



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

NON-GENDERED

Fighting for legal and social recognition outside the societal gender system

A quick update as Baroness Sarah Ludford's written question to the European Commission is now online.

www.europarl.europa.eu/sidesSearch/search.do?type=QP&language=EN&term=7&author=4529

Baroness Ludford is a Liberal Democrat MEP for the London area and I am very pleased that she has agreed to support the issue of legal recognition for those of us whose core identities place us outside the gendered societal structure.

But not all good in Australia:

The office of the Attorney General of New South Wales state government has intervened and had revoked the first non gender-specific 'recognised details certificate' issued in place of a birth certificate. The legality of the document has been called into question.

I am certainly not a legal expert but surely the document could not have been issued at all if not in compliance with state legislature.

Norrie, the NSW resident recipient is understandably devastated and I understand an application to the Australian Human Rights Commission is planned.

This is a shameful situation and no way to treat a human being. Social invisibility has rendered us somehow less than human in the eyes of many within the privileged gendered majority and this serves as a reminder that the battle is far from won. This setback will not make the issue go away as people like Norrie refuse to be driven underground.

The denial of existence is the worst act of discrimination by the gendered majority against the non-gendered.

Mar. 10th, 2010



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

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At last - I'm pleased to announce some positive developments:

The European Commission

Baroness Sarah Ludford, Liberal Democrat MEP for London has agreed to support this issue:

Written question to the Commission regarding legal recognition of non-gendered persons.

"In a paper on human rights and gender identity in July 2009, the former Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg noted that EU directives which implement the principle of equal treatment between men and women have a defined enumeration of discrimination grounds, and these do not include gender identity.

Also, a report from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) noted that there is no reason not to extend the protection from discrimination under EU law to people who wish to present their gender differently to that registered at birth.

In view of these opinions of human rights experts, does the Commission consider that EU legislation sufficiently protects citizens who choose to identify as non-gendered or present their gender differently to that registered at birth? Does it have any plans to revise EU Directives in future in a more gender neutral way? "

The written question is not yet available to view on the European Parliament website at time of writing this, but I have assurance the question should be documented online very shortly, so have provided link below where the question can be tracked (try the link every few days - the question will appear eventually):

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sidesSearch/search.do?type=QP&language=EN&term=7&author=4529>

I am informed it could take up to six weeks before a response from the Commission and the next course of action will be decided upon once a response has been received.

I have always tried to stress the point that legal recognition and equality of treatment for the most marginalized human beings who lead a socially invisible existence outside the gendered societal structure is a HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE whereas the perception within the United Kingdom tends towards designating anything 'trans related' into a 'health issue'. The pathologisation (and resultant stigmatisation) of what is fundamentally an innate inability to conform within a gendered societal structure is something I totally oppose.

It is poignant and refreshing that the terminology used here does not seek to pathologise what should only ever have been a human rights issue.

I offer my deepest thanks to Baroness Ludford in hope that legislators of all sectors within the European Union will begin to take note.

More News from Australia

But once again it is Australia that continues to lead the way. The state government of New South Wales has issued what is believed to be Australia's first 'Sex not Specified' recognised details certificate (in place of a birth certificate).

<http://www.thescavenger.net/glbsgdq/sex-not-specified-australia-leads-the-way-in-legal-document-756345.html>

The NSW Births Deaths and Marriages Department issued the certificate in accordance with a recommendation from the Australian Human Rights Commission report launched in March 2009. The recommendation was that an 'unspecified' option should be provided on government forms and records alongside the gendered options of male and female.

This is a fundamental achievement as Norrie - a resident of Sydney, NSW - is the first known citizen from a western culture to be issued with a non gender-specific identification document in replacement of an existing birth certificate.

I do remember a non gender-specific passport was issued to another Australian citizen in 2003 where the birth certificate recorded an 'indeterminate' sex, and it is a little known fact that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) accepted standards do permit the use of three options within the sex/gender field on a passport application form - but the third non gender-specific option is not mandatory and most nations choose not to offer the non gender-specific option. Two known exceptions

are India and Malaysia. In addition to that, the Nepalese government have issued a non gender-specific identity card to at least one trans. citizen. But now the Australian authorities have chosen to recognise the validity of human identity outside the gendered structure, and legal recognition for those who exist outside the gendered societal structure is a human rights issue the rest of western civilisation cannot continue to ignore.

