes one. “I’m not Germaine Greer or Mary Beard. I’ve just done my little bit to try to look after young women in higher education... but still trans activists have tried to silence me.”

The dossier she has compiled from other academics reaching out to her makes sobering reading. Some of them have been attacked for questioning having to use gender-neutral pronouns like ‘ey’ and ‘zie’ when referring to students, others had no idea why they might have transgressed: “I have been very quiet on this issue because I am scared to speak out, so I was a bit confused as to how anything I’d retweeted could possibly be interpreted as transphobic.”

Time and again, academics who come under suspicion say they are forbidden from discussing their case with anyone but close family. A lecturer who was kept waiting weeks to find out what the complaint was against her discovered it came from a student she had never knowingly spoken to, let alone taught. It accused her of retweeting 'gender-critical material' meaning she might 'misgender' trans students or be biased in marking: "During this whole investigation I was writing a scholarly essay about the State censorship and resulting self-censorship of a woman writer in 1824; I am struck by the parallels almost 200 years later."



Is free speech being stifled as many keep silent out of fear they will be attacked for being transphobic CREDIT: VANGELIS ARAGIANNIS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Stock's most recent correspondent has been 'let go' from a women's studies department for wanting to teach menstruation: "You can't talk about the female body in some gender studies departments anymore because that's called having "vaginal privilege". It's just ridiculous."

All this might seem surreal, but it dovetails into a stifling of academic debate more broadly. The issue is not whether one side or the other is correct but that noisy political activism and Twitter storms - with students and transgender activists picking up ideas and encouragement from other on social media - are drowning out reasoned debates and deterring potentially unpopular research.

Which is why Stock decided to get involved: "I just thought 'I have to force the issue, I have to be the first to say 'come on, we have to be able to talk about this:'"

Important questions are raised by the claim that having an inner "sense" of gender identity is as important as biological sex, she believes, including how to understand the rapidly rising number of children and teenagers being referred for gender counselling, whether transwomen should have a moral right to compete as women on the sports field and whether data should record gender identity rather than (physical) birth sex.

"These questions are profoundly philosophical," she says. "They are about identity and nature, politics and ethics, and balancing competing interests."

Universities are usually the places where such questions get chewed over, before being acted on by policy makers. That process is grinding to a halt, she thinks, because universities have to act as businesses and there is cut-throat competition to attract students and the fees they contribute. Becoming a Diversity Champion by putting staff through gender-awareness courses is a plus: "Universities love it because it makes them look really 'inclusive', which is a buzz word everywhere."

Kathleen Stock, a professor of philosophy at the University of Sussex who feels that debate is being stifled in academic institutions
CREDIT: ANDREW CROWLEY/TMG

Just for the record, she says: “I am not against there being trans women, or even a gender-recognition act, I’m just against it being based on self-identity and how you feel. There should be meaningful gatekeeping. You should have to have a diagnosis and you should have to demonstrate commitment and there should be gender dysphoria. It should be a therapeutic last resort rather than the thing a four-year-old does when he likes pink.

“In some university campuses we have posters in women’s toilets which say that if someone comes in to the bathroom who is a gender you don’t expect, or who looks like they are using the wrong bathroom trust them, not you [ie not your own instinct]. The norm we have is being eroded so we won’t be able to challenge anyone who comes into a bathroom, dormitory or changing room.”

At the same time, ideas about gender fluidity are percolating into the mainstream. Only last week, a BBC film featuring children aged 9-12 and made to support the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum in schools claimed there could be more than 100 “gender identities” (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/dare-bbc-teach-children-100-genders/>). Facebook currently lists more than 70, including two-spirit person, polygender, intersex man, genderqueer and cis.

In Stock’s view, this makes very little sense. “To say there are more than 100 genders is confused. If this was just going on in some ivory tower it wouldn’t matter, but it’s being disseminated in schools and children can’t possibly understand other than in very simplistic terms: a girl who likes playing with cars and maybe fancies other girls may well conclude the teacher is telling her that she’s really a boy and that has serious potential consequences.”

The number of young people questioning their gender is on the rise: the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust received 2,519 referrals to its gender identity development service in 2017-18. “There’s been a spike in young, teenage girls transitioning,” says Stock. “When they get to 25 they might feel differently, but by then they’ve got physical traces on their bodies caused by the drugs and they may well be infertile. Doctors aren’t tracking them, there aren’t any psychological programmes for them, they’re sort of in limbo...

“There’s a growing number on social media and they are often very intelligent, articulate, sensitive people, well able to analyse their own situation. I just hope academics will attend to that phenomenon socially, psychologically and medically because it’s going to be increasingly important. What’s emerging is lack of understanding of the impact of puberty blockers on young bodies. None of that can be talked about, it’s “transphobic”. You can’t question a child or it’s ‘conversion therapy’.”

“We have to talk about all this.”

She’s right - but in the current climate, who will be brave enough to speak out?

The 51 per cent newsletter

The talking points of the week through a female gaze, must reads, and honest work advice



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University of York Abolished Research Associate Position to Silence Me

🕒 October 8, 2019 👤 Dr Louise Moody 💬 0



University of York central hall. Source: Arian Kriesch, Wikimedia Commons



Dr Louise Moody describes how Head of Philosophy Professor Alan Thomas abolished the Research Associate position when he couldn't control her speech online.

Until Sept 2019 I was a Research Associate (Philosophy) at the University of York which meant that I retained an institutional affiliation whilst beginning to carve out - if I wanted - an academic career (hence the affiliation is extremely useful for c.v purposes!). Before that, I had had to abandon my postdoc due to developing Meniere's: in ordinary speak, my balance nerve has been literally erased by my type of deafness (producing vertigo attacks and *not drunkenness*), and for extra auditory excitement, a death drone, schizophrenic orchestra, and ethereal medieval chanting in my head 24/7 which, I would like to reassure readers, is *still* preferable than being subjected to, say, Rachel McKinnon's recent *reflections* upon sexual orientation (spoiler: anyone who doesn't want to sleep with them - i.e. anyone sane - is "immoral" and "transphobic", QED).



ABOUT AUTHOR



Dr Louise Moody

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It was during the months of adjusting to this newfound normal that I stumbled into the "Terf" wars after being ghosted by someone - who just happened to be an autistic pagan vampire - for denying that feelings maketh the woman. And shortly after that, I inevitably became aware of Rachel McKinnon, a trans woman philosopher whose evidence for their hypothesis that there are no substantive physiological differences between men and women consists in their regularly winning women's cycling events. Recently, McKinnon has called for people - including me - to be fired, publicly celebrated the death of Magdalen Berns by posting a GIF of a skeleton dancing on a grave, and asserted that lesbians should "adjust" to the penis if its owner identifies as a woman, i.e. lesbians, McKinnon thinks, should sleep with men.

Now many readers are likely aware that the Twitter Gods often ban people for tautologous tweets such as trans women are biological men or that lesbians are same sex-attracted. And it was in this Orwellian climate that I discovered Kiwifarms, an uncensored discussion forum that has a long running thread on McKinnon's sporting achievements and world-changing philosophical insights. One day I found myself mentioned in said thread, and so, I joined to state the truth that would likely get me literally erased from the Twitter-verse: namely, that not only is McKinnon a man but a "narcissistic misogynistic man" - admittedly, this felt so liberating that I may have made judicious use of CAPS LOCK. MAN. MAN. MAN. That was the post which led to accusations of being causally responsible for every calamity that had ever befallen transgender people (a nice exemplification of the fallacy: Post Hoc Ergo Trans Hoc) and then subsequently summoned before the trans-inquisition at York, Professor Alan Thomas who is the Head of Philosophy. Let's see why.

Due to their famously litigious stances, we are unable to show images of Harrop or Hayden. Instead we present the humble golf club: Stephanie Hayden's weapon of choice. Source: Dave Tanchak, Wikimedia Commons

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The spread of anti-christian hatred in Egypt goes beyond ISIS to include non-violent groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and even former ruler Mobarak.

"Two Prominent Members of the LGBT Community", a Lying Professor, and one Expensive Lawyer to the Rescue:

On August 8th, Alan received a **complaint** from two self-described “prominent members of the LGBT community”, Dr Adrian Harrop (a GP who has **doxxed** women) and Stephanie Hayden (LLB (Hons))¹ accusing me of compromising the “potential safety” of LGBT students due to my post about McKinnon on Kiwifarms. Alan informed me that my “misgendering” was not sufficiently “respectful” of someone who purports to be both a **world-champion and public intellectual**. Before I could seek advice, Alan decided to send me no less than **seven imperious sounding e-mails** all asserting that I was bound by York’s social media policy. One is reproduced below:

At this point, I had become Schrodinger’s employee being simultaneously bound (as an employee) and unbound (not being an employee) by the social media policy – worse, Alan had apparently forgotten that *he* was bound by the social media policy when he described **“angry young feminists” as “bellends”** on his Facebook. This being an extremely perplexing philosophical conundrum in manner of the famous Crime-Body problem (i.e. if someone committed crimes under a male name and have since legally acquired a female name, did the *same* person commit those crimes?), I decided to go to Greece for a fortnight to ponder it over numerous pints of Mythos. Unbeknownst to me, the matter had then escalated to one of National Security since Alan wanted to know precisely when he could “expect to hear from me” and, upon being informed when I would return, I received yet another request hours after deplaning at Manchester. At this point I felt harassed and pressured into giving an immediate response (presumably, *even more* transgender students might have been literally killed by the power of my thoughts if I didn’t). But I stayed the course, brave and stunningly, until I met my lawyer who sent this letter:

Instead of explaining *how* I was bound by social media policy and *what* processes had he followed concerning any investigation, Alan simply decided to remove Research Associate status from *everyone* without explicitly giving a reason (I know of at least two other people who received the same letter):

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What might have prompted this heavy-handed response? Well, a clue is in departmental meeting minutes from January 2018 discussing me (AT is Alan Thomas):

So, it transpired that Alan had sent me no less than seven e-mails quoting York's social media policy at me in full knowledge that I was "not required to adhere to UoY social media policy." As a Professor of Ethics, he should have known the appropriate word for that behaviour: LYING. When my lawyer pointed this out in legal speak and asked why I was *still* being summoned to a meeting, Alan simply **replied** that the Research Associate status "no longer exists" and that the department now "consider the matter closed." My lawyer, however, does not, and is in the process of drafting a formal complaint concerning Alan's unprofessional conduct to university management.

A Sad Day for Academic Freedom

Now, I should be upfront and say that the removal of the Research Associate status has few consequences for me (indeed, I am co-authoring a piece with my favourite Scottish academics, have several talks planned, and a single authored piece coming before the New Year), it *will* harm those who intend to pursue an academic career. The lack of an institutional affiliation increases the risk of job applications being thrown on the reject pile (and with hundreds of applications for most academic philosophy jobs, this is not an unrealistic concern); and of course, it's plain inconvenient for independent researchers, like myself, who have enjoyed journal and library access. Alan's blunt attempt to magic away my stating certain truths (trans women just *are* biological men) has harmed the academic careers of others. That is simply unacceptable. In my **Lesbian Strength speech** that I gave last month, I drew attention to how universities are now failing to uphold the principles of academic freedom because they are concerned about losing cash from the current generation of entitled spoon-fed woke students. This saga perfectly illustrates that.



Rachel Ara was due to speak at Oxford Brookes

Oxford Brookes University cancels feminist speaker Rachel Ara after students accuse her of transphobia

Rosemary Bennett, Education Editor

Wednesday November 20 2019, 12.01am, The Times

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A feminist artist who was due to speak at Oxford Brookes University yesterday had her talk cancelled at the last minute after students accused her of holding transphobic views.

The event featuring Rachel Ara, hosted by the university's fine art research unit, was called off after the LGBTQ+ society sent a letter to Anne-Marie Kilday, the pro-vice-chancellor, condemning her invitation.

The society said in the letter: "Rachel Ara is a trans exclusionary radical feminist who frequently shares transphobic discourse on her social media. She has openly showed support for the 'LGB Alliance', which is openly transphobic and seeks to isolate trans people within the LGBTQ+ movement. While this speaker may be invited under the pretence of academic freedom, we firmly believe that inviting such speakers infringes upon academic freedom at Oxford Brookes."

The letter to Professor Kilday was signed by a number of people, including the chairman of the university's Labour Party Club and the president of the LGBTQ+ society.

Ara, 53, said that her art was clearly "too challenging for today's youth" and lamented that "the world has gone slightly mad".

She added: "I was going to be talking about feminism and art, and the difficulties that exist for women trying to break through. It was nothing to do with trans issues. I'm not transphobic. I have been openly gay for 35 years. I think this movement is misogynistic — they are only targeting other women."

It is the latest free speech row on campus. The clash between feminism and trans rights is often behind decisions to no-platform speakers. Universities deny that there is a problem, but research by the Policy Exchange think tank found that fewer than half of students consistently supported freedom of speech, with two fifths favouring the no-platforming of controversial speakers.

Earlier this year the Open University cancelled a conference on prison reform after threats from the transgender lobby. More than 100 delegates had already bought tickets for the two-day event in May, which was co-organised with the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. The educational charity had been accused of transphobia for taking the view that transgender female prisoners should be jailed separately from female prisoners.

Other incidents include Cambridge University rescinding its offer of a visiting fellowship to the philosopher [Jordan Peterson](#) in March after a backlash from the faculty and students. Also at Cambridge, [Noah Carl](#), a social scientist, was sacked from his junior research fellowship after academics and students protested about his right-wing views.

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The decision by Essex marks the third time in a month that a university has cancelled an event due to accusations of transphobia
ALAMY

Trans rights activists halt gender debate at Essex University

Rosemary Bennett, Education Editor

Saturday December 07 2019, 12.01am, The Times

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A seminar on criminal justice and gender issues was cancelled at the University of Essex after organisers said that trans activists had threatened to “obstruct” debate and discussion.

Jo Phoenix, professor of criminology at the Open University, was invited to speak on trans rights on Thursday as part of the Centre for Criminology’s autumn seminar series. It was entitled “Trans rights and justice: complicated contours in contemporary sex, gender and sexualities politics”.

The event was cancelled with a few hours’ notice after a number of university staff accused her of being “anti-trans” and “exclusionary”, saying the event broke equality guidelines. It is the third time in a month that a university has cancelled an event after complaints from either students or staff who accuse the speakers of transphobia.

The university declined to comment, but its Centre for Criminology said that the seminar “was cancelled as we were concerned open debate and discussion might be obstructed”.

Professor Phoenix has voiced her concern that academics are increasingly anxious about the suppression of academic analysis and discussion of transgenderism. In her field of criminology the rights of trans women to serve their sentences in women’s prisons is particularly vexed. It has been exacerbated by the case of the prisoner Karen White, a convicted rapist and paedophile who was born a man but [used a transgender persona to attack female prisoners in a women’s prison](#).

Tracey Loughran, a historian and dean in the Essex University humanities department, was among those who contacted university administrators to complain about the seminar.

In a tweet directed to the university, she said: “This speaker is part of the anti-trans platform. Free speech is one thing, but trans rights are human rights and we shouldn’t be debating human rights. The campus must be a safe space for trans people. There’s a speaker-vetting policy, how did this slip through?”

Richard Garside, director of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS), said universities had to stand up for academic freedom. “I hope that the University of Essex gets this event back off the ground. Appearing to capitulate to a handful of bullies and ideologues is not a good look,” he said.

The CCJS had a conference cancelled in March at short notice at the Open University after warnings from trans activists that they would protest. The university said it had faced “significant pressure” and been threatened with the event being disrupted.

On Tuesday a research conference on how transgender issues are handled in schools was cancelled at Edinburgh University amid fears that speakers and guests would be at risk from trans activists. The event, due to take place next week, was to discuss plans for new guidance on supporting trans pupils in Scottish schools.

Oxford Brookes University scrapped an appearance by the feminist artist Rachel Ara last month at the last minute after students accused her of holding transphobic views.

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Sacked or silenced: academics say they are blocked from exploring trans issues



▲ Prof Jo Phoenix, a criminologist at the Open University, was called a 'transphobe' and prevented from giving a lecture at Essex University on trans rights in prisons. Photograph: Sam Frost/The Guardian

Anna Fazackerley

Tue 14 Jan 2020 07:15 GMT

On the December morning that Jo Phoenix, professor of criminology at the Open University, was to give a lecture at Essex University on trans rights in prisons, Twitter roared into action, with several Essex staff and students tweeting allegations that a “transphobe” would be on campus.

By 10am Phoenix was warned by a member of university staff that some students were threatening to shut down her lecture, as they said LGBT+ staff and students wouldn't feel safe if Phoenix gave her talk. At midday the university decided to cancel it because disruption looked inevitable, and proper academic discussion unlikely.

“I was furious,” Phoenix says. “It was very clear to me that those agitating were fundamentally anti-academic because they condemned me and my research without hearing what I had to say.”

Phoenix, who is adamant she is not transphobic, had given the same talk at the University of Newfoundland in Canada a month earlier, to an audience that included trans scholars, without controversy. “They all liked it. So there is something unique about what is going on in the UK,” she says.

The talk explored tensions around placing trans women in British prisons,



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However, academics such as Tam Blaxter, a historical linguist at Cambridge University, who is a trans woman, say these arguments make trans staff and students feel vulnerable. “Universities are communities of staff and students first and foremost,” she says. “They will always have a function of discussing difficult issues, but making minority members feel safe and welcomed must come first.”

Kathleen Stock, professor of philosophy at Sussex University and a gender-critical feminist, claims that last month Oxford University Press abandoned a book on female philosophers because her inclusion was deemed too controversial.

Stock, who insists she is not transphobic, is one of the most prominent advocates of gender-critical feminism, and has faced calls for Sussex to sack her. She says that one reason the American office of OUP gave in December for dropping the latest book in a series called *Philosophy at 3am*, was that she was involved and would attract negative attention. “I think that is terrible and cowardly,” she says.

A spokeswoman for the OUP said it would not comment on the review process for individual projects, but that it did not often publish collections of interviews and this was “a contributing factor to our decision not to pursue this project”.

▲ Colin Riordan, vice-chancellor, Cardiff: ‘If you don’t have the debate, how are you going to resolve it?’ Photograph: Cardiff University

Dr Kath Murray, a research associate in criminology at Edinburgh University, says there are many obstacles to organising gender-critical events on women’s rights. An event was cancelled at Edinburgh in December because of fears the speakers would face abuse.

