

Transgender Speak

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As if I don't have enough problems defining myself, gay media is now debating on what to call me. In a recent opinion piece by gay writer Rex Wockner on Planet Out (<http://www.planetout.com/pno/news/feature.html?sernum=435>), Wockner writes, "some editors consider "tranny" derogatory, so the headline above may be unPC. (Leave it there, Mr. Editor. I'm making a point.) I picked up the term several years ago from the Australian gay press and can claim partial responsibility for having increased its usage in the United States via my writings in gay publications. "

Wockner clearly argues since he pioneered the use of term "tranny," that makes it ok. Gay media would go nuts if the mainstream press used the word "faggot" to describe gays. "Queer" is even on the way out as a personal adjective. "Fag" or "Faggot" left the train station years ago. "Homo" hit the road this year too. How would you feel if you saw these news headlines: Vatican says "homo" priests unsuitable, "Faggot" wants 'to get equal rights', and "Queer" killed: hate crimes unit called. I truly hope these leave a bad taste in your mouth. "Tranny"" is close to the word "shemale." Go on google and search the word "tranny" and this is what you will find: Shemale LIVE pics and XXX tranny films, Chicks with Dicks - Hot Tranny Hardcore Action, and TRANNY XXX trannyextreme, transexuals and shemale fun. Sorry if I don't want porn to be the definer of whom I am. But hey, thanks for making "tranny" a household word!

Wockner continues decrying, "we can't say "transvestite" any more. The National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA) says 'cross-dresser' is 'preferred.'"

Sorry, I wouldn't want someone picturing me as Tim Curry in "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." I started my gender journey as a cross-dresser and I wouldn't want to be lumped in with the "Sweet Transvestite."

Words create mental images in others mind. As a journalist, it amazes me that Wockner doesn't know any better when he seems to argue for the right to continue calling African Americans 'colored people.' Wockner writes, "I guess it's kind of like how "people of color" is OK but "colored people" isn't, even though both phrases contain the same words. My aching head."

Why don't "people of color" like to be called colored? It brings up a negative stereotypes in their mind. Should it not be the community that defines what is and is not acceptable to call itself?

Wockner, is it that hard to change the use of language if it makes others feel accepted and comfortable? Wockner seems to me to be backbiting. If you notice there are changes to the gay and lesbian lexicon as well, but is that pointed out? Does someone have a problem with the transgender community?

The difference between Wockner and I is that I see him as brother in the struggle and will refrain from calling him a faggot, homo, or queer. In the words of Erich Fromm "Respect is not fear and awe; it...is the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality. Respect, thus, implies the absence of exploitation. I want the loved person to grow and unfold for his own sake, and in his own ways, and not for the purpose of serving me." Is it too much to ask that we are respected?

Gays and lesbians go through this as well, and it should be up to those in question to dictate how they are represented in the media.

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