The traditional stance of the United Kingdom is to resist all progressive change until forced to follow where others have lead. This has certainly been my experience where much discussion has focussed on the problems when I would rather concentrate on solutions. And there is the ongoing perception that the denial of a socially legitimate existence for those who identify outside the gendered societal structure is a 'health issue'. The UK will risk appearing increasingly out of touch as this human rights issue is embraced elsewhere. Change is not just achievable but inevitable. Thank-you Norrie, and enjoy your freedom!

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Nov. 23rd, 2009



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It's been some time since I posted an entry on this site. It would be good for me to have been able to report firm evidence of real and perceptible progress resulting from various proposals that have been put forward in effort to reach the first rung on the ladder and achieve that very first step towards social equality – a legal requirement for the provision of a non gender-specific box in the sex/gender field on forms of application and registration - but unfortunately there is nothing to get excited about at the moment.

While still waiting for news from Australia – the pessimistic side of my nature tells me the Australian Federal Government will resist the recommendation from the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) that a non gender-specific option be provided on government forms and official records – we nonetheless have to hope the bold initiative of the AHRC will be replicated around the world until, finally, those in authority within the gendered societal structure start to listen.

In my last posting I said that I would be writing a formal letter to Trevor Phillips, head of Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in the UK. This letter was sent some months ago and was ignored and then followed up with an email to EHRC general enquiries address (same address where I had already sent several unanswered emails). To cut long story short, I unwittingly ended up as a complainant in their 'complaints procedure' and my complaint was upheld!

From more recent correspondence with them, I understand that EHRC policy on "transgender issues" does cover all groups that come under what they admit is an umbrella term and this includes those who do not identify as male or female. So far so good, or better than before anyway. *Remember, previous correspondence from EHRC dating from 2007 alluded to the fact that non-gendered people are not a recognised group, and therefore the non-gendered are not legally entitled to protection from discrimination.*

But I have yet to see any evidence of this transformative acknowledgement of our existence progressed into real activity on our behalf. There was no reference of the issue, for instance, on EHRC submission in consultation for the Equality Bill.

I now have a contact within EHRC with whom I hope to have a meeting scheduled shortly and I noted some vague reference on EHRC website of existence of human beings who do not identify as male or female – but what we need and want now is action. I have suggested to EHRC that a similar move as has already taken place in Australia is necessary.

That dialogue has now been established with EHRC, I am feeling more positive and I want to give the organisation the benefit of the doubt – but let's see what happens next.

I have no further news concerning much awaited proposed parliamentary presentation at Westminster.

Caster Semenya - and wider debate over gendered societal structure

I have been following the 'story' surrounding the pitiful exploitation of Caster Semenya over the past few months and unsurprisingly found most of the initial coverage put forward by the media to be trite, ignorant of the facts and downright offensive to everyone with a personal interest in an issue that the gendered majority regard as taboo and would like to keep hidden and that had somehow exploded into mainstream consciousness.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) were due to announce the result of the "gender verification tests" and seal Caster Semenya's fate on 20 November but, in typical gutless fashion, they have failed to do so and demanded more time. In the meantime Caster Semenya has emerged as the only person to retain a single shred of dignity in this sad affair.

I have had plenty to say concerning the matter and I have written and criticised the reporting of various media coverage where necessary, but – and again entirely unsurprisingly – none of my letters were published! So here is a copy of blueprint of my letter sent to most of the 'qualities' in the UK at some point or more over recent weeks:

Throughout the furore surrounding Caster Semenya's humiliating and public ordeal, The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) have referred to the tests she was forced to undertake as "gender verification tests".

Caster Semenya was ordered to undergo tests to determine her biological sex and not her gendered role. Her gender identity (self perception) is obviously female and the two separate entities should not be confused.

If (as seems probable) the test results prove Ms Semenya's physicality is intersex in accordance with medical profession accepted criteria, she stands accused of unfair advantage over female competitors. Would those same critics also say she would have unfair disadvantage if running against male competitors or just that she had no right to compete in competitive sport at all? It appears to me that Caster Semenya can win gold medals yet cannot win in this situation due to inability to conform within the gendered societal structure.

All human existence lies within a biological continuum between male and female and there are thousands of known variations, rather than the socially accepted but false perception of 'normality' provided by the bi-polarised gendered societal structure. We are all intersex to a certain degree but this is more apparent in some people due to a combination of factors.

