

The Degenderettes: How a Violent 'Art Show' Is Seeking to Silence Women

For those who do not use social media, the word "[TERF](#)" (which stands for "Trans Exclusive Radical Feminist") might be disorienting. Thanks to its relatively recent and ferocious introduction into mainstream media, however, the term is gaining widespread use, including news stories about celebrities sporting a signature hairstyle known as "[TERF bangs](#)."

The function of this epithet is straightforward: it is used to shut down women who are critical of what in the 1970s and 1980s was formerly known as *sexism*. The bigotry of old has taken on a strangely progressive turn. Today, it is no longer sexist to believe that girls ought to play with dolls and boys with fire trucks. On the contrary, this sort of thinking has been emboldened by the transgender movement, where the most regressive ideology is seen as progressive. If your son fancies playing with [Barbie dolls](#) or your daughter dislikes [them](#), then you are the [proud parent](#) of a *progressive toddler*, otherwise known as a "transgender child." And if you happen to be someone who finds this kind of essentialist thinking troubling? You're a TERF.

TERF is a slur, and it is often accompanied by [threats](#) and acts of [violence](#). Merely stating that males and females are socialized differently is enough to be considered a TERF, as is any reference to the higher rates of rape or murder committed by males. While not so many years ago, [addiction to pornography](#) was viewed as a problem particularly acute within the male population, today this assumption will land you in hot water too. The politically correct thing to say is, "Women also have such addictions."

Fundamentally, any woman who disagrees with the notion of an [innate gender](#) or [gendered brain](#) that exists independent of biological sex (concepts entirely unfounded by science) will be [no-platformed](#) and [harassed online](#), and her employer may even be contacted. Suggestions that every woman is not genetically wired to dream of her [future nuptials](#) or [engagement ring](#), and that males, even if physically stronger than women, are not programmed to play [ice hockey](#) from birth, are hardly revolutionary statements. Yet transgender ideology demands that we abandon rational thinking or be branded postmodern [heretics](#).

A Violent “Art Show” Seeks to Silence Women

The trans lobby is fiercely trying to keep women’s voices from being heard, largely because this lobby is beneficial to a leftist political agenda. Notice how leftist men are not expected to take on any burden of responsibility for discussing how they—and *not women*—might better accommodate males who are gender non-conforming. When public restrooms are converted to “[gender neutral](#)” spaces, the vast majority of the time it is female restrooms that are converted, while [men’s restrooms](#) remain untouched. As leftist men and women fall over themselves to display their [admiration](#) of “transgender identity,” citing the bravery in each and every “coming out” story, it is the women—not the men—who are accommodating these gender dysphoric males. Isn’t this—the expectation that women accommodate these men—the primary issue? It is no coincidence that women are in the crosshairs of the transgender movement.

This is clearly demonstrated by the threats of violence directed by the recent exhibition at the [San Francisco Public Library](#)’s “[Degenderettes Antifa Art](#)” show. This exhibit spins a fictionalized victimhood of transgender males. It creates a straw-man version of these men’s alleged oppressors: TERFS.

When I say that the transgender subject of this exhibition is

fictionalized, I am referring to the way the show [presents](#) these men, positioning them as the casualties of women:

The Degenderettes are a humble and practical club, fighting for gender rights within human reach rather than with legislation and slogans. Their agit-prop artwork has come to permeate internet trans culture, national television, and headlines as far as Germany. This exhibit features objects and photographs documenting public performances—including parades, marches and die-ins—by the Northern California chapter of the Degenderettes.

Contrary to this description, this show does not manifest any sort of “performance” that any other hate group advocating violence against women does not likewise *perform*. Thanks to this concept of “performance,” the San Francisco Public Library has allowed a group of misogynist males to take over public space in order to promote women-bashing as an art form. This “art exhibit” is really just a weapons show promoting violence against women.

Biology, Gender, and Trans Ideology

These trans activists have created an Antifa-esque narrative aimed at anyone who disagrees with their fundamental proposition: that men too can be lesbians. It’s all part of the standard misogynistic repertoire so common in the transgender community. The narrative marks any form of intellectual disagreement as tantamount to “[murder](#),” and it attempts to remove the specificity of female *biology* by claiming it is a “[social construct](#)” while asserting that *gender* is [biological](#). This last is a complete reversal of what doctors and social scientists know to be true. Yet any disagreement with this proposal results in one’s being told that she is “[denying the existence](#)” of a transgender person.