Murray says one event that went ahead last year on sex-based rights required extensive security because of anticipated opposition. “There was a one-hour security briefing for speakers, seven security guards attending the event, a security sweep of the lecture theatre beforehand, and ID checks for all attendees,” she says.

In December, another event was due to take place, on schools and gender diversity. Dr Shereen Benjamin, senior lecturer in primary education at Edinburgh and the event organiser, says it was intended to show teachers both sides of the debate. “I wanted to bring together gender-critical speakers who see the increase in **referral rates** of children to gender identity clinics as problematic, and believe it has multiple social causes, with speakers from trans rights organisations who believe it is due to young people discovering their true identities at a younger age,” she says.

Benjamin says she was unable, however, to persuade any trans rights organisations to share the stage with gender-critical speakers, so the event was redesigned as a research seminar without teachers involved.

However, when booking went live in December, the university’s staff pride network criticised it in an **email** to hundreds of staff, and on its blog, citing guest speakers “with a history of transphobia”.

With at least one academic urging opponents to protest, Benjamin cancelled, fearing speakers would face abuse. “It is now so risky and frightening for people to talk critically about gender identity on campus,” she says.

“We need universities to establish and maintain the boundaries of acceptable protest from within their communities, and to intervene quickly and decisively if there are any attempts at intimidation.”

Jonathan MacBride, co-chair of Edinburgh’s staff pride network, says his committee felt the event “would be upsetting and hurtful for anyone who is trans or an ally to the trans community”.

He says universities should not provide platforms for outspoken gender critics. “When someone has said publicly that they don’t believe trans women are women or, more harmfully, that trans women are men and should somehow be held accountable for the actions of a minority of predatory men in the world, that isn’t really a debate, it’s just hateful speech about an already marginalised minority.”

Universities say privately that they are finding the debate difficult to navigate, because their obligations under the Equality Act seem to clash with freedom of speech. But Colin Riordan, vice-chancellor of [Cardiff University](#), a member of the elite Russell Group, says: “This is a divisive issue and rouses strong emotions, but if we don’t have the debate, how will we ever resolve it?”

Riordan faced down heated demands in 2015 for Germaine Greer, the celebrity feminist, to be [banned from lecturing](#) at Cardiff on the grounds that she had made transphobic comments. He says: “The way universities have to approach this, like other difficult issues, is to defend academic freedom and uphold free speech, as long as it is within the law.”

Sarah Honeychurch, a fellow at the University of Glasgow’s business school, says the problem extends beyond university management. She was [sacked](#) last summer as editor of the academic journal *Hybrid Pedagogy*, after signing a public [letter](#) by feminists questioning universities’ relationship with the LGBT+ charity Stonewall.

“One of the founding members of the journal said on [Twitter](#) that my position was at odds with values he considered to be central to education,” she says.

The journal managers blocked her from accessing any documents and have not spoken to her since, she says. “My background is philosophy. The idea that I can’t challenge anything is deeply troubling.”



Professor Rosa Freedman says university managers are acting like 'tinpot dictators'
ALAMY

Lawyer demands inquiry into trans 'gag' by university

Sian Griffiths, Education Editor

Sunday January 26 2020, 12.01 am, The Sunday Times

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A law professor has asked the universities minister to set up an inquiry into the “suppression of academic freedom” after complaining of being blacklisted from events and jobs because of “spurious allegations” that she is transphobic.

Rosa Freedman, a professor at Reading University and one of the UK’s leading human rights experts, says senior university managers seeking to “silence, block and gag” are acting “in the style of tinpot dictators”.

Her demand for a “full investigation”, in a letter to her MP, Oliver Dowden, and to the universities minister, Chris Skidmore, comes after events involving female academics at Oxford Brookes, Edinburgh and Essex universities were scrapped following protests by students and trans activists.

The protesters objected to feminist academics questioning policies that give transgender people access to female-only spaces such as women’s changing rooms, prisons and sports teams.

Freedman, an adviser to the UN, complains in the letter that she was “disinvited” from speaking on a panel on anti-semitism this week at Essex University to mark Holocaust Memorial Week.

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Exeter University economics lecturer is branded transphobic by LGBT and feminist students after tweeting 'only females menstruate' in response to user who claimed otherwise

- University of Exeter lecturer Dr Eva Poen has been accused of transphobia
- Feminist and LGBT students criticised her for 'only females menstruate' tweet
- Furious undergraduates said she was 'openly singling out trans people'

By [ED RILEY FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 15:55, 6 March 2020 | UPDATED: 12:27, 7 March 2020

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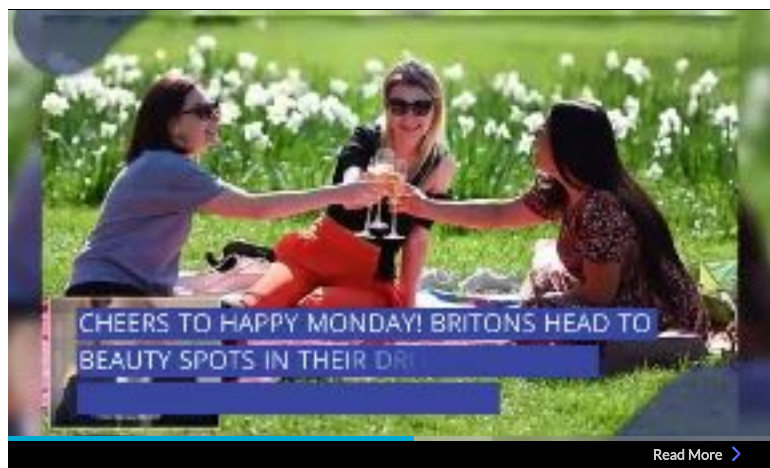


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A university economics lecturer has been accused of transphobia by feminist and LGBT students over a tweet in which she said 'only female people menstruate'.

Furious undergraduates at the University of Exeter condemned Dr Eva Poen accusing her of 'openly singling out trans people' in the posts.

The row erupted when Dr Poen responded to a tweet by Twitter user which read: 'Not everyone who menstruates is female. Not everyone who is female menstruates. Let's shift our language.'



The lecturer, who strongly denies accusations of transphobia, wrote back: 'Only female people menstruate. Only female people go through menopause.'

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The row erupted when Dr Eva Poen responded to a tweet by a Twitter user which read: 'Not everyone who menstruates is female. Not everyone who is female menstruates. Let's shift our language'

In another criticised tweet, in response to the insurance company Aviva promoting LGBT+ inclusion in sports, Dr Poen wrote: 'Let's keep female sports for FEMALE PEOPLE.'

'Stay in your lane, Aviva. We don't tell you how to do insurance; it would be great if you could stop telling women to give up their hard earned place in society. Women's sport is not yours to give away.'

The university's LGBTQ+ society condemned the comments.

Adam Deloit, the society's transgender representative, said: 'Dr Poen is openly singling out trans people. There's one transphobic tweet after another - she's very public about her opinions.'

'It's a constant bashing of trans people.'

Deloit, 22, who identifies as non-binary, claimed the lecturer's comments are an 'attack on trans people'.



The tweet posted by Dr Poen which sparked a flood of criticism from feminist and LGBT students

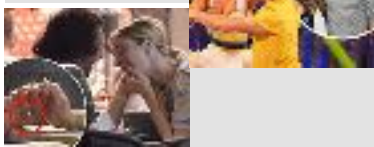
The second-year history student said: 'What she is doing isn't a debate. It's constant harassment and discrimination. I don't think anyone who sees her tweets can say that they are not an attack on trans people.'

'She can try to define us out of our existence, but we are still here. The fact the university tolerates her is really frustrating,' Deloit, who identifies as they, added.

A spokeswoman for the university's Feminist society said: 'It's shocking that a lecturer at the University of Exeter would feel so comfortable saying such transphobic comments publicly.'

'Dr Poen is a person who is in regular contact with students. If there are transgender and non-binary people in her lectures who are having to interact with someone who holds these transphobic views - it is very distressing for those communities.'

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A spokesperson for the University of Exeter (pictured) said: 'We support free speech within the law and expect people to conduct any debate with courtesy and respect for all'

'The university must investigate the allegations thoroughly and look at it from, if nothing else, a well-being standpoint for groups of students within that community.'

Dr Poen has been slammed on Twitter for her comments, with angry users saying she needs to be reported and reprimaded for 'spreading vitriol'.

Twitter user 'Roshi' denounced the lecturer's comments, insisting they 'ARE attacks on the Transgender community and they should be condemned'.

'Roshi', who identifies as 'she/her', added: 'Sometimes people need to be called out so that they can change. I'm explicitly not asking for her to be cancelled. But reprimanded and understand that she is actively harming people.'

The user later tweeted: 'My goal is for her to stop spreading vitriol so that our trans+ community at Exeter don't have to live in fear.'

Another twitter user 'ru {she/her}', who is a student at the university, tweeted: 'Yo pals there's a lecturer at my uni who is tweeting some pretty unsavoury, transphobic shit - if you have a min could you pls go and report her tweets.'

'Her handle in @/evapoen.'

Dr Poen has shown support for Maya Forstater, a researcher who lost her job at the Centre for Global Development (CGD) think tank after tweeting that transgender women cannot change their biological sex.

The economics lecturer, who has worked at the University of Exeter for nearly nine years, tweeted: 'Going through the #StandWithMaya hashtag, finding lots of new people to follow.'

In her Twitter bio, Dr Poen describes herself as: 'Female economist. Not cis. Not a manifestation of a universal existential condition.'

She insists there needs to be an important debate about sex and gender and said: 'I am a staunch supporter of academic freedom and freedom of expression. The accusations against me... are completely false.'

'There is an important political and academic debate to be had about sex and gender; we ought to be able to have this debate in a rigorous, robust, but also respectful manner.'

A spokesperson for the University of Exeter said: 'We support free speech within the law and expect people to conduct any debate with courtesy and respect for all.'

'We're not going to comment on an individual but of course academic freedom and freedom of speech are fundamental to our university. In the pursuit of new knowledge, free and open debate is crucial.'

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Selina Todd, the academic the trans lobby is desperate to silence

The witch-hunt against the Oxford professor reflects a worrying trend that sees mainstream views condemned as phobic, says Judith Woods

By Judith Woods
6 March 2020 • 6:00pm



SET across the River Cherwell amid Oxford's dreaming spires stands St Hilda's College. Established in 1893 as a woman's hall it only admitted men as recently in 2008. Its motto is "Excellence and Equality" and staff are justifiably proud of its achievements in promoting female voices and furthering female ambitions - things we now take for granted.

Yet it is here, on the eve of [International Women's Day](#), that a battle for 21st century women's rights and freedom of speech is being fought, the like of which we have never seen before. Modern history professor and best-selling author Professor Selina Todd, who specialises in the history of the working-class, women and feminism in modern Britain, stands at the centre of an astonishing - frightening - [witch hunt](#).

She has been branded "transphobic", found herself no-platformed, aggressively trolled and threatened with violence. Two security guards have been drafted in by university bosses to protect her during lectures. Why? Because militant trans-activists are targeting female academics who dare to disagree with their world view; namely that sex is not a valid descriptor and should be abolished as a legal identity, to be replaced by self-described gender.

"The focus of my research is women's history," says Prof Todd. "I believe in robust evidence and have come to the conclusion that I agree with the legal and traditional definition of men and women according to their biological sex."

"Throughout history women have been treated differently because of their actual or potential roles as mothers. They have been discriminated against in ways that men are not; biology matters. If we don't define woman and men as separate sexes, then how do we categorise them?"

Prof Todd, who was born in Newcastle and state educated, looks like an academic straight from central casting; charismatic, energetic, slender as a letter opener with neatly bobbed hair, she is the very opposite of strident. When she speaks, it is with soft urgency, measured reasonableness.

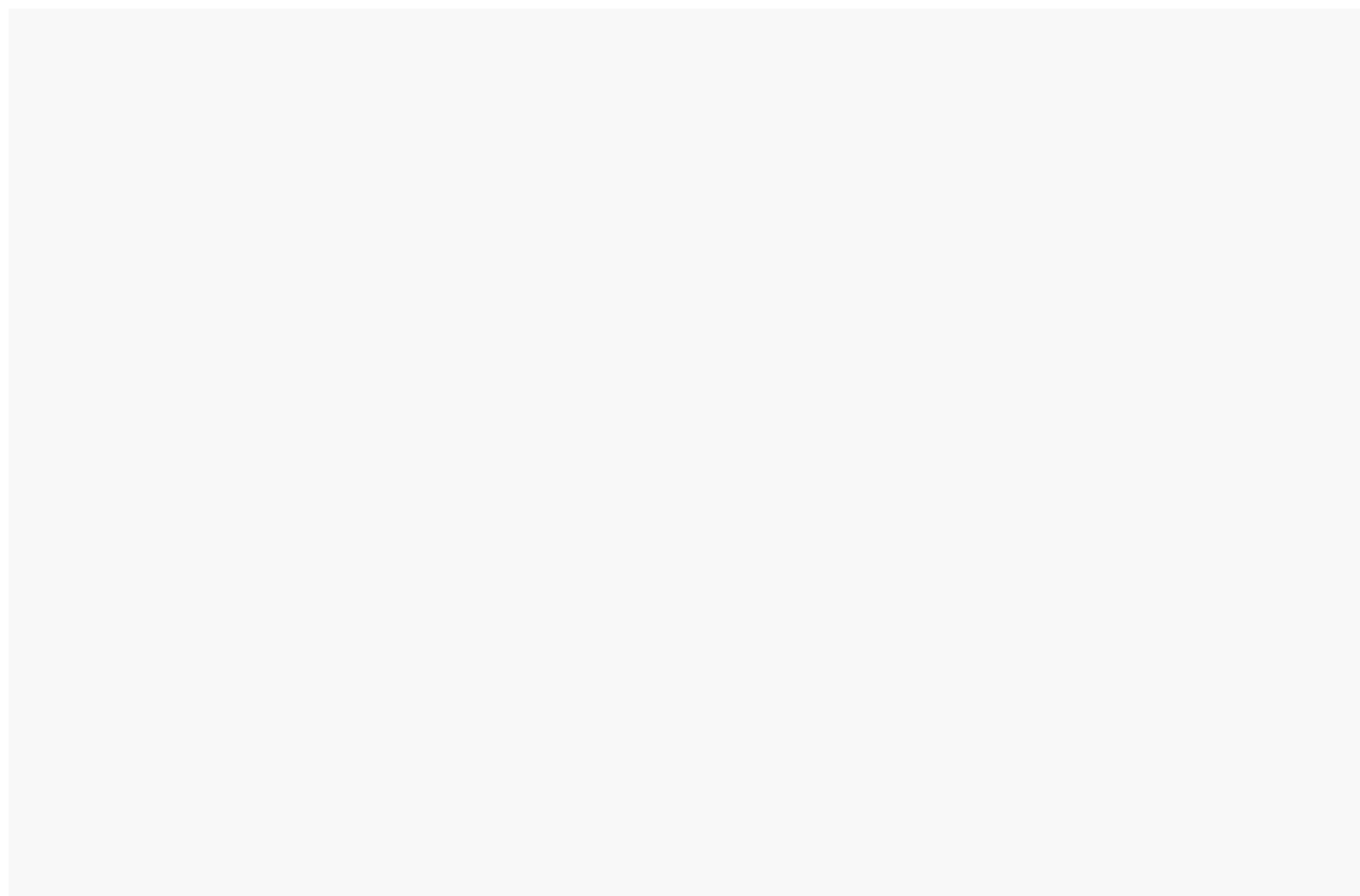
Her study is lined with bright cards offering her support, bearing legends such as “don’t let the bastards grind you down”, and a picture of the suffragist sculpture of Millicent Fawcett in Parliament Square which sees her holding the banner “Courage calls to courage everywhere”.

“I am not transphobic,” she says matter-of-factly. “I have students who are transgender and I have great sympathy for the difficulties they go through as they grapple to work out their gender identity.

“Everybody has the right to be who they want to be and I completely understand there’s a huge amount of pain and hurt around this whole subject. But I passionately believe in free speech and social media name-calling and hurling of abuse are no substitute for careful, considered debate about how we negotiate women’s rights and transgender people’s rights.”

Ominously, free speech is being curtailed. Last week transgender campaigners demanded that her invitation to speak at an event being held as part of the Oxford International Women’s Festival be rescinded or they would boycott the occasion and mount a protest outside.

It was the evening before the event; the organisers quiesced. This may sound like a storm in a scholarly teacup, but make no mistake, it is a full frontal assault on wider democratic freedoms. This week former Home Secretary [Amber Rudd was also no-platformed](#) by Oxford university students, who canceled the UNWomen Oxford society event she was due to speak at without telling her.



Selina isn’t the only target of the woke brigade. This week, former Home Secretary Amber Rudd was no-platformed by students from Oxford University, after they claimed her immigration policies had marginalised minority groups | CREDIT: Henry Nicholls/Reuters

She had planned to deliver a speech encouraging young women to get involved in politics. But her links to the 2018 [Windrush scandal](#) caused such outcry that the organiser pulled the plug – too late to let Rudd know. Humiliatingly, she turned up to an empty hall.

“I find it very frightening that there’s this new idea that women can be just shut down, silenced,” says Prof Todd, who is married to Professor Andrew Davies, professor of social history at Liverpool University. “That should worry us all.”

For her part, Prof Todd has links to the campaign group Women’s Place UK, which was recently labelled a “trans-exclusionary hate group” by the Labour Campaign for Trans Rights, despite the fact it welcomes transgender people to its meetings.

Yet another disturbing fact about her no-platforming was that she wasn’t due to speak on transgender issues but was nonetheless barred, reflecting a worrying trend that sees perfectly mainstream views being condemned as dangerously phobic.

Last December J K Rowling drew fire for publicly supporting tax expert Maya Forstater who was sacked after expressing her view that “men cannot become women”. A landmark employment tribunal ruling found that no-one has the right to question whether a transgender person is a man or a woman.

This sparked the hashtag campaign IStandWithMaya and prompted the Harry Potter author to post “Dress however you please. Call yourself whatever you like. Sleep with any consenting adult who’ll have you. Live your best life in peace and security. But force women out of their jobs for stating that sex

is real? #IStandWithMaya #ThisIsNotADrill'.