Ms Semenya does not possess the typical and idealised physique of a woman but neither does she have the physique of a man. From a central axis, my perception is that Caster Semenya is closer to a typical female ideal and it is right that she should be allowed to compete against women in her chosen profession which happens to be a sport that is gender-segregated, for where else is she to go? Is she supposed to give up her career and become invisible because her physicality does not fit the profile of either gendered stereotype?

And why was there no public outrage at the suggestion that the IAAF could decide that Caster Semenya must undergo unnecessary surgery before being allowed to compete as a woman in future athletic events? To be co-erced or bullied into submitting her healthy body to invasive surgical procedures under threat of banishment is a violation of her rights as a human being.

Note, I respectfully refer to Ms Semenya in the feminine because she identifies - and has presented herself to the world - as female, despite the debate going on around her. She was raised as a girl. Journalists have interviewed her family, and her birth certificate indicates she was classified as female for registration purposes. Ms Semenya has not indicated she feels psychologically anything other than female, therefore her *gender* is female whatever the outcome of the 'sex tests'.

The notion of gender is a societal construct based upon the flawed belief that society should be categorised into gendered roles of male and female.

The gendered societal structure is perceived as absolute whereas gender really represents nothing more than social categorisation dependant upon aspects of physicality at birth and what is stated on the birth certificate, rather than the innate core identity of the individual.

Whereas most people within the gendered majority can accept the gendered role (male or female) as appropriated to them, others (transsexuals) seek reassignment in order to align the body with the opposite gendered role with which they identify.

As Caster Semenya's painful predicament has demonstrated, the accepted social model of gendered classification represents collective failure to recognise the possibilities of human existence and validity of identities outside the gendered societal structure, thus condemning a socially invisible section within society to life on the margins.

A growing number of people - and I am proud to count myself among them - have rejected the gendered role misappropriated at birth and the misconception of the gendered status as absolute.

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Christie Elan-Cane

Finally, I want to mention a new online petition to No. 10. The aim of the petition is “to end the systematic erasure of those who do not exist within the artificial binary of male and female”.

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/notmaleorfemale/>

I strongly urge everyone to spread the word, show your support and sign the petition now.

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May. 7th, 2009



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

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While progress towards legal reform continues at a painfully slow pace here in the United Kingdom, I would like to mention a truly groundbreaking initiative that recently took place in Australia.

SEX FILES: THE LEGAL RECOGNITION OF SEX IN DOCUMENTS AND GOVERNMENT RECORDS

This concluding paper of the Australian Human Rights Commission’s sex and gender diversity project was launched on Tuesday 17 March 2009 at Parliament House in Canberra.

Among the 15 recommendations contained in this report and presented for consideration to the Australian federal government is that provision should and must be made for Australian citizens whose identity is other than male or female. The report recommends introduction of a gender unspecified assignation on passports and all items of personal identification documentation issued by government departments for gender diverse citizens who do not identify as male or female.

Read the full report: http://humanrights.gov.au/genderdiversity/sex_files2009.html

I was impressed not just with the boldness of the recommendations made by the Australian HRC but also the non-judgemental attitude where there is clearly a firm belief that legal recognition within ones true identity is a fundamental human rights issue even when the core identity of the individual is outside the gendered societal structure.

The language used in the report indicated a movement away from the usual language of pathologisation and medicalisation so often heard in the United Kingdom when government authority figures and other official bodies get together to discuss how to progress human rights issues for transpeople.

In his presentational speech at the launch Graeme Innes, Australian Human Rights Commissioner, was completely respectful towards the citizens who would benefit if the Australian federal government decide to adopt the recommendations contained in the report.

I want to congratulate the Australian HRC for their foresight and courage in compiling and presenting this report and I want to extend my thanks to all those activists and campaigners in Australia whose tireless work has brought us to this point.

And now to the UK: -

For me to refer to our own representative body, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, as an equivalent of the Australian HRC (or vice versa) would be doing the Australian HRC a great disservice. The organisation is simply not interested in this issue (or indeed any trans-related issues from what I can gather). Furthermore it is not EHRC policy to become involved with human rights issues in cases where the individual or group whose rights are being breached do not already enjoy the benefit of statutory legal protection from discrimination!

