

KAY: Women are not “womxn” no matter what activists say

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Activists at some British universities have decreed that the words “woman” and “women” are not inclusive enough in today’s gender-fluid world, so have introduced “womxn”—pronounced the same as “woman” and “women”—as a replacement. Some cultural groups immediately jumped on the bandwagon: Her Stories, a feminist organization sponsored by fashion brand H&M, used the word 15 times in a promotional email. Outrage by feminists ensued, with a number of shoppers threatening a boycott of H&M over the “bizarre” term. The Wellcome Collection in London, a museum and library in London, publicized an event about “how womxn can challenge existing archives,” then found, to its astonishment, that ordinary people were put off by it. Sunday Times columnist India Knight tweeted: “Womxn! Honestly, f*** off.” Others noted the obvious fact that “men” weren’t henceforth to be referred to as “mxn.” What was up with that?

At first the museum tweeted a defence of their decision: “We’re using [womxn] because we feel that it is important to create a space/venue that includes diverse perspectives,” but when this politically correct word salad failed to propitiate objectors, they capitulated a day later with the statement, “We should have put more thought into whether this was the right term to use when communicating about the event. We made a mistake, and we should not have used it. We’re sorry that we made the wrong call.”

The museum’s real mistake was that they rushed it. If they had simply waited for a wee bit of time, the neologism would have emerged as doctrinal across the board in the UK and in other western countries as well. Given the international, well-organized, bullish trends in trans activism, this is likely to happen.

Why was “womxn” deemed necessary in the first place? Because the campaign to erase “woman” is going well right now. Social and cultural gatekeepers like lawmakers, educators, social service providers and medical professionals are gleefully policing speech. But it is not going well in the general population.

Ordinary people, who are not caught up in theories and social media, and trust their eyes and common sense, stubbornly resist the collapse of biological differentiation in the rush to accommodate the wishes of those afflicted with gender dysphoria. They see transmen and transwomen as those who identify with, and present as the opposite sex—not as actual members of the opposite sex. So we feel we are being made fools of when we are forced to say that a transwoman “is” a woman, or that a woman can be a human being born with a vagina, as well as a human being born with a penis.

We are right to feel that way. If feeling foolish were the price to pay for social harmony, many of us might agree it was a price worth paying. But the definition of woman to include biological men entails social, legal, and educational consequences, under the catch-all rubric of “inclusivity,” that are disturbing to anyone with common sense—like the legal right for intact biological males to socialize or even live and work in what were designed to be private women’s spaces, such as locker rooms, rape crisis centres and prisons, and the truly alarming escalation in numbers of children identifying as gender fluid after exposure to trans activist designed program materials. (In England, a Brighton school claims 40 children who do not identify with their natal sex, and another 36 “gender fluid” students between the ages of 11 and 16.)

When feminists who object to women’s erasure point out these injustices, they are slandered, vilified and abused so viciously on social media and at demonstrations by trans activists who triumphantly point to “the law” endorsing “gender expression” as being on their side (which it currently is), they strike fear into observers, who quickly learn to keep their own disquiet about this ideology-based assault on the clarity of language to themselves.

In our hearts, though, we stubbornly hold fast to factual truth. We know that transwomen and transmen should, by logic, be called transwomen and transmen, for the sake of lexical clarity, and as well for the sake of social policy that is rational and fair to girls and women, while accommodating transwomen’s own need for privacy from other biological men.

The activists know they can force external verbal compliance with their obfuscations, but they cannot compel internal compliance. Thus things like “womxn” are thrust upon us—a market retooling, if you will, of the “a woman is a man is a woman” brand. As if the substitution of an “x” for a real word’s vowel will convince sane people to set aside facts. We will not be persuaded, but from the way things are trending, we may be forced to remember the word “woman,” and what it really means—“adult human female”—in silence.