

# S/He

Back in the good ol' 1960's and right through the 1980's, gays and lesbians finally stood up to decades of oppression and fought back for their rights. There was an explosion of gay and lesbian protest groups, political organizations, gay media and pride events and it ushered in the heyday of the bar, clubbing and party scene as we know it.

Today there's little of that gay rights activism left, bar the odd demonstration against gay violence or some other outrage that brings us back onto the streets.

That torch of activism has been taken up by the transgender movement. Whether it's fights over job discrimination or bathroom access, transphobic violence or the right to gender reassignment treatment, the **trans-moment** has truly arrived. The once invisible T has finally emerged from the LGBTQIA alphabet soup and it's not taking any shit.

We now celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility, commemorate the Transgender Day of Remembrance, go to transgender film festivals and have transgender role models like Laverne Cox or Cher's son Chaz Bono. And people like Caitlyn Jenner remind us that transwomen can also be right-wing ignorant assholes, just like everyone else.

Transmen and -women along with femme boys, butch women, drag queens and kings, genderqueer folk and cross dressers are chipping away at gender stereotypes and blurring the gender lines. That's a good thing for all of us.

Forcing people into strict gender-based straightjackets clearly hasn't been very kind to one half of the population. But we're all stunted by gender stereotypes that limit our free choices and emotional expression. Boys don't cry and grown men can't be gentle and caring, for fear of being labeled weak; whereas women shouldn't be ambitious or strong for fear of being labeled a bitch.

For me it's also a practical issue that I face regularly, and not just because I'm a bearded drag queen and mother of a drag house that spans a full panorama of genders and sexuality.

At Sauna Nieuwezijds and the men-only parties at Club Church, we welcome anyone who identifies as male. But transmen who haven't undergone gender realignment surgery or people like porn star Danni Daniels (who is endowed with voluptuous breasts and a gigantic cock) or bi-gender folk (who one day feel male and the next day female) present our staff with practical challenges.

It's too big a step even now to throw open our parties and sauna to all genders- I think we'd be hanged, drawn and quartered. But we're inching our way towards a less discriminatory world as we work our way down the LGBTQIA alphabet, one letter at a time.

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