As it is also “not EHRC policy to provide names” of staff members with direct responsibility for certain areas within their official remit, I intend to write a formal letter to Trevor Phillips, chair of this publicly funded body and I will report the outcome on these pages. But, as EHRC has chosen to ignore all my emails to date, my expectation of a positive response (or *any* response) from them now is frankly and pragmatically very low.

However, thanks to our friends in Australia, the issue cannot be ignored by governing administrations and official bodies within European countries for much longer.

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Jan. 6th, 2009



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

NON-GENDERED

Fighting for legal and social recognition outside the societal gender system

ONGOING CAMPAIGN ISSUES UPDATE

Automated patient check-in facility at my local health care centre:

It was a routine GP appointment at my local health care practice in March 2007 that first alerted me to an automated installation at the practice, a facility for patients to announce their arrival without having to queue at the reception.

When I tried to use the facility, I was confronted with an inappropriate (and insulting) request to state whether I was male or female. The system would not allow me to bypass this question and I was unable to use the facility.

I made a complaint initially to the GP and, on his advice, wrote to the practice manager. The practice manager suggested I approach the contractor who provided the facility and were responsible for software design. I began a series of correspondence with this company but it was very apparent from their arrogant responses that I was wasting my time dealing directly with them. I complained to the local NHS healthcare authority, Southwark Primary Care Trust (Equalities and Diversity section). Not much response initially with no obvious sign my complaint was being treated seriously.

I wrote a formal complaint to Southwark PCT in January 2008 and received a letter in response from the Chief Executive of the Trust. The letter informed that my complaint had resulted in a policy change and that an entire network of patient facilities was to be upgraded later in the year, starting with facility at my local healthcare practice. This was a major victory but it has taken the IT contractor until now to get around to rolling out the upgrade.

I understand the upgrade was rolled out (at my local healthcare practice at least) just immediately prior to Christmas 2008, so I suppose they were as good as their word.

I've been unable to find out specifically what the new check-in procedure entails, due to contacts at the practice and the PCT being on leave, but I have been informed the unnecessary requirement for patients to declare as male or female has been removed.

I have asked the PCT to keep me informed regarding the eight hundred or so other facilities that are to be similarly upgraded.

Fighting for the fundamental human right of recognition within my true identity is frequently unrewarding and depressing, but this is one example of proof that it does sometimes pay to be persistent and just do not take “No!” for an answer.

Taking this Issue to UK Parliament:

Simon Hughes MP is currently taking advice regarding the most effective way to proceed with introduction of a formal parliamentary presentation.

I am, again, not able to give any indication of a timescale. I am aware this is frustrating for everyone whose life is affected by this issue but there remains important ground work to ensure the issue is presented to secure the best effect. More information will appear as soon as possible. Keep checking this website.

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Oct. 29th, 2008



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

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Fighting for legal and social recognition outside the societal gender system

I want to thank everyone who responded to my recent appeal for support. The response was truly breathtaking and much better than I had expected or dared hope when it was suggested I collect “some names” as proof that life exists outside the gendered societal structure! I can confirm that all names (and addresses where provided) have now been forwarded to parliamentary office of Simon Hughes MP.

ONGOING CAMPAIGN ISSUES UPDATE

Taking this Issue to UK Parliament:

I regard the invisibility and resultant social exclusion and disempowerment of unrecognised existence as a fundamental breach of my rights as a human being. There are clearly many others who feel the same and whose personal experiences are similar to mine.

I believe anti-discriminatory legislation is necessary in order to ensure that state institutions and commercial organisations recognise the need for the non-gendered to be able to determine our own identities and not force inappropriate gendered categorisation upon us. Legislation would also mean that gendered society could no longer so easily get away with present failure to make provision for those members of society whose identities are not recognised under the existing gendered social structure.

I approached my local parliamentary representative Simon Hughes MP in 2005.

Simon Hughes has investigated various ways of incorporating the recognition of non-gendered and non gender-specific identities into existing legislation.

As no existing legislation recognises identities outside the societal gendered structure, this has proved an extremely complicated exercise. It is also an acute demonstration of the vicious circle that is gendered society, as referenced in my presentation for Gendys2K: The Fallacy of the Myth of Gender <http://www.gender.org.uk/conf/2000/elancane.htm>

Progress remains painfully slow. I hope to have an update and clearer idea of how things will progress within next two weeks but make no promises, and also subject to future change.