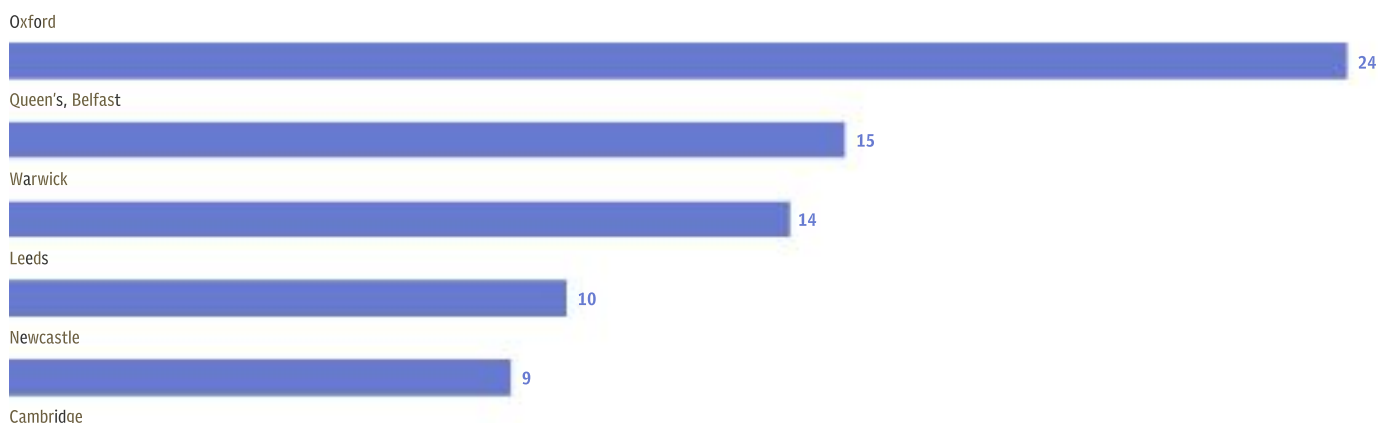
[Transgender women](#), who were born male, want the legal right to use female-only facilities; lavatories, changing rooms, women's refuges and prisons. In an argument free of nuance, anyone who is not with them is deemed to be against them.

They also want to compete in women's sport, which is why rugby chiefs for example are examining their transgender policies in a bid to provide clarity. Some increasingly noisy sections of the transgender lobby insist that self-identification rather than medical treatment is sufficient for someone to be deemed female.

It was this sort of strident insistence that fed into the catastrophic decision by prison authorities to send Karen White, who was legally still a man and hadn't undergone any surgery, to a women's jail. A convicted paedophile and on remand for grievous bodily harm, burglary, multiple rapes and other sexual offences against women, White went on to sexually assault two other inmates.

Such instances are extreme examples, but they reflect an alarming tendency among institutions to succumb to the pressure exerted by the few - which can undermine the safety of the many. "In a democracy we recognise that sometimes fairness is hard to achieve, and compromise is always necessary," says Prof Todd, whose next book *Snakes and Ladders: the great British social mobility myth* is published later this year.

Top universities where students request gender change on student record 2016-2018



her peers are seeking to challenge. She is due to appear at further events, including one at the University of Kent, which has already met with opposition, again from trans-activists even though she would be discussing her biography of the late pioneering playwright Shelagh Delaney.

"This has all been difficult," Prof Todd admits. "The onslaught from keyboard warriors on social media can be upsetting and isolating but I am proud to belong to a history faculty that supports women's history."

"I'm just the latest generation of a feminist movement that leads back to Mary Wollstonecraft and our strength comes from being part of a collective. I need to speak out, to keep speaking out."

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Kathleen Stock: life on the front line of transgender rights debate

Sussex philosophy professor on why she continues to speak out despite facing online abuse and 'hostile environment' at work

一月 7, 2020

Jack Grove ([/cn/content/jack-grove-0](https://www.thetimes.com/content/jack-grove-0))

Twitter: [@jgro_the](https://twitter.com/jgro_the) (https://twitter.com/jgro_the)



"It is quite a strange situation to work somewhere where people make it clear that they loathe you," reflected Kathleen Stock, professor of philosophy at the University of Sussex (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-sussex>), on the backlash she faced for her views on gender identification.

As one of the UK's leading gender-critical feminists, who has insisted that an individual cannot change their biological sex, Professor Stock has faced relentless criticism and abuse over the past 18 months – with blogs, petitions and Twitter users regularly demanding her dismissal for her allegedly "transphobic" views. In late November, a failed campaign to bar her from speaking at the Royal Institute of Philosophy's annual debate generated 6,300 likes on Twitter, but just five emails from outraged complainants.

But it is at traditionally left-wing Sussex where Professor Stock has encountered some of her biggest critics: students have made several formal complaints (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/professors-bullied-into-silence-as-students-cry-transphobia-b52t5gzz5>) against her, while some colleagues have made it obvious that she is not welcome, Professor Stock told *Times Higher Education*.

"I've found it quite a hostile environment – [some] have claimed my position is bigoted and I should be sacked," she explained. Recently, she was asked to teach in a different academic building and arrived to find numerous transgender pride flags hanging from office doors near her teaching room. "It is a grey area where, in apparently being kind [to one group], you can get away with some very targeted behaviour," said Professor Stock.

An internal Sussex email which was shared on social media after the publication of this article suggested that the flags were distributed in 2018 as a gesture of solidarity with trans people following media coverage of proposed legislative changes in the UK and international repression of LGBT rights.

Increasingly, however, the debate is less about whether Professor Stock's views are right but whether she should be allowed to voice them at all. To question the idea that a trans woman should be treated as a woman in all contexts is an act of "hate speech" that seeks to "erase" her identity, Professor Stock's critics contend. Writing anonymously on Medium (<https://medium.com/@transphilosopher33/i-am-leaving-academic-philosophy-because-of-its-transphobia-problem-bc618aa55712>) in May, one PhD student claimed that she was leaving philosophy, in part, because she could "easily imagine running into Stock or some other transphobic philosopher" at a conference.



Source: © Andrew Crowley/Telegraph Media Group Limited 2019

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Avoiding controversial issues because of such sensitivities is anathema to Professor Stock, she admitted. “I was always encouraged to discuss fundamental things like identity and social kinds, but now we are being told to accept a highly ideological view that a person is whatever they feel they are,” she said.

“Even when it has massive ramifications for society, philosophers are being told to stay silent,” continued Professor Stock, who objected, in particular, to the idea that discussion of the limits of transgender rights should be halted because it could cause some individuals to self-harm or take their own lives.

“I’m interested in the evidence that this is happening,” she said, adding that it relies on “dodgy statistics that have not been independently verified”.

“It is appropriate to engage in fiction for some contexts, but we are now losing the ability to talk about these issues because of this passive-aggressive way of arguing,” Professor Stock said, adding that “many women are devastated by what is happening in this area and their opinions matter”.

While unpopular closer to home, Professor Stock’s views are seemingly striking a chord with a larger audience outside academia – with 24,000 accounts following her on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/Docstockk>). Last month her blog on the employment tribunal ruling against Maya Forstater, the tax expert who lost her job after claiming that transgender women could not change their biological sex, was liked (<https://medium.com/@kathleenstock/i-am-a-professor-of-philosophy-employed-at-a-british-university-in-a-philosophy-department-a038ac89aad0?>) by more than 3,300 people.

According to Professor Stock, the judge’s claim that Ms Forstater’s belief was “not worthy of respect in a democratic society” was a precedent that “sent the message” to UK employees that your “job will not be protected” if you espouse this view – a concern later echoed in a tweet (https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/1207646162813100033) by Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling, who referenced Professor Stock’s post.

That decision followed the withdrawal of invitations to feminist speakers at three UK universities in November and December after receiving complaints over their support for gender-critical groups, such as Woman’s Place and the LGB Alliance.

Professor Stock is now involved in a campaign to mount a legal challenge to the policies of Oxford Brookes University (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/oxford-brookes-university>), which postponed a November talk by feminist artist Rachel Ara, who draws a distinction between biological sex and gender identity. A crowdfunding campaign has raised more than £6,000 (<https://www.crowdfunder.com/case/academic-freedom-of-speech/>).

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However, while some hailed 2019 as the year that gender-critical feminism reached the mainstream “thanks to the tireless efforts of many women”, Professor Stock was less optimistic that colleagues were listening. “Most academics only read the BBC or *The Guardian* which refuse, in general, to talk about these things, so the issue is still badly understood in academia,” she said.

jack.grove@timeshighereducation.com (<mailto:jack.grove@timeshighereducation.com>)

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Print headline: *‘Some accuse me of hate speech and want me sacked’*

READER'S COMMENTS (12)

#1 (/comment/49732#comment-49732) Submitted by Profbev70 on January 7, 2020 - 8:39am

So much for Sussex's flagship 'dignity at work' policy

#2 (/comment/49738#comment-49738) Submitted by Angi on January 7, 2020 - 11:23am

It is a cheap shot to call anyone whose views differ from our own "phobic" in any sense. It is also nonsense to claim that gender, a socially constructed idea of what feminine and masculine is, is the same as sex which is a biological construct. Academics should be vocal and support those who speak out about this. It is thought policing and very dangerous to block those of us who can see things as they are. To state that sex is innate and immutable is not to deny rights to anyone at all, but the transgender movement is increasingly denying women a say, and their rights.

#3 (/comment/49741#comment-49741) Submitted by cactus77 on January 7, 2020 - 11:32am

What a complex arena of debate - everyone has a right to an opinion. An opinion is not by default 'hate'. On one hand why would any of us be so bothered as to challenge an individual's right to be viewed or known as whatever they want? We should be living in enlightened societies. So socially it should be easy for people to live peaceful lifestyles as they would wish. If the debate is about biology should it even be on this particular debating list? Surely that is just an issue regarding medical treatment. The more complicated areas seem to be surrounding the rights of transgender people (especially male to female) and certain feminist voices who do not formally recognise them. It seems the real issues here are based around aggression, rounded debate and agreement on ways forward that ensure acceptance and inclusivity, but which also do not alienate.

#4 (/comment/49744#comment-49744) Submitted by mythrakitty on January 7, 2020 - 6:28pm

Thanks for covering this story and I agree academic freedom and freedom of speech are being challenged as well as hard win women's rights. I feel I can't speak about this issue at work as well and women / feminists are being silenced and erased so that trans can have a voice (quite violently) and it begs the question as to why do one group's rights have to trample on and erase another's - how does this create an equal society with equal voices?

#5 (/comment/49810#comment-49810) Submitted by lbatik on January 9, 2020 - 4:36pm

*This is both biased and *sloppy* reporting.*

According to other professionals at that institution, the trans flags were put up to protest Trump, and there had been plenty of communication about it beforehand. The flags were not just "on doors near [Stock's] teaching room", they were on numerous doors. And Stock's own arguments have not been mere philosophical exercise, they have been actively dismissive of students' (and other people's) lived experience, and have also misrepresented any number of the issues which trans men and women have been trying to bring forward. Her actions have in fact contributed to a "hostile environment" for other people in the department and university, as well as outside it; certainly no-one wants to think of themselves as a villain, but painting herself as a victim (using, I note, extremely emotive language which again misrepresents many of the criticisms) for being called to account for promoting harmful myths about a small and vulnerable minority, is not justifiable.

THE had a responsibility to look into the details of this situation. They evidently couldn't be bothered.

#6 (/comment/49996#comment-49996) Submitted by m.robertson8_291084 on January 15, 2020 - 10:36am

I don't agree with Stock's opinions regarding transgenderism, but she is as entitled to hold them as I am to hold mine. Hate is not an appropriate response, neither is name-calling and abuse. If you don't agree with someone's views, refute them. That's what academic debate is all about: it doesn't say much for the development of basic academic skills in a community where someone with dissenting views is so badly treated.

#7 (/comment/50158#comment-50158) Submitted by llowe on January 19, 2020 - 3:32pm

what is especially troubling is to read the discussions of Prof Stock and the issues here on social media, & to see how those discussions transfer into the academic setting.

one of their main lines of attack is to say that "nobody is being silenced" as Prof. Stock says.

well, I am being silenced, & that's part of why I am posting anonymously. I NEVER speak or write about this topic, though I have spent a great deal of time researching and thinking about it.

further, in very tentative, private conversations with a few trusted colleagues, i hear the same thing.

i think it is possible that the majority of academics, especially those with a strong inclination toward feminist values, are terrified to speak about this topic because of the variety of tactics trans activists use to attack us.

it is remarkable to read carefully the trans literature and to ask: which parts of feminism do they actually support?

because it turns out that that the answer is: virtually none of it. from women's sports to women's health to sexual harassment policies & even to equity in pay and work, trans activists are exclusively interested in extending those rights to trans people. what they call "cis" women are, to many of them, part of the problem.

trans is the most dangerous political movement on the left i have seen in my 30+ years of research and activism. it is full of fascist and proto-fascist gestures and rhetoric, and despite the surface and real differences, has many things in common with far-right anti-feminist movements like the incels and MRA. Most frighteningly, it is impossible to talk about this in academia, without the very fact that we are talking about it becoming the object of conversation, rather than the issues we are trying to talk about.

i do not agree 100% with Dr Stock's positions on gender, but many of them, and i admire her willingness to take the profoundly antifeminist attacks that are constantly lobbed at her. that they are lobbed in the name of feminism--but a feminism that has almost nothing in common with what we described with that name 20 years ago, and attacks that resemble exactly the other attacks on feminist women in the university we used to see and still do see--is profoundly disturbing.

you don't have to dig for more than 5 minutes to see the proto-fascist logic at work in condemnations of Dr Stock: despite her decades of work, she "isn't really a feminist," they say. what is a feminist, you ask? someone who supports trans rights. Why can't trans rights be a separate thing from feminism, just as lesbian and gay rights are? that is hate speech and it is "killing people."

the world is upside down.

#8 (/comment/50233#comment-50233) Submitted by m.robertson8_291084 on January 21, 2020 - 10:43am

If you care about human rights you have to care about ALL of them. It's no use preening yourself on your dedication to feminism if you don't care about the rights of people on the LGBTQ+ spectrum or gender diversity or fighting racism: even if your particular interest is in feminism. That may be your focus, but if you do not pay attention to the needs of others, why should they care about your particular 'thing'?

#9 (/comment/50296#comment-50296) Submitted by llowe on January 22, 2020 - 2:53pm

who said anything even remotely resembling "do not pay attention to the needs of others"?

I said, as Dr. Stock says, that feminism is a thing to be understood. So is racism. in fact racism has different forms. all must be understood.

in your prior message you talked about academic rigor. i am trying to be rigorous. transgender rights are important. so are women's rights. that's what I said. that's what Dr. Stock says repeatedly.

*i see trans people, despite the rhetoric, expressing care *only* about trans rights. all over the place. so i find your message curious. In fact I pointed out in my message that many trans people write and talk as if "cis women" are part of the problem.*

that is not paying attention to the needs of others. that's telling them you could not care less. it's certainly not "caring about ALL human rights." it is certainly hard to understand why I should count as "feminist" a position that tells the vast majority of women that they are part of the problem.

sometimes human rights conflict. that is part of Dr Stock's point: there are very clear ways in which trans rights and what have been described until now by feminists as women's rights conflict.

i do care about the needs of trans people. what i see is that trans people care only about themselves (and yes, they talk about race and other forms of categorization, but usually only to aggrandize their own sense of marginalization, and usually only when the racial other is also trans). and I see it all over the place.

by the way, who in political history has called "feminism" "caring about a particular 'thing'"? not feminists. so right there you have what I, and I think Dr Stock, see as a huge part of the problem: trans rights very quickly take on the

rhetoric and arguments of antifeminism. only trans women are to be supported. in other words, most women are not. that is the world turned upside-down.

#10 (/comment/50479#comment-50479) Submitted by Veronica Martian on January 26, 2020 - 8:37pm

I support free speech but this is highly inaccurate: "As one of the UK's leading gender-critical feminists..." Stock has been involved in the debate quite late in the game and there were other scholars well-steeped in the debate before some women in the feminist movement started putting flagpoles on their perceived territory. Julia Long is one such academic who has been speaking and writing about this for years, well over a decade. It would behoove The Times Higher Ed to get facts straight because Stock is a latecomer and has written pieces plagiarising from other scholars on this subject. I think Stock believes citations are only due if it relates to academic material, but the stark reality is that she recycles women's work way before her.

#11 (/comment/51160#comment-51160) Submitted by annie Gunn_287463 on February 15, 2020 - 10:37pm

Glad to say my daughter has rejected Sussex due to the bullying of Stock. Realised students are woke sheep far from the free thinkers as the university would like us to think. Shock you have a penis you are male. No amount of Trans bullying is going to change that. No amount of trying to erase the term sex and trying to replace it with gender will change this. Isn't it great that Sussex reinstates a convicted male lecturer who assaulted a woman. Do they use NDAs to gag female sexual assault victims. This is all deeply worrying misogyny. Death threats made to women who call for women only places made by trans. I call you out for what you are women haters. So petty to call for the removal of female symbol from sanitary towels. Disgrace. Sorry guys you will never be women.

#12 (/comment/51502#comment-51502) Submitted by anguishedmom on February 25, 2020 - 7:01pm

Cause Celebre

Why we must discuss what is happening to our young women,

Why did you make my teen your cause Celebre, your virtue signaling tool, your evidence of inclusivity? Maybe I missed her distress signals, maybe I thought my kid felt loved and unique, maybe she was at home. I missed the distress she felt in the social networking, socially competitive world teens navigate in middle and high schools at the onset and apex of puberty. I missed the destructive pull of the inclusive agenda pushed by well intentioned student governments, students, staff and school board.

That world is the perfect environment for a previously overlooked, socially awkward vulnerable confused teen to find celebrity and solace as the mascot for a social justice group agenda as their congratulatory gender identity pet.

My child became the pet once she declared herself transgender of entire clubs, psychologists, teachers, virtue signaling individuals and school board members. They could all point to her and congratulate themselves on how kind and compassionate and inclusive they were. She could then go on to a college that advertises proudly how inclusive they were by posting pictures of inclusive clubs where all identities are welcome.

