



A P R I L H A R T F O R D

T r a n s g e n d e r - O n e P e r s o n ' s J o u r n e y

Trans-misogyny

“Trans-misogyny” is a term coined by Julia Serano in her book *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (Seal Press, 2007). She points out that trans women are often ridiculed for their femininity, whereas trans men are rarely ridiculed for their masculinity. This dichotomy springs from a misogynistic worldview that values masculinity more than femininity. In her words:

“When the majority of jokes made at the expense of trans people center on ‘men wearing dresses’ or ‘men who want their penises cut off,’ that is not transphobia—it is trans-misogyny. When the majority of violence and sexual assaults committed against trans people is directed at trans women, that is not transphobia— it is trans-misogyny. [. . .]”

“The media hyperfeminizes us by accompanying stories about trans women with pictures of us putting on makeup, dresses, and high-heeled shoes in an attempt to highlight the supposedly ‘frivolous’ nature of our femaleness, or by portraying trans women as having derogatory feminine-associated character traits such as being weak, confused, passive, or mousy.”

“The media hypersexualizes us by creating the impression that most trans women are sex workers are sexual deceivers, and by asserting that we transition for primarily sexual reasons. Such depictions not only belittle trans women’s motives for transitioning, but implicitly suggest that women as a whole have no worth beyond their ability to be sexualized.”

“The media objectifies our bodies by sensationalizing sex reassignment surgery and openly discussing our ‘man-made vaginas’ without any of the discretion that normally accompanies discussions about genitals. Further, those of us who have not had surgery are constantly being reduced to our body parts . . . by people who have been so brainwashed by phallocentrism that they believe that the mere presence of a penis can trump the femaleness of our identities, our personalities, and the rest of our bodies.”

“It is not simply enough for trans activists to challenge binary gender norms—we must also challenge the idea that femininity is inferior to masculinity and that femaleness is inferior to maleness. In other words, by necessity, trans activism must be at its core a feminist movement.”

†National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, “Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2012,” June 4, 2013.

Of the 25 documented anti-LGBTQ homicides in the United States in 2012, 13 were transgender women.†