Census 2011:

Despite engaging in some positive dialogue with a representative of the Office for National Statistics over last eighteen months or so, the ONS Census Director (the one charged with overall responsibility for Census 2011) refused my request for a meeting on the basis the ONS had no plans to change the sex/gender question for Census 2011 questionnaire and therefore saw "little value" in arranging a meeting.

He did, however, later agree to meet with Simon Hughes MP in order to discuss a number of issues concerning Census 2011 including the addition of 'non gender-specific' third option for sex/gender field. I did not attend the meeting but understand ONS position on this issue to be as follows:

ONS have no plans to voluntarily introduce a non gender-specific box in the sex/gender field. One of the given 'reasons' being that, under The Census Act (1920), there is no legal requirement to gather information regarding sex/gendered role. The question is included on the census form (with M/F boxes provided) because end users have requested breakdown of male and female respondents for purpose of demographic information gathering. Sounds like a complete contradiction to me and not a valid reason to exclude a section of society, no matter how small and socially invisible the minority group.

The other reason ONS would not consider inclusion of non gender-specific option is because (and I'm not making it up) some gendered respondents would be unable to resist the temptation to tick this option when it does not apply to them, thus distorting the overall quality of gathered data!

Apart from the fact that it remains possible for respondents to be not entirely truthful when filling in all sections of a census questionnaire (*although I'm sure the goons within the current Labour administration are busily working on devising ways of 'correcting' this oversight as I write*) whereas we are only asking for provision of non gender-specific option to enable us to answer this question truthfully, it would appear that key decision makers at ONS would condemn us to a life of permanent social invisibility and inherent exclusion from the benefits of society as taken for granted by the gendered majority because of a possibility that some rather juvenile gendered people would tick the non gender-specific box when it doesn't apply to them!!

It was suggested that anyone who does not identify within either gendered role could write their self-defined identity alongside M/F boxes and this will be accepted as a valid response by ONS and therefore would not invalidate the questionnaire (and the respondent would not receive a hefty fine). I find this response totally unacceptable for following reasons: We are not being treated with same and equal level of respect as the gendered majority. The ONS' expectation that we should scribble around the pre-printed options provided for the gendered majority does not give us parity with the gendered majority and does nothing to create greater public awareness of our existence.

Furthermore, I frankly do not believe that what is written on the questionnaire by the non-gendered respondent will actually end up on record. As already happened in most recent Australian census, an administrator will input the data of returned questionnaire onto a system that is designed to receive information as set out on the questionnaire, meaning provision for M/F options only for sex/gender question. A gendered identity would then be misappropriated and entered onto the system. Of that I am certain and I will be writing to ONS again in near future.

I understand the final decision regarding Census 2011 questionnaire content will not be made until 2010 so there remains time for everyone who cannot identify as M/F to demonstrate to ONS why this response is just not good enough.

The denial of existence is the worst act of discrimination by the gendered majority against the non-gendered.

Sep. 10th, 2008



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

NON-GENDERED

Fighting for legal and social recognition outside the societal gender system

A groundbreaking opportunity exists right now for new legislation to be brought before parliament in the United Kingdom.

The legislation would grant the right of recognition to the invisible and disenfranchised minority of human beings who cannot identify within the societal gender system.

At present, it is not possible to acquire personal identification documentation (passport, driver licence, national insurance number etc.) or access many essential services (car insurance, private healthcare insurance etc.) without stating whether one is male or female.

The gendered social structure fails to recognise the existence or respect the fundamental rights of those who do not identify as male or female and we are forced to accept compulsory categorisation into an inappropriate gendered role in order to function and participate within society. This situation is unacceptable and a breach of the most basic human right to dignity and equal treatment within society.

The proposed legislation will state the necessity for a third option of 'non gender-specific' or 'gender not specified' in sex/gender fields on all application and registration forms alongside existing gendered options of male and female.

All documentation issued where the third option has been selected will not feature a gendered role either on the item or in corresponding official records.

In order for the proposed legislation to succeed in effecting a change to the law, there needs to be firm evidence of social necessity and this is where I need the help of EVERY person in the UK who does not identify as male or female and would use the non gender categorised option if it were available.

Please send an email to Christie.Elan-Cane@ukgateway.net with the following text - I SUPPORT NON GENDER-SPECIFIC OPTION - as the subject.