None of these virtuous warriors, well intentioned institutions, gentle affirming therapists will be present in my daughters life when the deleterious affects of cross sex hormones gripe her healthy body. When here uterus collapses, when her vaginal walls atrophy, when her bladder leaks as her kidney become increasingly damaged, when her risk of heart disease and suicide escalate. All the virtuous warriors that were "understanding" and "available to talk" because her parents "didn't know" are gone, retired, some may have moved on with their lives, their healthy bodies and families. Most won't even remember her name.

My daughter was the "buffer girl", the girl placed between to rambunctious jocks because she was quiet and good, the one no one noticed. Finally she got noticed, she got celebrated, she was championed, at what cost?

Virtuous inclusive warriors, will you carry away the Surgical discard vessel that contains her amputated breasts, her surgically evacuated uterus? Will you hold and comfort her precious, beautiful young body post op? A lithe young body that built fairy houses in the woods, and set out birdseed for the warblers?

You probably won't, you'll be too busy congratulating yourself on what a wonderful person you are, you will probably be busy at your next speaking engagement as you talk about your work on the inclusiveness committee. You might even be running for public office, loudly proclaiming how compassionate you are and how you love every body; even as I alone hold my beautiful baby and wonder what could I have done to reassure her that she was born perfectly made, no committee present.

I also know that I will be dismissed. Labeled as some kind of crazy phobic person. My years supporting my gay child overlooked, my years believing in birth control for all rejected. What will history say about me? About you? About this?

您可能也喜欢



Sullivan: 'silencing of mainstream views more widespread than people realise'
AKIRA SUEMORI

Stonewall's new boss Nancy Kelley let census expert be no-platformed

Sian Griffiths, Education Editor

Sunday May 24 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

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The new head of Stonewall, an LGBT charity that campaigns for “acceptance without exception”, allowed a top social scientist to be barred from a discussion of how Britain conducts its census.

Nancy Kelley was one of the leaders of a research group that agreed to have the scientist “no-platformed” in the latest row over academic freedom.

Alice Sullivan, professor of sociology at University College London and director of one of the UK’s biggest social science projects, was due to speak at a seminar last month alongside officials from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which is organising the 2021 census.

Sullivan leads the 1970 British Cohort Study, which follows 17,000 people born in one week 50 years ago. She was invited by the research body NatCen, which works closely with the ONS. Kelley is NatCen’s deputy chief executive and is to move to Stonewall later this year.

The event was cancelled after some NatCen members alleged that Sullivan held “anti-trans views”. Emails disclosed under information laws reveal fears “that including Sullivan as a panellist could be seen as NatCen endorsing anti-trans views, risking reputational damage and perhaps more importantly risking harm to staff and audience members”. Circulated among the six-strong leadership team, the emails say the NatCen LGBT group “suggested she not take part or that the event be cancelled”. It was scrapped days later.

Sullivan had intended to discuss proposed ONS guidance that people should be allowed to self-identify as male or female in the 2021 census. Under the guidance, respondents would be able to answer according to what they felt themselves to be and not their birth sex. In December Sullivan organised a letter, signed by 80 social scientists and [published in The Sunday Times](#), arguing that to let people choose how to answer will affect the accuracy of the census.

Sullivan revealed her no-platforming experience in a paper published last week in the *International Journal of Research Methodology*. She writes that she was told the seminar was cancelled because inviting her was “too risky” and another speaker had threatened to pull out if she attended.

“Many people do not recognise the scale of this culture of no-platforming or how it operates,” she said. “I hope that developing a better understanding of how this culture of silencing on gender issues works will help universities and research organisations to recognise what is going on and take a more robust approach to defending scientific prerogatives.”

She added: “It is troubling that Nancy Kelley appears implicated in cancelling a research methods seminar rather than allowing an open discussion . . . No-platforming is a tactic that we used to associate only with hard-left sects and student politics. Trans activists have brought no-platforming and silencing of mainstream views into organisations that should know better. It is far more widespread than people realise. The academics affected come from a range of disciplines, yet they are nearly always women.”

NatCen said: “The National Centre for Social Research is committed to independence and impartiality. Given the current lobbying on census sex and gender questions, and the need for us to retain our actual and perceived independence given we have been testing different approaches with customers in this area, we did not feel it appropriate for NatCen to hold a seminar at this time. Our staff have a wide range of differing views on issues including in this area. We encourage them to express these openly and we value diversity. There is certainly no staff lobby or policy to no-platform academics or anyone else at NatCen and we have given that reassurance to Professor Alice Sullivan.”

Stonewall and Nancy Kelley declined to comment.

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Raquel Rosario-Sanchez said she was targeted by “masked protesters”

Student to sue university over ‘transgender bullying’

Ewan Somerville

Monday May 25 2020, 12.01am, The Times

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A student is considering legal action against Bristol University over an alleged two-year campaign of bullying by transgender activists.

[Raquel Rosario-Sanchez](#) has instructed lawyers after the university ended a 16-month disciplinary procedure without taking action against a trans student about whom she had complained.

Ms Rosario-Sanchez, 30, said she was targeted by “masked protesters” who threatened to throw eggs at her when she attended hearings.

“Trans activists used bullying in an attempt to stifle my free speech as a defender of women’s rights while my university did nothing to stop them,” she said.

She filed a bullying complaint in January 2018, shortly after agreeing to chair an event for the group Woman’s Place UK on proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act. Feminist groups raised concerns about the prospect of self-identifying trans people using single-sex spaces.

Ms Rosario-Sanchez claimed that in the following months a trans group distributed pamphlets urging students to chant “scum, scum, scum” when she attended disciplinary meetings. One group told its members to give her “hell”.

She said that the university required her to hire private security guards on multiple occasions to host speakers on campus. Activists wrote an open letter to Hugh Brady, Bristol's vice-chancellor, calling her student feminist society "nasty, nasty transphobes".

Bristol threw out the bullying allegations last June, blaming "reasons unrelated to the merits of the case". Ms Rosario-Sanchez requested a review of the handling of the case, which ruled in the university's favour in December.

She is crowdfunding her campaign to sue the university, alleging indirect sex discrimination, negligence and unlawful victimisation on the basis of the Equality Act.

Her lawyer, Peter Daly, of Slater and Gordon, said: "Every student has the right to pursue their education in an environment that is safe from bullying and harassment."

Ms Rosario-Sanchez says the ordeal caused her PhD progress to stall and fears that she will lose scholarship funding from the Dominican Republic, where she is from, next year.

Bristol University said: "Our internal processes are confidential and therefore we are unable to comment further."

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She was told that “the central university had problems with the third speaker (ie me), that there was a need to include a student member of the panel and that the committee had issues with me speaking at the event”, she says in her letter to her MP.

Freedman fears she was turned down for a post at Essex and is no longer invited to lecture, teach or speak at events at the university, one of the leading centres of human rights, “owing to spurious and non-evidenced accusations of transphobia”.

In December Jo Phoenix, a criminology professor at the Open University, was “no-platformed” at Essex after some staff accused her of being “anti-trans” and “exclusionary”.

Essex University said it had approached Freedman as a possible speaker, but denied a formal invitation had been made or withdrawn.

It said it was already reviewing the cancellation of the event involving Phoenix.

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James Kirkup

The trans debate could cost this Cambridge porter his job

📅 27 October 2020, 8:28am



Clare College, Cambridge (photo: iStock)

This is a story about a man called Kevin Price, who was until last week a councillor and who is, for now at least, employed as a porter at a Cambridge college.

The story illustrates two points. First, political conflict over trans rights and women's rights is far from over, especially in the Labour Party. Second, people who say the wrong thing in this debate can put their livelihood at risk.

Mr Price last week resigned from Cambridge City Council. He had sat as a Labour councillor since 2010 and was once the council's deputy leader.

He resigned rather than follow the Labour Group whip and vote for a motion that declared, among other things that:

“ ‘Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary individuals are non-binary.’

Those are, of course, the holy words of trans orthodoxy, a catechism that cannot be questioned despite the countless questions it raises. (Here's a starter for ten: if trans women are women, what does the word 'women' mean?)

Mr Price quit because, he said, he could not accept the unquestioning, uncritical adoption of those words. He noted that for some people, those words have highly

troubling implications.

Resigning, he **said**:

“ ‘The inclusion of the first three sentences of this motion will send a chill down the spines of the many women who believe there is a conflict of rights and who want to be able to discuss those in a calm and evidenced-based way....

[It is] foolish to pretend that there are not widely differing views in the current debate or that many people, especially women, are concerned about the impact on women’s sex-based rights from changes both in legislation and within society and who fear, not only that those rights are under threat, but that they are unable to raise legitimate questions and concerns without a hostile response.’

And that might have been the end of the story, seeing Mr Price ending his career as an interesting example of a politician putting principle before position or the party line, with a fairly measured contribution to a debate that too many politicians are still wary to enter.

If that was the end of it, Mr Price’s tale might prove only that Labour has some way to go before it reaches a settled, unified stance on this issue. There are good reasons that Keir Starmer has been trying to take a ‘listen to both sides’ position on the trans debate; one of those reasons is that his party is seriously split on the issue.

But that is not the end of Mr Price’s story. For Mr Price is now facing the sort of ‘hostile response’ he spoke about – calls for his employer to dismiss him from his job, because of his thoughts on sex and gender and ultimately, because of his reluctance to say the holy words.

According to *Varsity*, a student paper, the Union of Clare Students has condemned him and demanded the college authorities act against him. By discussing issues of policy and law at a council meeting, Mr Price had jeopardised the ‘safety’ of the college’s trans and non-binary students, the union suggested in a statement.

Varsity further quotes one Clare student as saying Price is ‘unfit both to hold public office and to be in a position of responsibility over students.’

Now, I didn’t go to Oxbridge and I’m not much for Marxist analysis of society as a class struggle. But I know enough about both to suggest that there’s something both distasteful and revealing about a bunch of Cambridge undergraduates threatening the livelihood of a man employed to serve them because he refuses to share their opinions and adopt their language.

There’s been a lot of talk in recent years about free speech on campus being under threat, and a lot of that talk has been overblown, based on nothing more than stupid self-important students doing what stupid, self-important students have always done and disinviting or banning people from speaking at events that no reasonable person would ever want to attend anyway.

But some of the concerns about universities and free inquiry are justified: just ask Professor Selina Todd, an Oxford historian who **needed** bodyguards because some people objected to her research on sex and gender in history.

And now it appears that the refusal to permit dissent or debate about sex and gender could cost a man his job at a university. I hope not, and not just for the sake of Kevin Price.



Fury as Open University censors leading academic just for mentioning JK Rowling during free speech debate following 'woke' backlash she faced over trans views

By Patricia Kane and James Heale For The Mail On Sunday
22:01 05 Dec 2020, updated 01:53 06 Dec 2020



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- Alistair Bonnington, 68, has angered trans rights activists at the Open University
- In a discussion about Voltaire's exile, he cited author JK Rowling's experience
- He referenced Scotland's Hate Crime Bill which allows men to identify as women
- His post was deleted while 'trans women are women' comments were permitted

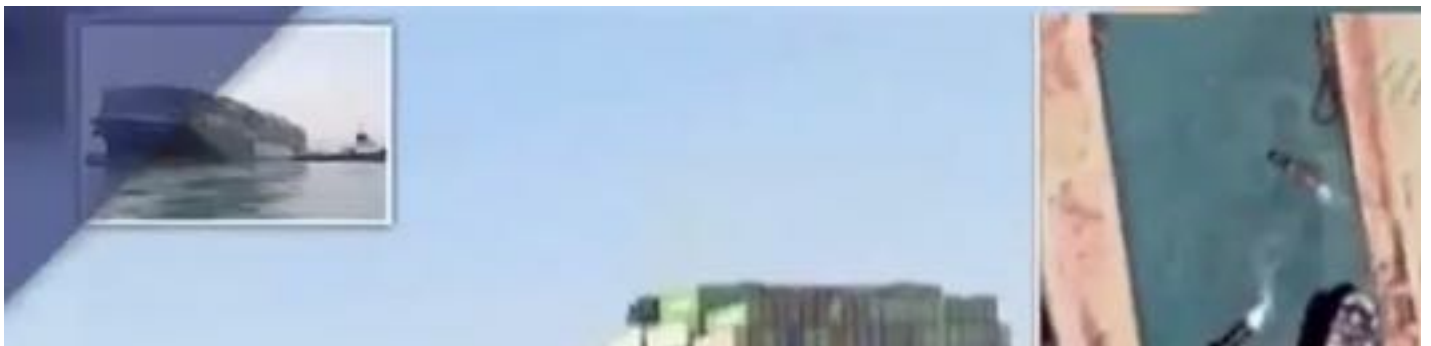
A leading law lecturer has criticised Britain's largest university after his comments on trans rights during an online debate on free speech were censored and he was warned not to repeat them.

Alistair Bonnington, an ex-BBC legal adviser and former honorary law professor who taught Scottish First Minister [Nicola Sturgeon](#) during her student days, posted his views on an Open University forum during a discussion about the 18th Century French writer Voltaire – an advocate for freedom of speech.

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But his comments, referring to Scotland's Hate [Crime](#) Bill, which will allow men to self-identify as women, and the 'woke' backlash faced by Harry Potter author [J. K. Rowling](#) earlier this year over her trans views, were deleted. Ms Rowling faced overwhelming abuse on social media and an onslaught from the so-called 'cancel culture' – in which Left-wing activists attempt to eradicate their victim's views from being aired publicly.



LOSING SIGHT OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS (AGAIN): A RESPONSE TO COWAN ET AL.

Lucy Hunter Blackburn, Kath Murray and Lisa Mackenzie

Abstract

This article responds to Cowan et al.’s critique of our article ‘Losing sight of women’s rights: the unregulated introduction of gender self-identification as a case study of policy capture in Scotland’, published by *Scottish Affairs* 28(3) in August 2019. Cowan et al. make a series of strong criticisms, including of our accuracy, diligence and adherence to scholarly norms. We reject these as unreasonable. In our view, they misunderstand and misrepresent the fundamental purpose of our article, fail to engage with our core thesis of policy capture, and implausibly seek to place our view of the law beyond academic respectability. Their own strongly-asserted view of the law appears at least open to question. We argue that the problem is not with our scholarship falling below any normal acceptable standard, but rather that Cowan et al. appear to be uncomfortable with others holding and expressing any different view to theirs on this topic. They have therefore reached too quickly for assertions of incompetence or worse. We discuss the climate in which our original article was produced and in which we are now defending it. Describing our own experiences as well of those of other academics, we question how the scholarship needed to help shape policy and law in this area can take place under such conditions.

Key words: sex; gender self-identification; policy capture; Equality Act 2010; women’s rights; academic freedom

Lucy Hunter Blackburn is currently a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh, specialising in student funding. She was previously a senior civil servant in the Scottish Government.

Dr Kath Murray is a Research Fellow in Criminology at the University of Edinburgh. Her research background is in criminal justice, policing and policy-making.

Lisa Mackenzie is an independent policy analyst and former UK Government civil servant.

have been less inclined than we might otherwise have been to seek further opportunities to present our paper, largely because we anticipate that considerable time might need to be set aside to deal with any adverse reaction, either in advance or afterwards. Happily, the article itself continues to attract a substantial readership, with 8,726 downloads of the published article from the EUP site to the end of October 2020 and 1,528 downloads of the 'open access' version from the University of Edinburgh's *Research Explorer* portal.²²

On publication of our article, our attention was drawn to comments by one of the co-authors on social media, who called it a 'poorly-sourced conspiracy theory masquerading as an academic case study' (Giles, 2019: 9). This comment formed part of a series of strong criticisms directed at the journal, published on Twitter, which also suggested that we were responsible for 'deliberate' omissions (Giles, 2019: 1). Two of the authors have publicly questioned whether *Scottish Affairs* subjected our article to a proper peer review process (it did).²³ Later in 2019, without naming us, an Equality Network policy officer referred to policy capture as 'anti-trans rhetoric' and suggested the thesis had been 'disproved' (Crowther, 2020). We note that given the space of a full academic article, Cowan et al. do not engage in any substantial way with our policy capture thesis nor the evidence we present about the detailed operation of the policy process. Far less do they 'disprove' that policy capture is a relevant concept here. Neither has anyone else, to our knowledge. The Cowan et al. response is the only detailed critical feedback to have been provided directly to us since publication in summer 2019, and the only published academic piece we are aware of so far responding to our article. Indeed, it is the only critical feedback we have received directly (apart from a personal threat that was reported to the police and a handful of comments on social media). All other comments directed to us and to the journal from academic readers and others since publication have been positive. We do however of course stand ready to address any criticism of our central thesis if any such is forthcoming.

b. A balanced debate? Sex and self-declared gender in academia

Our own experiences are by no means unique amongst those engaging with the debate on sex and self-declared gender from a similar perspective to our own. Difficulties encountered include calls to be removed from teaching, security required for ordinary lecturing duties, disinvitations, cancelled events, attempts to have editorships removed, and lost opportunities to publish.²⁴

A Response to Cowan et al.

A recent article defending the collection of reliable data on sex in the census by Professor Alice Sullivan (2020a) was published on the unusual condition that two invited critical response pieces would be published in the same edition (Hines, 2020a and Fugard, 2020). Responding to these, Sullivan notes that Hines fundamentally misrepresents her arguments, and adds:

Having entirely swerved the substance of the paper, Hines resorts to a series of ad hominem. She accuses me of paranoia and bad faith, and of being ‘trans exclusionary’, and dismisses me as representing a ‘vocal minority’. No evidence is provided for any of these assertions. (2020a: 540).