All these responses to intellectual debate are, of course,

completely emotional and irrational. The mere mention of science will result in one's being called a "[biological essentialist](#)," an accusation hurled at feminists continually by trans activists. Not only is this labelling functioning to silence these women, but it is actually the exact opposite of reality; trans activists, not feminists, are the ones who are *biologically essentialist*. Here's a handy definition of biological essentialism by [Oxford University Press](#):

The belief that "human nature," an individual's personality, or some specific quality (such as intelligence, creativity, homosexuality, masculinity, femininity, or a male propensity to aggression) is an innate and natural "essence" (rather than a product of circumstances, upbringing, and culture).

Remember, the trans narrative contends that gender is biological and inherent and *not* a product of social circumstances, family, and culture. It then argues that if a male child dresses in a [tutu or Snow White costume](#), this means that his body is *actually* female. This reasoning is nothing other than classic biological essentialism. It leads those who accept it to tolerate medical treatments that permanently alter the bodies of children to match their chosen objects of play, and to turn a blind eye to the violence often carried out by biological males, regardless of their self-identified gender.

The San Francisco Public Library has taken the narrative of gender essentialism one step further by emboldening these males who identify as women to turn on actual women. By making room for the [Degenderettes](#) to display their weaponry—including axes and bats—among other artifacts of bigotry against women, this library has conferred social and political legitimacy on a group of men whose work threatens anyone who calls into question their violence. Even after people wrote to the exhibit to complain about the violence advocated against women, only one of the shirts was removed and none of the

weaponry.

The exhibit includes [shirts](#) that read “Your apathy is killing us” and “I punch TERFs.” There are also numerous weapons displayed throughout the exhibit, including a large cardboard sculpture of a skeleton with phallus holding an axe, six brightly-colored baseball bats, and a series of [weapons](#) labelled a “femme sledgehammer” and “trans labrys (axe).” In a recent [panel discussion](#) held at the library, members of Degenderettes claimed that the bats and axes were intended to create a “safe space” for those who feel “unsafe.” While transgender ideology claims to “[defy gender norms](#),” what this show demonstrates is merely a repetition of male violence presented as art.

Misogyny in Drag

The term “TERF”—and the accompanying violent campaign against those accused of being one—is not only a misogynist’s dream. It is also an extremely useful tool for leftists to keep women in check while invoking essentialist models of sexism from decades past.

Make no mistake about this exhibition—this is a hate group masquerading their dystopian [politics](#) as “progressive,” and it is being supported by a public institution. It inverts *who is doing the harming* and *who is being harmed*. If anything speaks to how identity politics reverses historical facts, this exhibition seamlessly does so. What’s more, it enlists the city of San Francisco to condone these males’ acting out a series of murder fantasies directed at women, calling them “art.” Like their [incel](#) cohorts, these men not only lash out by telling women to “[die in a fire](#)” on Twitter, they have moved from the virtual cocoon of social media into libraries and [lesbian marches](#). All this is embraced by leftists who support public statements that advocate the murder of dissenting women.

The Degenderettes don't stop at the bats and axes that are presented in the San Francisco exhibit. They have recently made their intentions clear on social media, where they detail a lengthy menu of weapons they intend to employ against TERFs, including [AR-15s](#). The axes and bats in their exhibit were never really metaphors for trans empowerment and visibility. The actual aim of this exhibit is clear: to threaten women with violence while insinuating that women are actually a threat to these axe- and bat-toting males.

But beyond the threat, there is reality: the many trans identified males (TIMs) who have committed [murder](#), [rape](#), and [assault](#) against women. Just last fall, [two attacks](#) took place against women in London; these women were targeted not because they were threatening trans men, but because they had formed their own thoughts on the subject of gender. The first was an attack on a sixty-year-old, a humanist celebrant attending a talk at Speakers Corner, and the second was largely composed of verbal abuses and death threats sent to [Helen Steel](#) at the Anarchist Book Fair.

The Degenderettes invert power relations by allowing men claiming to be women to craft an identity based on fictional oppression by feminists. In reality, their gender politics is merely misogyny in drag. It's a twist on the older paradigm of sexist males telling women to get in "their place." Today, men on the left are instructing women that they "are on the wrong side of history." Trans activists even go so far as accusing lesbians of discriminating and creating a "[cotton ceiling](#)" if they refuse to have sex with biological males who identify as women.

Do females who critique gender ideology deserve to be murdered? Is it the case that, as these advocates claim, "[?the only good TERF is a dead TERF](#)"? The responsibility for finding answers to these questions? lies with those who support an ideology that not only seeks to silence women's voices, but that responds to dissenting views with threats and acts of

violence.

—

This [article](#) republished with permission from the Witherspoon Institute.