Your email should include your full name and preferably your full address in the UK (the address is not essential and you should not be put off responding if you'd really rather not disclose your address, but responses with a UK address will carry more weight).

Please do not send any attachment documents with your email.

I will forward all responses to the Office of the Member of Parliament who has agreed to present the case on my behalf.

You could also consider lobbying your local parliamentary representative in the UK and elsewhere, as the failure to recognise the existence and resultant marginalization of those outside the societal gender system is a global human rights issue.

The denial of existence is the worst act of discrimination by the gendered majority against the non-gendered.

Jul. 24th, 2008



CHRISTIE ELAN-CANE

NON-GENDERED

Fighting for legal and social recognition outside the societal gender system

Gendered society offers no provision for persons without gender to have a voice. Gendered society is structured in such a way that there exists no mechanism or social framework where the non-gendered person can challenge the absolute status of the gendered societal structure or their own status as a non-person within that structure.

Persons of non-gendered identity are excluded from all constructive forms of participation in gendered society.

I have rejected the gendered role (mis)appropriated to me on my birth certificate although the gendered role remains on my birth certificate and is a factor on other items of personal identification as though it were fact.

I do not feel a sense of identification with the other socially permissible gendered role that is strong or certain enough to make me want to transfer and become identified within that role. My need to identify as a person of non-gender was not addressed in any way by the Gender Recognition Act, the purpose of which was to align legislation in the United Kingdom with legislation in most other European countries and introduced new legal rights and protection for some transsexual people.

It remains socially and legally acceptable to discriminate against the non-gendered in all kinds of ways with no recourse for those on the receiving end of discrimination. Medical intervention has traditionally been practiced on the newly born if the physicality reveals evidence of the newborn as intersex, in order that the individual is gendered in line with the social structure and can “fit in” in later life. More recent scientific and medical research would indicate that we all occupy a place somewhere along a human continuum between the gendered roles of male and female.

Gender is a societal construct that does not allow a space for those who cannot identify within the roles of male or female – and yet the societal system where the human being is categorised in accordance to gender (based on the exterior physicality at birth) could progress to embrace new identities including the non-gendered identity if the public and political will were there to make it happen.

There have been many marginalized groups who experienced extreme social injustice and had to fight to achieve a level of greater equality within mainstream society. The latter half of the 20th Century witnessed social change that would have been unimaginable to previous generations. And yet, despite having lived through a prolonged period where social equality is perceived as a democratic right that can be enforced by the law, the non-gendered person remains socially invisible, a non-person.

Gendered society denies the existence of those who live without a gendered role and who occupy a space outside the societal gender system. The denial of existence outside the gender system is the denial of a platform for the non-gendered to state their case. The denial of existence is the worst act of discrimination by the gendered majority against the non-gendered.

It is impossible for any human being to function within a society that does not recognise their existence and fails to acknowledge their right to be: I have already mentioned the birth certificate as the first legal document issued to the new born. The birth certificate is required in order to obtain other documents and forms of personal identification that are necessary if one wants to participate fully within society and lead a regular active life. These documents also require a gendered role at the point of application, even when the gendered role is not shown on the item (or

is coded or presented in a microchip format as is often the case now). Examples where individuals are categorized by gender include: passport, driver licence, NI record, medical record, tax record.

Access to goods and services is often determined by the ability of the individual to state a gendered role upon application. Examples here include: car insurance, private healthcare insurance, automated facilities where gendered role is demanded during access procedure, online accounts (such as My Space) that demand a gendered role when opening an account (*this latter can be subverted through stating opposite gendered role to that appropriated on birth certificate - but nonetheless an inappropriate, insulting and unnecessary question that I would rather not be forced to answer*).

To be non-gendered not only means social invisibility and disempowerment, the non-gendered person who refuses to be categorised by gender will soon be criminalized by the state. The United Kingdom government are set to introduce identity cards for UK subjects (as opposed to citizens). The identity card will hold every conceivable piece of information about the carrier in microchip format for the benefit of government departments and state institutions. I, like many thousands of others, find the whole idea of identity cards repulsive. Notwithstanding my objection to this scheme on grounds of unwarranted state intrusion, I would be issued with a card where the data used is taken from existing documentation and I would therefore be inappropriately gender categorised. I understand that, once this scheme is rolled out across the country, the card must be produced upon demand by certain authorities and refusal will be a criminal offence.