Another researcher has recently shared with us a reviewer’s comments on a draft article in their specialist area which repeatedly described the text as ‘transphobic’, and included assertions such as ‘using the term opposite biological sex is not only sexist, homophobic and transphobic, it is biologically incorrect’, ‘male bodied people is incorrect and transphobic’ and ‘The Authors should remember that not just gender, but sex too, is a social construction’.²⁵ The article is without a publisher at the time of writing. Writing as a biologist in defence of the position that sex is a two-category, immutable state for human beings, Marinov feels moved to include this statement: ‘A disclaimer: I am not a tenured faculty member and have no job security; I am well aware that my career prospects could be jeopardized by this essay’ (2020: 279). Against this background, it is one of Cowan et al.’s more frustrating complaints that our article suffers from a ‘lack of academic rigour’ due to a lack of peer-reviewed references to support our own position. Readers will not be surprised to learn that our access to relevant formal academic literature from any perspective other than that taken by Cowan et al. was severely limited, although that position is starting slowly to improve. Academic activity in line with the position advocated by Cowan et al. meanwhile enjoys considerable institutional support and funding, as evidenced in multiple university-based events, large research grants, and dedicated journals and special editions.²⁶

7. Conclusion: Academic intolerance

Cowan et al. conclude that ‘There are many reasons to be concerned about Murray et al’s article’, following this statement with a series of assertions about scholarly shortcomings. It appears to us however that the problem here is not with our scholarship falling below any normal acceptable standard, but rather that Cowan et al. are uncomfortable with others holding and expressing any

different view to theirs on this topic. They have therefore reached too quickly for assertions of incompetence or worse. They misunderstand and misrepresent the fundamental purpose of our article, fail to engage with our core thesis of policy capture, and ignore one of our two substantive case studies in its entirety. Asserting that our 'legal arguments are reliant upon misinterpretations and selective quotations from statute and case law' they do an injustice to how we present our position on the law and ignore available arguments in its favour. Their own legal view, which is presented as the only one acceptable to put forward, relies substantially on a text that describes itself as 'not authoritative' and whose content is open to challenge. They rely, too, on readings of the statute which also appear to us at least open to question, and in the case of 'misperception' either irrelevant or wrong. At points they misread our content and blame us for the results. They over-react to small faults and seek to police our adherence to particular scholarly practices in a way we find superficial and oddly rigid. All this leads to a serious claim of 'glaring inaccuracies and discrepancies within the article' which we submit is not remotely proven (it is offered with no notes or cross-references). We reject this as unreasonable criticism. We have to leave readers to judge how far Cowan et al. themselves may be vulnerable to any of the criticisms they level at us.

Addressing the specific question of whether policy capture occurred, they argue only that our thesis 'ignores the gradual shifts in law and policy across the UK over at least the last two decades, and, particularly with respect to the GRA and the 2010 Act, the processes of scrutiny and consultation that accompanied them'. As we argue above, we do not think the case is persuasively made that the law changed in favour of self-declared gender over the period they mention, while the shift in policy is of course our core concern. Cowan et al. provide no account of the nature of the scrutiny and consultation which accompanied the EA 2010, and how that would support their position, nor of the processes round the GRA 2004, which anyway is not relevant to those who fall outside its scope.

We would suggest that, if anything, the evidence that policy capture is a relevant concept to apply here has strengthened since we undertook our original research. Jones and Mackenzie's (2020) more extensive consideration of primary sources on the development of plans for the census in different parts of the UK has found even stronger evidence of how public authorities prioritised representations from advocacy groups including the STA, Gendered Intelligence and Stonewall, over other possible interests. Similarly, Biggs (2020) has found the same lack of interest in impacts on women, and prioritisation of arguments put forward in favour of prioritising self-declared gender identity, in the development of prisons policy for England and Wales. Meanwhile, in a

A Response to Cowan et al.

recent paper produced with SPS support as part of a project intended to 'influenc[e] the future direction of its transgender prison policy' (Maycock, 2020: 37), the very limited acknowledgement of possible negative impacts on women prisoners is again apparent. Our particular focus was on institutional behaviours and decision making in response to advocacy, rather than on the advocates themselves, a point which does not emerge clearly from a reading of Cowan et al. However, a report produced by the law firm Dentons for an international group of organisations which support self-declaration has since set out how it has been a deliberate advocacy strategy in multiple jurisdictions to seek legal changes in this area by pursuing these (in its own words) 'under the radar': we have discussed elsewhere how far the processes by which laws enabling self-declaration were achieved in other jurisdictions appear to reflect that approach (Murray et al. 2020b).

For some time the academic climate has been such that claims about the primacy of self-declared gender over sex, with substantial implications for law and policy, have been placed beyond discussion. A contrast might be drawn with religion, where it is generally accepted that people may legitimately hold conflicting beliefs of great importance to their sense of self, literally in good faith. People's motives, integrity and competence have been persistently regarded as fair game, in our case by a group whose lead author is in a far more senior role than any of us.²⁷ We question how the scholarship desirable to support legal and policy change can take place properly in such an environment and wonder whether this is a direction those with a senior role in shaping academic discussion really wish to go.

Given the nature of the claims made about our work, we feel entitled and compelled to defend ourselves robustly here. We are however aware that this could itself provoke further reaction, on social media or elsewhere. We would encourage people engaging with the authors of either article to preserve at least the tone we have tried to strike here.

Notes

1. See <https://murrayblackburnmackenzie.org>
2. See online version of this article for further detail (n 4).
3. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.
4. Cowan et al do not define this term, which is not used in the Act, and their use of it has some potential to be confusing; specifically, their statement that the Gender Recognition Act 2004 'allowed trans people to change their sex marker on their birth certificate' fails to convey that the GRA does not permit this for all those who Cowan

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Liverpool John Moores lecturer accused of posting transphobic tweets

He said 'trans women are not women'

1 month ago



[Rachel Evans](#)

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A lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University has been accused of transphobia, after posting multiple tweets denying transgender individuals their respected identities, including saying: "I do not accept that a trans woman is a woman, they are simply not".

Dr Paul Greenall, a lecturer in forensic psychology who [specialises in offenders with a past of sexual violence](#), has tweeted saying "women menstruate men do not", "a man cannot give birth", and "trans women are not women".

The matter was raised on the Liverpool student Facebook group Smithdown Ticket Exchange after a user shared the tweets, saying: "No teacher should teach a course about mental health whilst being discriminatory towards a social group who suffer from mental health."

The Liverpool Tab reached out to Dr Greenall. After this, his Twitter account was deleted. He is yet to respond to requests for comment.

Liverpool John Moores told The Liverpool Tab the university is "looking into" the tweets. When asked to clarify if this meant the university is investigating, a spokesperson said: "We're looking into it and taking it seriously."



More screenshots of the tweets can be seen below

One of the tweets says: "I don't advocate nor want to see any discriminatory behaviour shown to trans people", but continues: "But I do not accept that a trans woman is a woman, they simply are not".

Greenall replied to a news story about a trans man who gave birth, saying: "Simple human biology... a man cannot give birth... that privilege is reserved for women!"

Before deleting his Twitter, the lecturer's bio read: "You take offence, I don't give it!"



More screenshots of the tweets can be seen below

In another, he replied to a tweet about a gym company allowing trans women to use women's changing rooms. He said: "So I can pretend to be a woman and go into a women's changing room to look at naked women... it's utter madness and an insult to women everywhere!"

He responded to a tweet where someone says they will not educate their children about their being multiple genders. Greenall said: "In my house, there are two genders; men and women."

In another, he replied to a photo of trans people menstruating, with the caption "people have periods". He said: "Women and only women have periods. These 'people' would like us to think otherwise, but they are bonkers!"

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University speakers with gender-critical views are most likely to be banned from addressing students

There have been 21 occasions at Russell Group institutions which saw speakers banned outright or pressured into withdrawing from events

By Dominic Penna

20 February 2021 • 9:00pm



University speakers accused of being critical of transgender rights are most likely to have been no-platformed at Britain's top universities, analysis by The Telegraph has found.

There have been 21 occasions at Russell Group institutions which saw speakers banned outright or pressured into withdrawing from events in the last six years.

Eight of these incidents involved 'gender critical' speakers, including Dame Jenni Murray, feminist campaigner Julie Bindel, and Oxford history professor Selina Todd.

Dame Jenni [pulled out of an Oxford talk in 2018](#) after a students' union campaign group accused her of "transphobic comments" the previous year.

The former Woman's Hour host wrote a newspaper column headlined: "Be trans, be proud - but don't call yourself a 'real woman'". Dame Jenni has previously said she is "not transphobic, or anti-trans".

Manchester students accused [Ms Bindel](#) of transphobia - which she denies - after her articles claimed that transgender people choosing how to self-identify was "madness".

Prof Todd was dropped from the Oxford International Women's Festival at Exeter College in February 2020. She says this was because organisers were pressured by transgender activists.

Professor Selina Todd, who lectures at the University of Oxford, says there is an 'absolute resistance' to discussing certain issues. | CREDIT: Andrew Crowley

Prof Todd's research has suggested women who posed as men in the past were often lesbians who sought to protect themselves.

"On the whole what I find is an absolute resistance to discussing this issue. Whenever no-platforming happens [it acts as a silencer](#) on so many other people," she said.

"We have this culture of fear just always there beneath the surface. I took two years of academic leave to write some books, and when I came back around 2017 I was really taken aback by how much the culture had changed at Oxford.

"It's great to debate and criticise each other and learn. But what a tragedy that none of us can do it in these universities."

Toby Young, founder of the Free Speech Union, said: "I've been shocked by how many gender critical feminists have been no-platformed at universities. The main victims of censorious student mobs are Left-wing feminists."

A further seven speakers have been banned from campuses since 2015 because students deemed their views excessively right-wing, including Alice Weidel, leader of Germany's far-right AfD party.

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg's talk was also cancelled after threats from Left-wing activists, [while Amber Rudd was no-platformed](#) by an Oxford society.

Analysis by this newspaper found 27 out of 140 universities in the UK have their own codes of conduct with limits on speakers that go beyond existing laws.

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University forced to apologise and compensate PhD student over 'transphobic' tweets

A student sent screenshots of Jonathan Best's tweets and blog posts to university authorities

By Ewan Somerville

6 March 2021 • 2:33pm



A university has been forced to apologise and pay compensation to a PhD student subjected to a lengthy disciplinary probe over “transphobic” tweets, in the first case of its kind.

Jonathan Best, 50, was investigated for six months by Huddersfield University after a fellow student filed an anonymous complaint about 13 tweets from his account, and his writings on transgender issues.

One tweet cited by the complainant stated “every trans woman is part of the same sex class as me. We’re all male”. They accused Mr Best of “misgendering” trans people and asked: “Could a trans woman student be expected to feel comfortable or respected being taught by him?”

Officials at the university launched a formal probe and summoned the music tutor to disciplinary hearings, later alleging he had potentially been “offensive” and not respected others’ “feelings”.

But in the first free speech case of its kind, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education - which handles student complaints - has now criticised multiple “procedural failings” with the university’s investigation and ordered it to apologise and pay him £800.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator also told the institution to swiftly review its disciplinary procedures, after Mr Best complained.

He told The Telegraph it illustrates the “chilling effect on free speech in action”, with censorship and a “low grade totalitarianism” sitfling scholarly debate on the distinction between gender identity and biological sex.

“In these free speech cases, the process is the punishment - getting through the process is grindingly difficult and stressful. It wears you down,” he said. “It makes you wonder if speaking and writing honestly is worth it.”

Jonathan Best

Last week The Telegraph reported how leading professors are facing formal investigations for “liking” and sharing tweets that students deem transphobic, as universities struggle to weigh academic freedom against pressure from activists to protect minorities from harm.

In Mr Best’s case, a student sent screenshots of his tweets and blog posts to university authorities. One said: “There is no such thing as ‘misgendering’. There is no such thing as ‘deadnaming.’” Another claimed “misogynistic trans ideology” was being pushed in schools.

The formal complaint alleged “repeated transphobic behaviour” and “discrimination”. An investigation was opened in August 2019 and Mr Best defended the posts under freedom of speech laws.

The following month the complaint was dropped but four new charges were levelled over him publishing the original complaint redacted online and campaigning for innocence.

He was issued a formal warning by a faculty dean, despite not being notified of the charges or allowed a formal defence beforehand, and accused of “sexual, homophobic, racial or other unlawful harassment of any student” and bringing the university into disrepute.

He was found in breach of the university’s social media and trans equality policies that protect against a “humiliating or offensive environment”. Mr Best successfully appealed, then went to the ombudsman which reviewed the case.

The OIA ruled last month: “We are not satisfied that the University has adequately apologised for the delay and the impact of the procedural failings on Mr Best. We consider that distress and inconvenience was caused to Mr Best, which has not been recognised by the University.”

A Huddersfield University spokesman said it was “committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and will rigorously investigate claims of discrimination against any of our students. Whilst the University cannot comment on individual cases, we will of course follow any instructions issued by the OIA”.

Ministers are planning a raft of new laws to uphold free speech at universities, including allowing students and academics to sue for compensation through the courts if they feel unfairly silenced.

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Campus feminists censured for excluding trans students

Bristol Students' Union has ordered the society's president to stand down and banned her from union leadership posts for two years

By Ewan Somerville

13 March 2021 • 4:00pm



A university feminist society has been disciplined for excluding trans women from talks and debates about rape and sexual assault.

Women Talk Back hosted women-only meetings at Bristol University to discuss male violence against females, and argued the presence of men could make attendees fearful to speak out.

The students refused entry to male-born transgender people who self-identify as women, classed as men under equality laws unless they have changed their legal sex.

Now Bristol Students' Union has ordered the society's president, Raquel Rosario-Sanchez, to stand down and banned her from union leadership posts for two years.

And committee members must complete an "equality, diversity and inclusion" course.

The society's 73 members have written to Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, urging him to take action under new free speech powers to combat "unacceptable silencing and censoring" on campuses.

A student filed a formal complaint against the society last year after a trans woman was shut out from a campus meeting on "women's boundaries" in law, culture and society.

Ms Rosario-Sanchez had cited the Equality Act 2010 which lists biological sex as a protected characteristic, meriting single-sex spaces.

But students' union officials ruled in February that the student was discriminated against and the incident was "extremely harmful" to them.

The society was told that Bristol SU defines women as "all who self-define as women, including (if they wish) those with complex gender identities that include 'woman', and those who experience oppression as women".

'Women have a right to single-sex spaces'

Ms Rosario-Sanchez, 30, a PhD student, said: "Women have a right to single-sex spaces when we are talking about sensitive matters. We want to use that law so any woman can have a space to talk and be respected and believed.

"There is this climate where people think they have a right to censor and silence the free speech of others. It's happening to us and so many students, but universities are becoming weaker and weaker."

A Bristol SU spokeswoman said: "The [society's] behaviour was found to be in breach of the Bristol SU code of conduct, and the complaints panel decided that it is appropriate to apply sanctions to the group."

Peter Daly, a discrimination lawyer at Doyle Clayton, warned sex and gender identity have been "conflated and confused", with the latter not a protected characteristic under equality laws.

"Institutions that misunderstand or misapply these concepts risk implementing policies that are at variance with the law," he said.

Two in five LGBT students have [hidden their identity at university](#) for fear of discrimination, according to the charity Stonewall.

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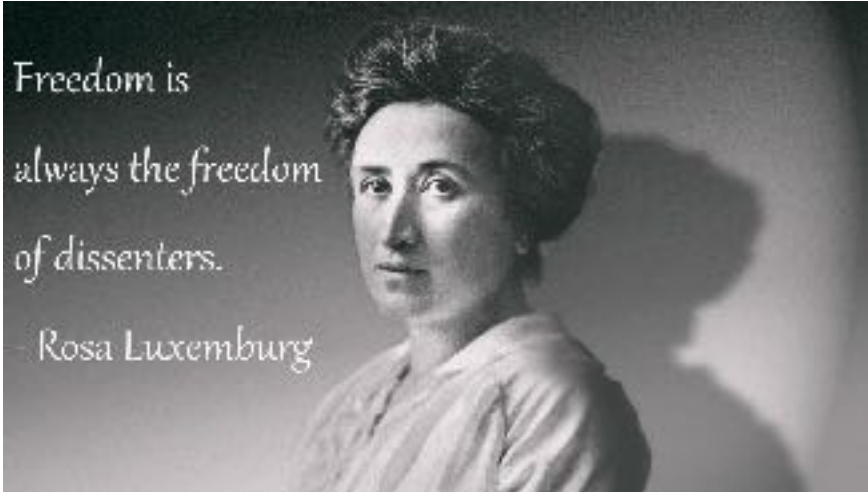


Being Gender Critical: a Story

by Alessandra Asteriti

Graham Linehan

Mar 22 100 14



In April 2019, I wrote a fact-filled, reasonable thread on the importance of maintaining the legal definition of ‘woman’ in international law. Within two hours, I received my first reply with ‘shut the fuck up TERF’ and an anime character pointing a gun at me.

In a little more than a year, the following things happened to me.

1. I was suspended permanently from Twitter twice, the first time in June 2019 (reinstated in September 2019 after appealing to the Better Business Bureau) and the second time in December 2020, again permanently. This time appealing to the Better Business Bureau is not available anymore, so the ban will probably stand, and I will join the thousands of feminists already banned.
2. I was targeted several times by trans activists, with death threats, by tweet and by DM, and emails to my university.
3. Apparently, Mermaids sent a complaint to my university. Mermaids denied they did so and the university is refusing to confirm this, or release the communication, citing data protection legislation.
4. I have had to withdraw a chapter I was asked to submit to an edited collection. Every new edit I submitted came back with further requests of edits, some of them obviously irrelevant. The editor of the collection blocked me on Twitter because of my views.
5. I published [an article in the Modern Law Review blog](#), together with solicitor Rebecca Bull. Most academics studiously ignored it, even if it is the first published rebuttal of the gender ideologists’ position on the GRA reform.
6. I published [a letter on the Italian newspaper La Repubblica](#). As a consequence, I became more visible to the Italian trans activists, who targeted me on Twitter eventually resulting in the permanent suspension. Italian philosophy professor Michela Marzano wrote a reply on Facebook, heavily criticising my letter, but without alerting me of the response. I signed up to FB to reply. I was shortly thereafter also suspended from FB without an explanation.
7. Students at my university complained to the President about my ideas and asked that [a statement be made against me](#) (in German). The students claim they do not feel safe with me on campus. Reminder that I am the one who received death threats.
8. In a little more than a year I went from fewer than 3000 followers on Twitter to more than 11,000. Many many of them women, a lot of them anonymous. Many of them contacted me with their stories. Stories of silencing, fear, loss of rights.

I know that there are a lot of women who have had to suffer much more than I have. Some of

Sex and the Census: Why surveys should not conflate sex and gender identity

The UK census authorities have proposed guidance for the 2021 census indicating that the sex question may be answered according to subjective gender identity. This raises issues about the measurement of sex and gender identity which other data collection exercises are also contending with. This paper addresses the questions that have arisen regarding the census, before going on to explain how these questions have emerged more widely. Finally, I address the difficulties of discussing the collection of data on sex in a climate of policy capture and silencing.