To identify outside the gender system equals exclusion from many aspects of society where categorisation according to gendered role occurs, such as club membership, gymnasium, participation in certain sports to name but a few. The National Health Service has no provision for appropriately sensitive treatment of non-gendered patients and it is common for the patient to be referred to a hospital department that only treats patients of the gendered role (mis)appropriated to the patient as a newborn.

The one aspect of life that needs to be recognised above all others as a serious social issue is the non-gendered person's (lack of) access to employment.

The non-gendered person is effectively barred from employment opportunities due to the discrimination of gendered employers (quite legally, as the non-gendered are an unrecognised minority without protection or any enforceable legal right not to be discriminated against). When one is unable to gain employment, for whatever reason, the effect on the life of the individual is devastating. The non-gendered person can expect to endure extreme financial hardship throughout their entire adult life and then have no pension rights if actually reaching the age of retirement. The opportunity to fulfil potential and any personal ambition once held by persons trying to live outside the societal gendered structure are quashed for no reason, other than that gendered society seeks to marginalize those that it cannot comprehend within the framework of a gendered social structure.

The non-gendered identity has been oppressed by the societal system of the gendered majority.



ONGOING CAMPAIGN ISSUES:

Introduction of a Parliamentary Bill:

Purpose of proposed new legislation: to have non-gendered identity recorded on my personal records and official documentation thus granting legal recognition for my identity, placing issue within public arena and developing social framework to enable non-gendered to function within gendered society. Respect for my identity as of no less value than gendered identities of male and female.

This will be a truly groundbreaking piece of legislation that will change my status in society (and the status of others similarly unrecognised and invisible within society) from a non-person into a human being of equal value and worth.

I cannot give any details of timescale regarding the introduction of the legislation because it has to date been a painfully slow process and previous time deadlines have not been met. It had been expected that the Bill should go through parliamentary presentation (the first reading where the title is announced) towards the end of 2007 and this did not happen. I remain hopeful that 2008 is the year when the Bill does begin the long and slow process through parliament.

The Bill has been given a proposed title which could be subject to change. I will announce short and long title of the Bill on this web page as soon as I am confident that the information I am giving will remain accurate.

Census 2011:

I have been in discussion with the Office of National Statistics (ONS) regarding content of Census 2011 questionnaire. The sex/gender question does not provide options other than male and female. I would like to see the introduction of the third option of 'non gender-specific' for all individuals who do not identify as male or female, including those who identify as non-gendered.

When the proposed legislation passes through parliament, there will exist the legal right to challenge any organisation that fails to recognise existence outside the gender system.

Automated patient check-in facility at my local health care centre:

A new automated system has been installed at my local health care centre (and other centres in my area and beyond) that inappropriately and unnecessarily demands patients state a gendered role as part of the identification process in announcing their arrival at the practice.

I made an official complaint to my local Primary Care Trust. I have been reliably informed that my complaint led directly to a change of policy and that the insulting question will be removed from the patient check-in procedure in a software upgrade due to be rolled out across the borough later this year.

I intend to stay on their case until this is done.

Finally:

I have been asked on several occasions how I would prefer others to refer to me. There are no historic non gender-specific terms for a title and salutation generically applied across the board - the only non gender-specific titles in common usage denote a professional qualification such as Doctor.

I was reasonably content to not use a title but eventually became irritated after receiving numerous letters that lazily contained a gapped space before my surname in the salutation, in the place where a title should have been printed.

I use the title 'Pr' which is an abbreviation of Person and pronounced "per". I also use 'per' (pronounced as spelt) as the third person singular pronoun for non gender-specific.

I have successfully been able to persuade most companies and organisations with whom I have a relationship to use my title although there are a few who unfortunately have failed to add my title to their computer system range of titles (there is no excuse – it is a straightforward procedure).

I am aware of a number of titles and pronouns used by individuals within the transgender community. If some terms are adopted and used as common reference points, in the eventuality, I may decide to adopt those terms for myself. In the meantime, I offer my terms of reference, which other non-gendered or non gender-specific persons are welcome to use.

The Fallacy of the Myth of Gender

Click on the link below to read my presentation at the Gendys2K conference at University of Manchester in 2000

<http://www.gender.org.uk/conf/2000/elancane.htm>

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