Forthcoming in: *International Journal of Research Methodology*, accepted for publication 6th March 2020

Professor Alice Sullivan

UCL Institute of Education, Department of Social Science

Sex and the Census: Why surveys should not conflate sex and gender identity

Introduction

The UK census authorities have proposed guidance for the 2021 census indicating that the sex question may be answered according to subjective gender identity. This raises issues about the measurement of sex and gender identity which other data collection exercises are also contending with. This paper addresses the questions that have arisen regarding the census, before going on to explain how these questions have emerged more widely. Finally, I address the difficulties of discussing the collection of data on sex in a climate of policy capture and silencing.

The 2021 Census

Proposed online guidance to accompany the sex question in the 2021 census advises respondents that they may answer in terms of their subjective gender identity, rather than their biological or legal sex. The guidance will effectively transform the longstanding sex question into a question about gender identity.

Different versions of the guidance are being used in the census rehearsal for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively, which could be problematic in itself if differences in the guidance lead to differences in the way the question is answered. Both the England and Wales and Northern Irish versions of the proposed guidance refer to people with intersex conditions (Differences of Sexual Development/DSDs). Concerns have been raised by those supporting families with DSD conditions that these rare congenital conditions should not be conflated with gender identityⁱ.

The census has collected data on sex since its inception in 1801. As a fundamental demographic variable, robust data on the number of male and female citizens is of vital importance to the planning and delivery of public services. Sex is a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act, therefore data on sex is clearly necessary for equalities monitoring. Research and analysis by users of population level data typically presumes the ability to distinguish who is male and female, as a basic explanatory variable.

The sex question was treated as self-explanatory, and issued without guidance until 2011. Guidance issued for the 2011 census advised transsexual and transgender individuals to respond to the sex question based on their self-declared gender identity. This was not subject to consultation, and it is not clear how data quality was affected, but it is likely that few respondents consulted the guidance. The shift to a 'digital-first' census in 2021 means that any proposed guidance will be much more visible and accessible, compared to the 2011 census (which was predominantly paper based, with separate online guidance). It is also likely the number of respondents who might seek to answer the sex question in terms of their gender identity will be higher in 2021. Taken together, these factors introduce the potential for significant discontinuity with the 2011 and previous censuses.

The 2021 census will include a new, voluntary question on gender identity in 2021. This could provide valuable data for researchers seeking to understand the prevalence of trans and non-binary identities geographically and across demographic groups, with the proviso that the risk of identifiability may prevent such data being released at the micro level. Due to its scale, the census potentially provides a unique opportunity to provide accurate data on the diverse group described under the 'trans umbrella', as well as the opportunity to give a baseline to track change over time. This has been welcomed, given the current lack of data, and strong interest in understanding the rise of trans identities, particularly among youth. Whereas, among older generations, male-to-female identities were more common than female-to-male, this has been starkly reversed among the younger generation (Littman 2018). The value of the gender identity variable will be maximised if it is combined with accurate data on sex.

The proposed guidance assumes that the number of respondents who self-identify as members of the opposite sex will be small, and that the resulting measurement error will therefore be small compared to other sources of misclassification. However, we currently have no reliable data on the size of the trans population either in the population as a whole or within sub-groups, and crucially, it is impossible to predict how this may change over time. It is unlikely that the trans population will be evenly distributed, for example by age, sex and geography. This means that the effects on data reliability are likely to be greater at the sub-group level. This can have extreme consequences for particular subgroups, e.g. 1 in 50 male prisoners in England and Wales identify as transgender (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2019). The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust claims that between 1.2% and 2.7% of children and young people are 'gender-diverse' (NIHR 2019).

It is widely understood that survey questions should be clear and specific (Payne 1951). Deliberately muddling together two distinct concepts (sex and gender identity) into one question is therefore a novel approach. This appears to be driven partly by a desire to avoid offending some respondents with a question about their sex, since, if this clashes with their identity, they may not wish to acknowledge this. However, it is hardly unusual for researchers to ask about delicate matters which could potentially offend. Some respondents who are offended by a question may give incorrect information, and some may fail to respond. However, this is not in itself a sufficient justification for guidance which effectively requests a false response.

Of course, all survey designers are mindful of the feelings of respondents, both because of their ethical duty of care, and because they aim to maximise response rates. This sensitivity must extend to all population groups. However, despite assertions that the self-id guidance is motivated partly by a desire to maximise response, testing commissioned by the National Records of Scotland suggests that the overall response rate could in fact be negatively affected by this guidance (ScotCen 2019).

As the UK's most high-profile population survey, changes to the census are likely to influence other data collection exercises. If the decision to reframe the sex question in terms of self-declared gender identity is replicated in other surveys, we are likely to lose data on sex more widely, with detrimental implications for policy-making, research and analysis

There are a number of options open to the census authorities to avoid guidance which conflates sex and gender identity. 1) Remove the guidance. The term sex is self-explanatory, therefore guidance is arguably unnecessary, and no guidance would certainly be better than guidance indicating that the question should be answered incorrectly. 2) Advise respondents to answer in terms of their biological sex. 3) Advise respondents to answer in terms of their legal sex. While option 2 might be preferred in

terms of the accuracy of sex-based data, in practice, 2 and 3 would be identical for all bar the few respondents in possession of a GRC. There may be issues with requiring GRC holders to disclose their biological sex, so that a biological sex question may have to be optional for this small group. The main risk of option 3 would be to continuity over time, given the possibility that changing legal sex may become more common in the future. However, any of these three options would be preferable to the current proposal.

Sex Matters

We need accurate data, disaggregated by sex in order to understand differences in the lives of women and men, and in order to tackle sexism. Sex matters from the start of life, as illustrated by international differences in the sex ratio at birth due to son preference (Chao et al. 2019). Sex is a powerful predictor of almost every dimension of social life: education (Stoet et al. 2016), the labour market (Joshi et al. 2019), political attitudes and behaviour (Green and Prosser 2018), religion (Voas 2015), crime (Ministry of Justice 2017), physical health (Koblinsky, Campbell and Harlow 2018), mental health (Ploubidis et al. 2017), cultural tastes and consumption (Sullivan and Brown 2015) – the list goes on. It is difficult to think of an area of life where sex is not an important dimension for analysis. Women have historically been second class citizens when it comes to data (Perez 2019), and a ‘male as norm’ attitude was still apparent in much quantitative social science as recently as the 1980s. Nevertheless, few quantitative social scientists today would question the central place of sex as an analytic category. So, why are some surveys moving away from asking about or observing sex?

Sex, gender and gender identity

Increasingly, accurate data collection on sex is being undermined by the conflation of three distinct categories: sex, gender and gender identity.

1. Sex: In humans, sex is a binary biological category. Individuals are classified by reproductive function as male or female. Sex is determined in utero, and is immutable (Kashimada and Koopman 2010; Sobel, Zhu and Imperato-McGinley 2004).
2. Gender: The term ‘gender’ refers to the stereotypes and social roles that are associated with each sex (Scott 1986). Gender is a social category, rather than an individual one, and refers to how society sees girls and boys and women and men, based on their sex. Gender refers to the hierarchical power structure between men and women (Oakley 1998).
3. Gender identity: The term ‘gender identity’ refers to some people’s sense that they identify psychologically as a member of the male or female sex, particularly when this identity clashes with their biological sex. It refers to how individuals see themselves, rather than how society sees them.

People often use the terms sex and gender as synonyms, perhaps partly due to squeamishness about the word ‘sex’, but also in order to highlight the point that differences in social and economic outcomes between the sexes are often due to power structures and stereotypes rather than *simply* biology. This use of sex and gender as interchangeable has become problematic because of changes in the use and understanding of the term ‘gender’.

There has been a shift in recent years towards using the term ‘gender’ to refer to both gender (the social construct) and gender identity (the individual self-perception). The confusion between gender and gender identity is clearly illustrated in ONS materials (Tolland and Evans 2019). Yet, whereas gender is

rooted in sex, and how others treat us based on our sex, gender identity derives its meaning in opposition to sex. A male may “identify as” a woman, whereas a female simply is a woman. Biological sex and social gender only differ for the very small number of transsexuals who are perceived socially as the opposite sex to their biological sex. This is likely to be a negligible fraction of the group labelled as ‘trans’ in contemporary usage.

Postmodern fallacies about sex

Data collection exercises risk being influenced by a set of inter-locking fallacies about sex, which derive from a strand of postmodernist queer theory, which can be labelled ‘genderism’. The key fallacies are as follows:

1. There are more than two sexes, and/or sex is a spectrum.
2. People with intersex conditions are a ‘third sex’ and/or intersex conditions are a form of gender identity.
3. Sex is a (western) social construct which is arbitrarily assigned at birth.
4. Non-binary individuals are neither male nor female.
5. It is offensive to acknowledge the existence of biological sex.

The claim that there are more than two sexes originates with the influential queer theorist Anne Fausto-Sterling, who first posited the existence of five sexes, sliding into the claim that sex is a continuous variable “*Indeed, I would argue further that sex is a vast, infinitely malleable continuum that defies the constraints of even five categories.*” (Fausto-Sterling 1993). Fausto-Sterling later dialled back from such bold claims, in favour of the more nebulous notion that “*...sex and gender are best conceptualized as points in a multidimensional space*”. (Fausto-Sterling 2000). As absurd as it may appear, the claim that sex is not binary appears to be gaining credence through sheer repetition (Wright and Hilton 2020). For example, a recent paper published in the journal *Significance* claims that “*There is a growing recognition in scientific, social and political spheres that gender and sex vary across a continuum.*” (Alba, Wong and Bråten 2019). If sex really was a spectrum, then presumably we would need to measure it according to some kind of scale, yet so far, no such scale has been proposed.

Fausto-Sterling’s claim that sex is not binary relies on the existence of people with intersex conditions, also known as Differences of Sex Development (DSDs). These conditions are estimated to apply to 0.018% of births (Sax 2002). It is clearly a fallacy to suggest that the existence of a small minority of anomalous cases invalidates the existence or usefulness of a categorical variable. From the point of view of social statistics, it is strange indeed that such a tiny element of noise or error should be seen as problematic. Think of any other category used in social science – social class, educational level, ethnic group – and it is obvious that each of these concepts is far murkier and more open to measurement ambiguity and error than sex. Sex is arguably the cleanest variable in our arsenal.

People with DSD conditions are not a ‘third sex’ (or a fourth or fifth sex for that matter) and their conditions have nothing to do with trans identities. But the genderist ideology uses intersex conditions to argue that binary sex is not a biological reality, but a western social construct. Fausto-Sterling claims that “*Western culture is deeply committed to the idea that there are only two sexes*” (Fausto-Sterling 1993). This sows the seed for the startling and frankly, racist trope that ‘non-western’ people had binary sex imposed on them by imperialists – how genderist queer theorists imagine these innocents managed

to reproduce before the advent of imperialism is unclear. In this paradigm, sex is not determined in utero and noted at birth, but arbitrarily “assigned at birth”. Birth certificates do not simply note sex, they actually create the sexed body (Holzer 2019). The use of DSD conditions in the service of an ideological cause which is unrelated to these conditions has caused offence and upset to many DSD families and campaigners (Dreger 2016).

While trans people identify as the opposite sex, ‘non-binary’ people claim an identify which is outside the gender binary. If this implies some level of discomfort with the stereotypes associated with both sexes, then clearly this may apply to vast swathes of people, perhaps to everyone. Yet, clearly, people who describe themselves as non-binary come in two sexes, male and female, the same as everyone else.

The tendency to shy away from asking which sex a survey respondent belongs to appears to be based on the view that it is offensive to ask people who identify as trans or non-binary about their sex, often phrased hyperbolically as the claim that acknowledging sex erases people’s identities or denies their existence. Yet sex and gender identity are two distinct concepts. Indeed, trans identity derives its meaning from sex, since being trans implies incongruence between sex and identity.

The fallacies listed above are reflected, whether wittingly or not, in survey items which ask the respondent’s gender instead of their sex, which give additional response categories alongside male/female when asking for the respondent’s sex (e.g. are you male/female/trans/non-binary/intersex), or which ask whether the respondent’s ‘gender’ is different from their ‘sex assigned at birth’.

The political agenda, policy capture and silencing

It is impossible to understand the proposed change to the meaning of the sex question in the census without reference to a broader political project aimed at replacing sex with gender identity in law, language and data-collection.

Much of the general public within the UK only started to become aware of gender identity as a political project as a result of proposed changes to the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA) by the Scottish and UK Governments in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The GRA allows transsexual individuals with a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria to change their legal sex if certain conditions are met. Since the Act came into force around 5,000 people have acquired a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)ⁱⁱ. Both Governments consulted on proposals to remove all medical gate-keeping and replace this with a statutory self-declaration process, thereby making GRCs accessible to a much larger number of people who may identify as trans without experiencing gender dysphoria, and without the need to demonstrate that they have been through any medical or social transition. The current UK Government now appears to have dropped its plans for reform, while at the time of writing, the Scottish Government is consulting a draft Bill aimed at introducing statutory self-declaration. Yet the principles behind the proposed changes have already been accepted by many public bodies. Examples in practice include police forces recording crimes committed by men as though they were committed by women at the request of the perpetrator (Burden 2019), organisational pay-gap data being collected according to gender identity rather than sex (ACAS 2019), and the replacement of actual sex with the desired sex on medical records at patients’ request (MBM Policy Analysis 2020b).

Gender identity lobbyists have campaigned for many years to remove sex as a protected characteristic in law (WPUK 2020). Much of this campaigning has been done quietly, behind the scenes, within social and political institutions and organisations, without public debate, due process or democratic scrutiny, a process termed ‘policy capture’ (Murray and Hunter Blackburn 2019). Murray and Hunter Blackburn outline the way that the census authorities have been lobbied by and have consulted with genderist organisations since at least 2008, whereas groups representing women’s interests have not been consulted. Neither has there been specific discussion of the move away from collecting clear data on sex with academic researchers or public bodies which use this data. *“This change is only happening because of intense lobbying by groups which promote the view that sex should be treated as irrelevant where it contradicts self-declared gender identity.”* (MBM Policy Analysis 2020a)(p.2).

The question of sex and gender identity is marked by exceptional intolerance of dissent by genderist extremists, and a remarkably successful campaign to shut down debate. Academics face campaigns of vexatious complaints, no-platforming, and even threats of violence simply for asserting the reality and social salience of sex, especially when they do so from a feminist perspective (Sullivan and Suissa 2019). This has a wider chilling effect, meaning that normal open and rigorous discourse is effectively suspended. Critical voices are no longer heard, and so a false ‘consensus’ emerges.

Case study

A letter to the census authorities asking them to reconsider their approach to the sex question was signed by 80 quantitative social scientists, including ten Fellows of the British Academy, and several leaders of major social surveys (Griffiths 2019). Yet, such is the climate of fear on this issue that some colleagues did not feel able to sign the public version of the letter, or to sign at all. One colleague who felt constrained by job insecurity explained that they could not take the potential career hit: *“So with a very heavy heart I have chosen to swallow my integrity on this particular issue and keep my head down. I don't like doing this, and I don't like how it feels. I don't like the implications of my inaction for social justice in general or gender issues in particular.”*ⁱⁱⁱ

This colleague’s fears were not misplaced. The CEO of a major UK research organisation which is working closely with ONS on the census wrote to all staff instructing them not to sign the letter to the census authorities, claiming that this could risk damaging the perceived independence of the organisation, and stating that *“We know that staff endorsing this letter may cause upset and offence to some of our LGBT+ colleagues”*^{iv}. This organisation had never made a similar demand of staff on any other topic.

I had been invited to speak at a research methods seminar on sex and gender issues in data collection at this organisation, on a panel including representatives from ONS. The event was cancelled. When I challenged the organisation on the reasons for this, I was told that including me was ‘too risky’, and that either the chair or one of the other speakers had threatened to pull out if I was given a platform (threatening to pull out of an event if another speaker is included is a standard no-platforming technique). A staff group had also applied pressure. An internal email stated *“The LGBT+ group feel that including her as a panellist could be seen as [organisation name] endorsing anti-trans views, risking reputational damage and, perhaps more importantly, risking harm to staff and audience members. They have suggested that she should not take part, or that the event be cancelled.”*^v No evidence was provided for these supposed “anti-trans views” or of any risk of actual harm. However, it is now commonplace for people who believe in the reality and importance of sex as a category to be accused of transphobia, simply on the basis of this belief, regardless of their complete commitment to upholding

the human rights of trans people. By no-platforming such people, organisations are refusing to engage with evidence-based positions which are widely held within the relevant community of experts. This cannot be healthy, particularly in a context where policy is being formed.

This example is not atypical. Academics, research organisations and policymakers need to be alert to this climate of fear and silencing in order to counter it. This makes it even more important than it would be on other topics that experts are actively consulted. Rigorously seeking out genuine expertise protects against policy capture. Troublingly, the census authorities appear to have treated submissions from university staff with no relevant disciplinary expertise, but a clear ideological agenda, with at least equal weight to the views of population data users (MBM Policy Analysis 2020c). As online activism among university staff and students becomes increasingly prevalent, it is important that the organisations being lobbied are able to distinguish between self-identified experts and genuine ones.

Conclusions

Sex and gender identity are entirely distinct concepts. The census, and surveys in general, need to avoid conflating them.

Without accurate data on sex, we lose the ability to understand differences and to design evidence-based policies tackling problems facing girls and boys, women and men. We also lose the ability to gain an accurate understanding of issues facing trans people of both sexes.

A culture of silencing and policy capture by gender identity lobbyists uniquely affects this aspect of data collection, shutting down critical discussion, and allowing normal measurement considerations to be brushed aside.

The postmodernist project is explicitly anti-scientific (Sokal and Bricmont 1998). It is vital that those of us who work with social statistics understand the origins of the attempt to dismantle sex as a category in postmodernist queer theory. For queer theorists, dismantling categories is a political project. Social scientists who are interested in measuring social phenomena that are 'out there' in the real world should understand that the postmodernists who used to denigrate all quantitative research are now coming for our questionnaires. Resisting postmodernism matters for everyone who believes that the distinction between fact and fiction matters for research and policy.



What's On

Police warned leading Scottish poet over threats to safety after social media 'hounding'

A leading Scottish poet and spoken word performer was warned by the police about threats to her safety in the wake of a bitter "transphobia" row which she says forced her to move out of Edinburgh.

By [Brian Ferguson](#)

Sunday, 4th October 2020, 7:00 am



Jenny Lindsay is one of Scotland's leading poets and spoken word performers. Picture: Ryan McGoverne

Jenny Lindsay, one of the country's best-known spoken word performers, has revealed she was advised not to attend events unaccompanied after she was targeted online.

Lindsay has told she she felt she was the victim of "a casting out" and "a shaming" after being singled out for speaking out on social media over the nature of posts by a transgender activist, and their subsequent defence in an online magazine article, suggesting they had advocated violence against women taking part in a demonstration in London.

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comments

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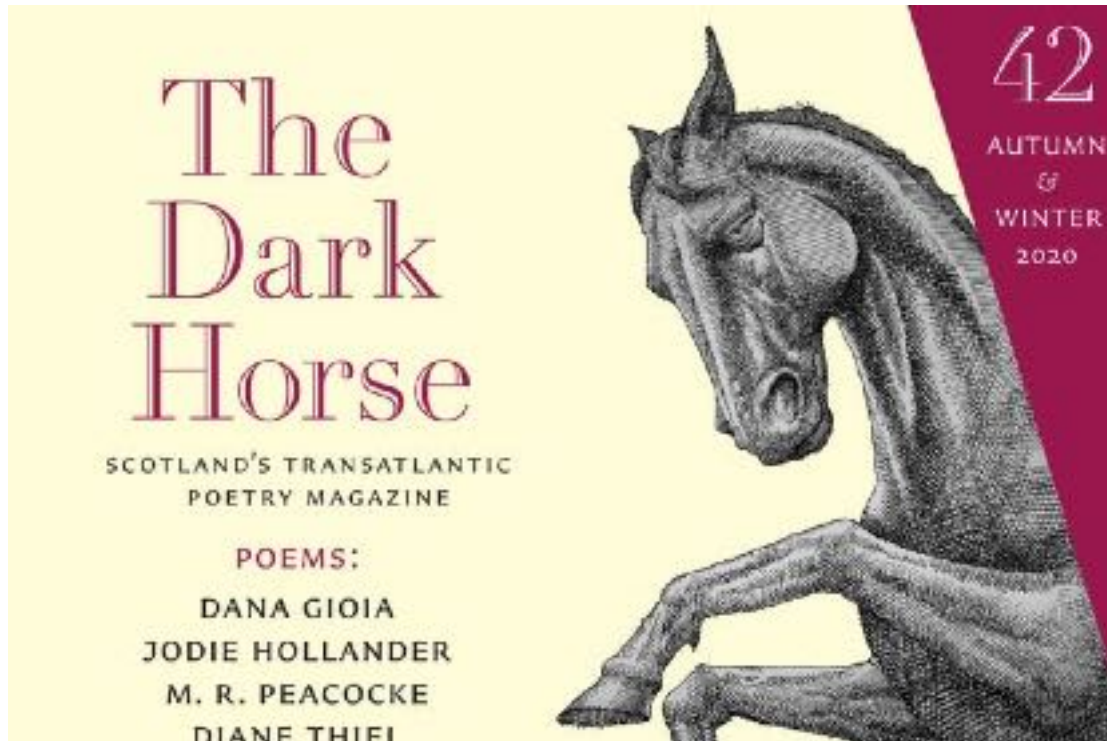
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eToro

5 Big Myths of AI and Machine Learning Debunked

Splunk

In a new essay in poetry magazine *The Dark Horse*, Lindsay sets out how she was told was being “denigrated” on private online forums for writers.



Jenny Lindsay's essay appears in the new edition of the poetry magazine *The Dark Horse*.

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In the essay, entitled “Anatomy of a Hounding,” she also tells how she began to lose work and found out from fellow poets that they had come under pressure not to share a stage with her.

In the new essay, Lindsay, a leading figure in Edinburgh’s poetry scene for nearly 20 years, describes her treatment as “social ostracization coupled with cultural authoritarianism.”

The police involvement came after the intervention of the Scottish Poetry Library in February of this year when it issued a statement condemning “bullying and calls for no-platforming of

writers in events programmes and publishing.”

It stated: “There has been an escalation, particularly on social media, of disharmony, which is creating fractures that aren’t sustainable or healthy in a small country like Scotland.”

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In her essay, Lindsay - who has tackled sexual politics, gender and feminism in her recent stage show and book *This Script* - recalls how she was continually “unfollowed and unfriended” on social media by Scottish writers and poets, despite making little public comment.

She added: “I began to feel I was experiencing an almost Kafkaesque surveillance and denigration, without knowing what the exact charges were so having no means to challenge them.

“My income as a freelancer - always precarious - dropped

date.

"As anyone who has been through this will know, the only way one can survive a smearing of this kind is with robust defence from those who know and love you. It was in short supply, partly because so many of my friends/peer group are in the literary sector.

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"I was told about private forums for writers on Facebook where I was being denigrated, often without being named. Scotland's literary sector is small. The target was evident. Knowing that people I thought of as friends were bearing witness to such things but saying nothing in my defence was gut-wrenching."

In her essay, Lindsay recalls how her relief at the initial reaction to the SPL's statement was "short-lived" after the publication of an open letter accusing the body of "institutional transphobia."

It suggested that "the language used and the manner of communication led us to worry that the statement provided cover and comfort to public transphobia, and failed to protect and respect trans writers."

On International Women's Day in March, Lindsay was named in the Scottish Parliament by Joan McAlpine, chair of Holyrood's culture committee, as an example of a feminist poet who had been subjected to "online mobs trying to prevent their getting work or blocking their performances."

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Writing in her essay, Lindsay states: "Social media has taken a wrecking ball to both individual and institutional self-confidence, with cultural edicts making our scene at even the formerly very open-access grassroots level appear exclusive.

"What happened to me could easily happen to any of you if we allow lies to become truth and women to be police by standards we would never demand of men.

"We cannot permit our literary culture to become a reflection of, rather than a powerful antidote to, an increasingly corrupted political discourse on this and so many issues.

"We cannot have a healthy literary culture if we allow this to continue and without our institutions supporting values of free, democratic, creative expression. Robustly. Publicly. The alternative is cultural vandalism."

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Asif Khan, director of the Scottish Poetry Library, said: "A key consideration for the arts sector as a whole is the fostering of positive relationships. In this day and age, there is little space for nuance and empathy on social media platforms.

"A key consideration for the arts sector as a whole is the fostering of positive relationships. In this day and age, there is little space for nuance and more often empathy on social media platforms.

"National Poetry Day on Thursday demonstrated the strides we can make on promoting the art form and the undoubted talent in Scotland when we come together."

A message from the Editor:

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CULTURE Jul 11, 2020 3:00 PM EST

Standing up for JK Rowling gets YA author Gillian Philip cancelled

Scottish author Gillian Philip of the Warrior Cats series was sacked by her employer, Working Partners, for standing up for JK Rowling on Twitter.

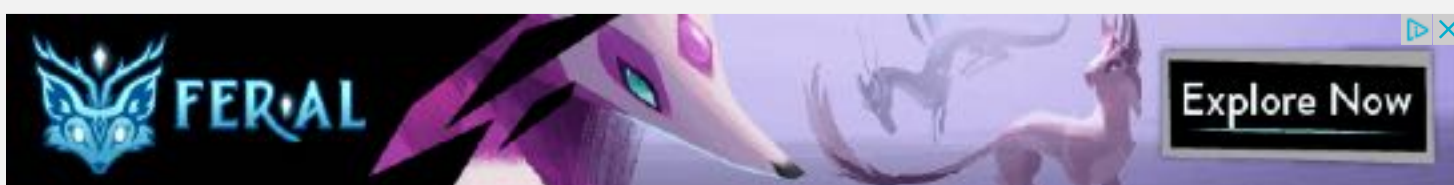


Erin Perse
London, UK

July 11, 2020 3:00 PM
3 Mins Reading

A matter of days after Hachette Publishers and the Blair Partnership literary agency made a stand for free expression on behalf of their star author, JK Rowling, it looked as though things were looking up for women in the book industry who object to the erosion of their rights by trans ideology.

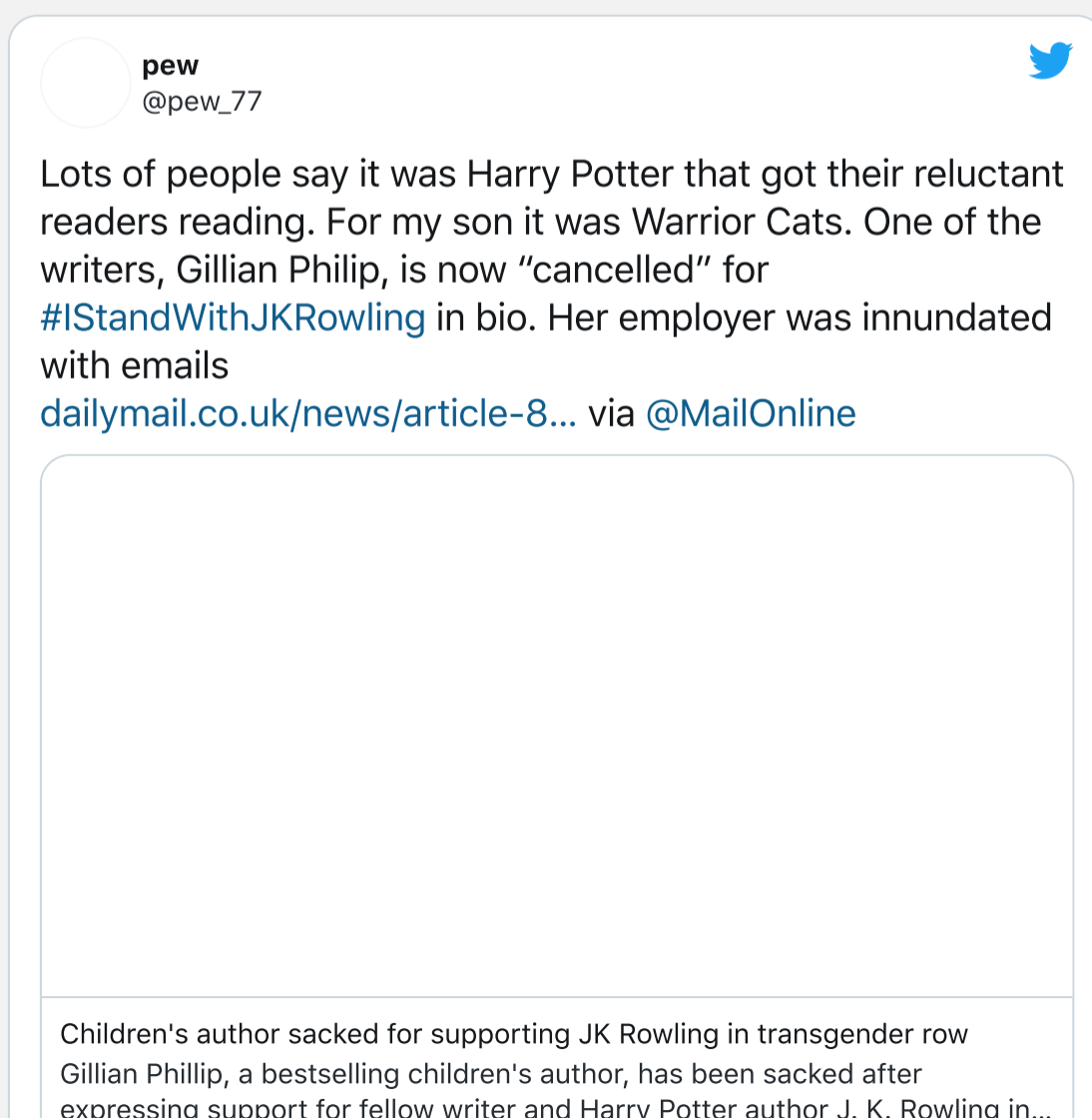
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Then a Scottish author, Gillian Philip, was sacked by her employer for standing up for JK Rowling on Twitter. Seeing the barrage of sexually abusive messages to Rowling, Philip changed her Twitter handle to include a message of support, the hashtag #IStandWithJKRowling.



That's it. And for that, she lost her job.



Expressing support for Rowling and Philip, letter author of the morning news
dailymail.co.uk

8:24 AM · Jul 5, 2020



180 53 Copy link to Tweet

This—along with the fact she was a children's author tweeting under her own name (the world of children's & young adult fiction fandom is notoriously woke)—quickly attracted the attention of the assorted trans activists, and disturbed teenage boys whose misogyny—abetted by Twitter turning a blind eye—makes the social medial site such a difficult environment for women. As the accounts were anonymous, there was no way of knowing whether they were genuine *Warrior Cats* fans.

Over a 24 hour period, men bombarded Philip with a large volume of sexually abusive tweets, which she simply retweeted along with the defiant battle cry "Bring it, homophobes and lesbian-haters". She was also accused of being "transphobic". When the bombardment got too much, she deleted her Twitter account, which is still [cached](#).

When Philip expressed her unwillingness to recant her support for Rowling, trans activists organized a mass-spamming of complaints to her employer, a US company called Working Partners which answers to the publisher Harper Collins. Within 24 hours James Noble, the managing editor, sent personal emails to the vexatious complainants to say that he had sacked his employee.

Harper Collins did not approach the author to find out what happened, from her perspective. The reason given to the sacking was Philips' "responses to the fans," although it was not clear at all that her antagonists were fans of the book series.

Philip is part of *The Warrior Cats* series published by Harper Collins. The series of children's books, aimed at the 8-12 age range, is put together by the production company Working Partners. The books are authored by 'Erin Hunter,' which is collective pseudonym for a group of female writers, one of whom was Gillian Philip.

Philip has also authored fiction under the nom de plume Gabriella Poole, for the *Darke Academy* series and as Adam Blade, for the *Beast Quest* books. Fiction she authored under her own name has seen a surge in sales since the news of her sacking broke.

This is what happens to a children's author who lacks the international platform of someone of JK Rowling's signature stature. The episode demonstrates how companies will treat women who step out of line, by defying trans ideology, when they aren't too big to cancel. In effect, women are being sacked because they are the victims of online sexualized abuse by males. Women are re-victimized by those who should defend them.

It is apparent that women writers are at a pinch point. Horribly aware of these threats to their freedom of speech; earning an often precarious income in a notoriously 'woke' industry, now is clearly a risky time to speak out.



Even so, women are finding their voices, and deciding that living without cognitive dissonance is preferable to staying silent. As the volume of our voices seems gradually to be turning



Allison Bailey
@BluskyeAllison



... been happening, the tide

In 2020, in the West, women are being hounded out of their jobs by men because they assert women's sex based rights. The mere mention of women's rights, independent of males, has become hate speech!? HarperCollins, shame on you. #IStandWithGillian.

Children's author sacked for supporting JK Rowling in transgender row
Gillian Phillip, a bestselling children's author, has been sacked after expressing support for fellow writer and Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling in...
[dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk)

9:11 AM · Jul 5, 2020



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WILD WOMAN WRITING CLUB

reviewing new poetry & fiction, writing for women's liberation

Bullying the Children's Author

Posted on ~~December 15, 2020~~**December 15, 2020** by **flow**

I am a trained teacher and children's author who has been subject to openly hostile tweets from a cohort of authors regarding my motivation for writing a body positive picture book 'My Body is Me.'

Amongst other names, I have been called hateful, likened to an Islamaphobe, and my suitability as a visiting author in schools has been publicly called into question.

This name calling has been extremely distressing. I have had periods where I haven't slept or eaten a meal for several days, and have been constantly crying and battled suicidal thoughts. This distress is exacerbated by my autism and natural social anxiety.

I no longer attend social publishing industry functions for fear of being shunned and I haven't been able to focus on any sustained writing project for over a year from when this first began.

I feel I have no option but to exit my career as a writer once my forthcoming books have been released.

Rachel Rooney

*This is the book used to justify the hounding of Rachel Rooney: **My Body is Me** (<https://www.transgendertrend.com/product/my-body-is-me/>)! A rhyming tale for children aged 3-6 years, its' message is that there is nothing wrong with children's bodies. "I am my body / My Body is me / It's a wonderful thing / I'm sure you'll agree." As this runs contrary to gender identity ideologues' 'born in the wrong body' belief, they consider that the author must be berated and ostracised for it.

READ MORE LIKE THIS (https://wildwomanwritingclub.wordpress.com/2020/06/10/what-it-costs-women_speak-out/)

15 thoughts on "Bullying the Children's Author"

PRETTY LITTLE HOBO says:

December 15, 2020 at 10:19 am

This makes me so angry for you, myself and for all women.

REPLY

FLOW says:

December 15, 2020 at 10:26 am

It's all upside-down, isn't it? A woman with autism, who has spent decades working with kids with SENs, writes a book which tells kids there is nothing wrong with their bodies. Those who believe people can be 'born in the wrong body' attack her relentlessly, so they don't have to think through the implications of paediatric transitioning, all of which were made crystal clear in the Keira Bell judgment. Peak 2020.

REPLY

PRETTY LITTLE HOBO says:

December 15, 2020 at 10:31 am

It's craziness. It's so important we all don't stop taking about this. While obviously I completely support Rachel doing whatever she needs to do to look after her own mental health (she's given so much already), it's vital that other women take up the mantle. I need to do more.

FLOW says:

December 15, 2020 at 11:50 am

Hard agree. We can support those being targeted, emotionally/morally/by buying their books. We can tell those baselessly attacking their reputations that they're out of line. We can call upon institutions to support dissident writers & artists. We can respond to public consultations. Lots we can do, and every little bit matters.

PRETTY LITTLE HOBO says:

December 15, 2020 at 11:55 am

Agreed. I'm a writer currently writing a novel and considering starting a blog. I will do my utmost to counteract this harmful ideology in every area, as well as supporting those brave enough to speak in a hostile and hateful climate.

BAUBO60 says:

December 15, 2020 at 5:32 pm

Who would have thought that writing a wonderful book for innocent children about how wonderful our bodies are, incites such abuse! The ones that tell us we are hateful for loving and supporting girls and women and putting them first, are projecting and expressing their own hatred in full view for all to see. Their self destructing attitudes leaves a trail of psychic attack victims. We women know it's just more of the same of what millions, billions of girls and women have experienced over the millennia. Sadly the ones who's minds have been infiltrated do not. I feel deeply for Rachel and want to retaliate on her behalf. A great injustice has been done. Her career must be revered! Her words are Golden.

REPLY

FLOW says:

December 15, 2020 at 6:39 pm

The awful thing is that institutions support and condone their misogynistic treatment of women. Nobody intervenes. Heretical women have few friends in this sense. Instead of retaliating, I think we do best to support the targeted women, and carry on making arguments for why the attackers' views are wrong, plus calling out bullying & scapegoating for what it is.

REPLY

KATRINA says:

December 15, 2020 at 6:11 pm



(<https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/chambers-and-stonewall-fail-to-strike-out-barristers-discrimination-claim/print/>)

Chambers and Stonewall fail to strike out barrister's discrimination claim



12 March 2021

Posted by [Neil Rose](https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/our-team/neil-rose) (<https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/our-team/neil-rose>)

Stonewall sought to pressure a leading chambers to remove a barrister who was highly critical of the LGBT charity's approach to transgender rights, it has emerged.

It also threatened Garden Court Chambers over their ongoing relationship – Garden Court is a member of the Stonewall diversity champions programme – if the set did not take action against Allison Bailey.

At the heart of the case is Ms Bailey's opposition to replacing sex with gender when it comes to identity and Stonewall's policy of accepting as women people who were born as men but who then identify as women.

Writing last year, she said: "As a woman, a lesbian, a criminal defence barrister and someone who has had extensive experience of male violence, abuse and oppression of women, I believe that there should be some exceptions to males being admitted into female spaces."

Ms Bailey has brought an employment tribunal claim against Garden Court and Stonewall. She says that, in December 2018, she made clear in an email to all members that she was opposed to chambers associating with Stonewall through the diversity champions scheme.

In the email, she alleged that Stonewall was in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

In October 2019, Ms Bailey co-launched and tweeted about the LGB Alliance, a campaigning group which says "attempts to introduce confusion between biological sex and the notion of gender are harming LGB people".

Stonewall complained about her to Garden Court. It confirmed publicly that it was investigating her tweets and then upheld complaints about two of them, but she rejected a request to remove them.

Ms Bailey is claiming for victimisation and/or indirect sex or sexual orientation discrimination against Garden Court, and that Stonewall instructed, caused or induced that unlawful conduct.

She alleges that she suffered various detriments, including a significant downturn in instructions and consequent loss of income.

At a hearing before Employment Judge Stout last month, the respondents failed in a bid to strike out the claims.

In relation to victimisation, [the judge said](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/603670b4d3bf7f0ab2f070b3/Ms_A_Bailey_-_v_-_Stonewall_Equality_Limited_others_2202172_2020_-_preliminary_judgment.pdf) ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/603670b4d3bf7f0ab2f070b3/Ms A Bailey -v- Stonewall Equality Limited_others_2202172_2020_-_preliminary_judgment.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/603670b4d3bf7f0ab2f070b3/Ms_A_Bailey_-_v_-_Stonewall_Equality_Limited_others_2202172_2020_-_preliminary_judgment.pdf)), there was evidence that some members of chambers "reacted adversely" to Ms Bailey's views of Stonewall and her launch of the LGB Alliance, regarding her views as "bigoted".

Though Ms Bailey was not able at this stage to show that the individuals played a "material role" in the detriments she alleges she suffered, Judge Stout said she had established that "she has a reasonably arguable case on the merits".

There was also material "which shows there was interaction between one or more members of chambers and persons who were at least associated with Stonewall... that could be said to amount to 'collusion'".

On indirect discrimination, the judge said there was "considerable force" in the chambers' argument that the views expressed by those individuals were simply their personal views that could not be attributed to the chambers.

But there was evidence that those barristers also sought to communicate them to the heads of chambers and the management committee and could have been acting as agents, so she could not say the claim had no or even little prospect of succeeding at trial.

Judge Stout suggested the claimant's argument that Garden Court allowed Stonewall to direct its complaint process was put too high.

"However, the [Stonewall complaint of 31 October 2019](https://allisonbailey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PH-Bundle-pp-331-2-Stonewall-Complaint.pdf) (<https://allisonbailey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PH-Bundle-pp-331-2-Stonewall-Complaint.pdf>) in itself plainly seeks to put pressure on chambers to take action against the claimant, indeed to the extent of urging chambers to remove the claimant from chambers, and accompanies that with a threat about the ongoing relationship between chambers and Stonewall itself if chambers does not take action.

"There is also evidence that during the investigation there was ongoing interaction between members of chambers... and Stonewall... and that the intention of this interaction was to seek to persuade (at least) chambers to take action against the claimant."

Similarly, it was "plainly arguable from the terms of the complaint of 31 October 2019 that Stonewall sought to induce chambers to subject the claimant to a detriment because of her publicly expressed beliefs and the allegations that she had made against Stonewall".

Judge Stout added: "If the claimant establishes that taking action against her for her beliefs is unlawful indirect sex or sexual orientation discrimination (which is not a straightforward issue), and that the allegations are indeed protected acts, and if the necessary causal connection to a detriment for the purposes of section 111(5)(a) [of the Act] can be established, then she will succeed at trial."

She concluded that the claim was "at least reasonably arguable and stands more than little prospect of success".

The case came to public attention last summer after a [row blew up](https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/censored-or-offensive-crowdjustice-trans-row-rumbles-on) (<https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/censored-or-offensive-crowdjustice-trans-row-rumbles-on>) over what Ms Bailey wrote on her page on crowdfunding website CrowdJustice.

She has now [raised £150,000](https://allisonbailey.co.uk/) (<https://allisonbailey.co.uk/>) from more than 3,600 donations.



Bailey: Arguable case



The Observer

Tavistock trust whistleblower David Bell: 'I believed I was doing the right thing'



Rachel Cooke

🐦 @msrachelcooke

Sun 2 May 2021 10.00 BST

To talk to David Bell is to have some small sense of what it might be like to be his patient. At 70, his energy puts mine to shame. He cycles everywhere. His diary is full. I've rarely interviewed someone so engaged (there are days when he emails me several times, each message more exacting than the last). But ask him a question and he's unlikely to rush in. Certainty is not a given. His open-mindedness belongs to someone far younger. Above all, he is so calm: a reassuring presence. There are times during our conversation when it's hard to believe we're discussing experiences that must have caused him so much anxiety and even, at moments, some fear.

Bell, a distinguished psychiatrist and practising psychoanalyst, is the doctor who in [2018 wrote a controversial report](#) about the activities of the gender identity development service (GIDS), a clinic at the Tavistock and Portman NHS foundation trust in north London, where he worked in adult services from 1995 until his

retirement earlier this year. GIDS, the only clinic of its kind in England, specialises in treating children with gender identity issues and in recent months has been in the news even more than usual. Last December, a judgment by the [high court ruled](#) that those under the age of 16 were unlikely to be mature enough to give informed consent to the prescription of puberty blockers (such drugs delay the development of secondary sex characteristics in patients, in theory enabling children more easily to transition into their desired gender identity as an adult). This ruling, the result of a judicial review brought by 23-year-old Keira Bell - born female, she was prescribed blockers by GIDS at 16 and now regrets her transition - has effectively curtailed medical intervention for children with gender dysphoria. (The Tavistock is to appeal; the case will be heard in June. David Bell will be what is technically called an intervenor in the appeal, which means he can give evidence.)

Bell's report anticipated the concerns of the high court and he feels vindicated by its judgment. "It was jaw-dropping," he says. "Because it was very strong." As he read it, he was struck by details that have not been widely reported, particularly those involving a lack of data, a problem he had raised himself (GIDS was unable to produce for the court any data relating to outcomes and effects, whether desirable or adverse, in children who had been prescribed puberty blockers; nor could it provide details of the number and ages of children who had been given them). But the experience was painful, too: "I felt concerned that we'd moved away from the values [of care] the trust has embodied for so long." He is astonished the judgment seems to have had so little effect on the organisation of GIDS. "Ordinarily, heads would roll," he says. "The management structure has changed slightly, but it feels like window-dressing."



▲ Keira Bell outside the high court after its recent ruling on puberty blockers. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

But whatever the court's verdict, it cannot change the fact that the organisation to which Bell devoted the greater part of his working life did not respect his rights as a whistleblower. Nor has it taken the heat out of the debate about the medical treatment of trans children - if anything, the discourse has only grown more entrenched - which is why he's talking to me now. This is the first time he has spoken in detail about his experiences: about how he came to write his report and the grave consequences that doing so had for him. His retirement means that the threats of disciplinary action against him are over. He is free, at last, to say what he likes.

Writing the report was, he says, a matter of conscience. In 2018, 10 GIDS staff brought their worries to him unsolicited, a figure he estimates to be around a third of those then working there. He had no choice but to act and would do the same again. Nevertheless, it was not easy. Far from being grateful to him for alerting it to a potentially dangerous situation, the trust's position appeared defensive - having read the correspondence involved, perhaps aggressively so - almost from the start. It tried to silence him and instituted proceedings against him. Was he frightened? Yes and no. "I believed I was doing the right thing," he says. "I never doubted that, and most of my colleagues in the adult department supported me, so when I went up to my floor at the Tavistock, I could be oblivious and get on with my work. The real betrayal wasn't of me personally, but of the trust's duty to whistleblowers and to its wider mission [since 1920, the Tavistock has specialised in talking cures]. But the thing that enables you to sleep at night is a good lawyer." To pay for this lawyer, he launched two crowdfunding appeals.

How, exactly, did the trust attempt to silence him? The trust told the *Observer* that it is proud of the GIDS service, which is committed to providing high-quality support and care for young people experiencing issues with gender dysphoria, and that the claims made by Dr Bell are historical and were dealt with following proper processes at the time. It vigorously denies that any steps were taken against Bell for being a whistleblower. It says that it has a duty to safeguard its staff, who have faced intense, personalised and upsetting harassment, and has taken a series of actions, following proper processes, to do this.

By Bell's telling, its approach was at once Kafkaesque and cack-handed. In the months after he delivered his report, a book to which he had written an introduction was removed from the Tavistock's library. When he spoke at a conference about de-transition in Manchester, a member of GIDS' staff travelled there, he says to spy on him. "They wrote it up very accurately," he says, with a laugh. Finally, he was told that he was not allowed to write about, or to talk in public about, anything that wasn't directly connected to his [NHS](#) employment, "which sounded odd to me... was

it the case that if I was going to write a paper about the psychology of *King Lear*, I'd have to ask permission?" (As his lawyer informed him, this was against the terms of his contract.)

The story begins in February 2018, with a knock on Bell's office door. "I was often the person people came to when they had problems," he says. Having worked as a consultant at the Tavistock for more than 25 years, he was one of its most senior doctors: for 10 years, he was in charge of its scientific programme; in 2018, he was also an elected staff governor of the trust, for the second time. Of the 10 GIDS staff who would talk to him over the course of the next seven months, only the first saw Bell at the Tavistock; the others, who spoke of intimidation, worried about being seen. What did he make of what they told him? "My blood ran cold. Their concerns were similar, but not in a choreographed way. One or two were severely troubled."

▲ The Tavistock Centre in north London. Photograph: Alamy

Among these concerns were the fact that children attending GIDS often seemed to be rehearsed and sometimes did not share their parents' sense of urgency; that senior staff spoke of "straightforward cases" in terms of children who were to be put on puberty blockers (no case of gender dysphoria, notes Bell, can be said to be straightforward); that some were recommended for treatment after just two appointments and seen only infrequently thereafter; some felt that GIDS employed too many inexperienced (and inexpensive) psychologists; that clinicians who'd spoken of homophobia in the unit were told they had "personal issues". One told Bell that a child as young as eight had been referred to an endocrinologist for

treatment. "I could not go on like this... I could not live with myself given the poor treatment the children were obtaining," said another.

Was he surprised? How much did he know about GIDS before these conversations? (The clinic, which was established in 1989, had grown hugely during his time. In 2009, it saw 80 patients. By 2019, this figure had risen to 2,700.) "That's a good question. It started as a small service, then it became nationally funded; a contract with NHS England meant a guaranteed income. It was peculiar. You could see that everyone knew about it and yet no one wanted to know about it. In the adult department, there was a sense that we didn't want to find out what went on there, because we might not have liked it if we did."

Bell wondered what he should do. "In July, I met with hospital management. I told them I would write a report. They said: OK. While I was writing it, I contacted GIDS. I needed to know some basic stuff: the number of patients they'd seen; their gender; what psychiatric problems they may have had." He received no answers. "I then got a rather unpleasant letter from Paul Jenkins, the trust's chief executive. It said that GIDS was very busy and that its staff were not obliged to answer me." Was it that GIDS didn't have the data or that it didn't want Bell to have it? "Both."

In September, Bell sent his report to Jenkins and to Paul Burstow, the chairman of the board. For unspecified legal reasons, he says, they forbade him to send it to the council of governors, which oversees the board. "That was when I got myself a lawyer," says Bell. His lawyer told him that, on the contrary, a failure to send it out might make him culpable in the event of any future legal case taken against the trust. When he did so, however, he received what felt like a "very hostile and threatening" note from Burstow. Nevertheless, the report was discussed at the next council, where it was agreed that a review of GIDS would be led by Dinesh Sinha, the trust's medical director. In spite of this, in November 2018, Bell received two letters threatening disciplinary action. One of the grounds was "bullying". He was not told whom he had bullied. He was also asked to agree not to speak any further to Sonia Appleby, the trust's director of child safeguarding. (Appleby is bringing a whistleblowing claim against the trust in which she alleges that when she made "protected disclosures" regarding concerns raised by GIDS staff over patient safety, she was subjected to detriments.)

While Sinha's review was taking place, Bell asked for its terms of reference. He wanted to ensure that those who'd talked to him could speak to the review safely, that their anonymity would be protected. He says he got no response. Bell wrote to staff at GIDS, reminding them of their right, as NHS workers, to speak confidentially. At this point, he says, the trust "went ballistic... they interfered with my emails so I couldn't write to them again". The trust's review delivered its report in February 2019. Initially, Bell was not allowed to see it. He was then given 30 minutes to read

its 70 pages (it was later leaked to him in full). “There was still no data. It mentioned intimidation, but no action was [to be] taken. However, it did acknowledge the inappropriate involvement of trans ideology groups in the work of the service.” The report was approved by the board and the council of governors, although one consultant psychotherapist, [Marcus Evans](#), accused the trust of having an “overvalued belief” in GIDS expertise and resigned. Soon after this, Bell’s report was leaked to the press. “That disturbed me, until I read [the article],” he says. “The reporting was accurate. I started to think it was a good thing.” He says the trust began to suggest that Bell was unqualified to write such a report and to suggest that the cases in it were hypothetical. (They were not.)

In early 2020, procedures were set up for disciplinary action to be taken against Bell. “All the grounds were in connection with my activities as a whistleblower,” he says. In the meantime, Bell announced that he would retire, as he’d always planned to, in June 2020. But then the pandemic hit; wanting to see his unit through it, he decided to delay his departure until January 2021. The trust attempted more than once to set a date for the hearing, but these were always dropped. Bell felt all this was just for show.

His retirement was only weeks away.

Last January, he retired as planned, only a month after the Keira Bell judgment. He had long believed a case would be brought against the trust, though he thought the most likely scenario was that a former patient would sue for damages (Keira Bell instigated a judicial review). “It was inevitable,” he says. “I warned the trust of this.” But the Keira Bell judgment has done little to alleviate his concerns. Whatever the outcome of the appeal, he believes more questions must be asked, particularly about the rise in the number of girls presenting at the clinic (three-quarters of patients are now girls; the gender balance used to be closer to 50:50). “We do not know why this is happening.” He worries that too much emphasis is placed on gender and not enough on sexuality - “the children are often gay” - and he continues to be anxious about co-morbidities such as anorexia, autism and history of trauma in its patients. “Some of the children are depressed. It’s said that it’s their gender that is the cause of this, but how do we know? And why don’t we try to treat that first?”

▲ 'Consent is the issue here, nothing else,' says Bell. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Observer

Bell is not against puberty blockers per se - "a doctor should never say never" - but he believes that halting puberty only makes it more frightening to the child: "The child will never want to come off the hormones and 98% do now stay on them. This could be a dangerous collusion on the part of the doctor. The body is not a video machine. You can't just press a pause button. You have to ask what it really means to stop puberty." It should be possible, he believes, to manage the distress of a child

who is suffering gender dysphoria in a less interventionist way, until he or she is an adult and can make a decision: "Consent is the issue here, nothing else." He does not doubt that some patients will want, and need, to transition in the future. But, he says, not all children with gender dysphoria are trans. The two have been elided. More work needs to be done locally. "Gender dysphoria clinics should be part of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and available nationwide," he says. "At the moment, children who are suffering extreme distress in relation to their bodies are sent to the Tavistock and the problem then goes away at local level, where psychotherapy services are on their knees."

There is anger on both sides of the debate. But given his politics - Bell describes himself to me as a "Corbyn-supporting Jew" - he has been most shocked by the reluctance of the left to engage with the issues. "They think this is to do with being liberal, rather than with concerns about the care of children. Mermaids and Stonewall [the charities for trans children and LGBTQ+ rights] have made people afraid even of listening to another view." It surprises him that the left is unwilling to consider the role played by big pharma. In the US, a journal that published a paper about the effect of puberty blockers on suicide risk recently had to disclose that one of its co-authors received a stipend from the manufacturer of another drug.

When he appeared on *Channel 4 News* earlier this year, Bell was asked if he feared being on the wrong side of history. "I've often thought about that question," he says. "It's a good one. **Psychiatry** has a sad past. Homosexual men were given behavioural therapies and so on. But history isn't always right. What matters is the truth. I hate the weaponisation of victimhood, the fact that the fear of being seen to be transphobic now overrides everything." The current campaign to ban so-called gay conversion therapy is, he believes, likely to become a Trojan horse for trans activists who will use it to put pressure on any clinician who does not immediately affirm a young person's statement about their identity, decrying this, too, as a form of "conversion". For Bell, the prospect of not being able to talk openly about such things is a tyranny: just another form of repression. "This is about light and air," he says. "It's about free thinking, the kind that will result in better outcomes for all young people, whether transgender or not."

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