

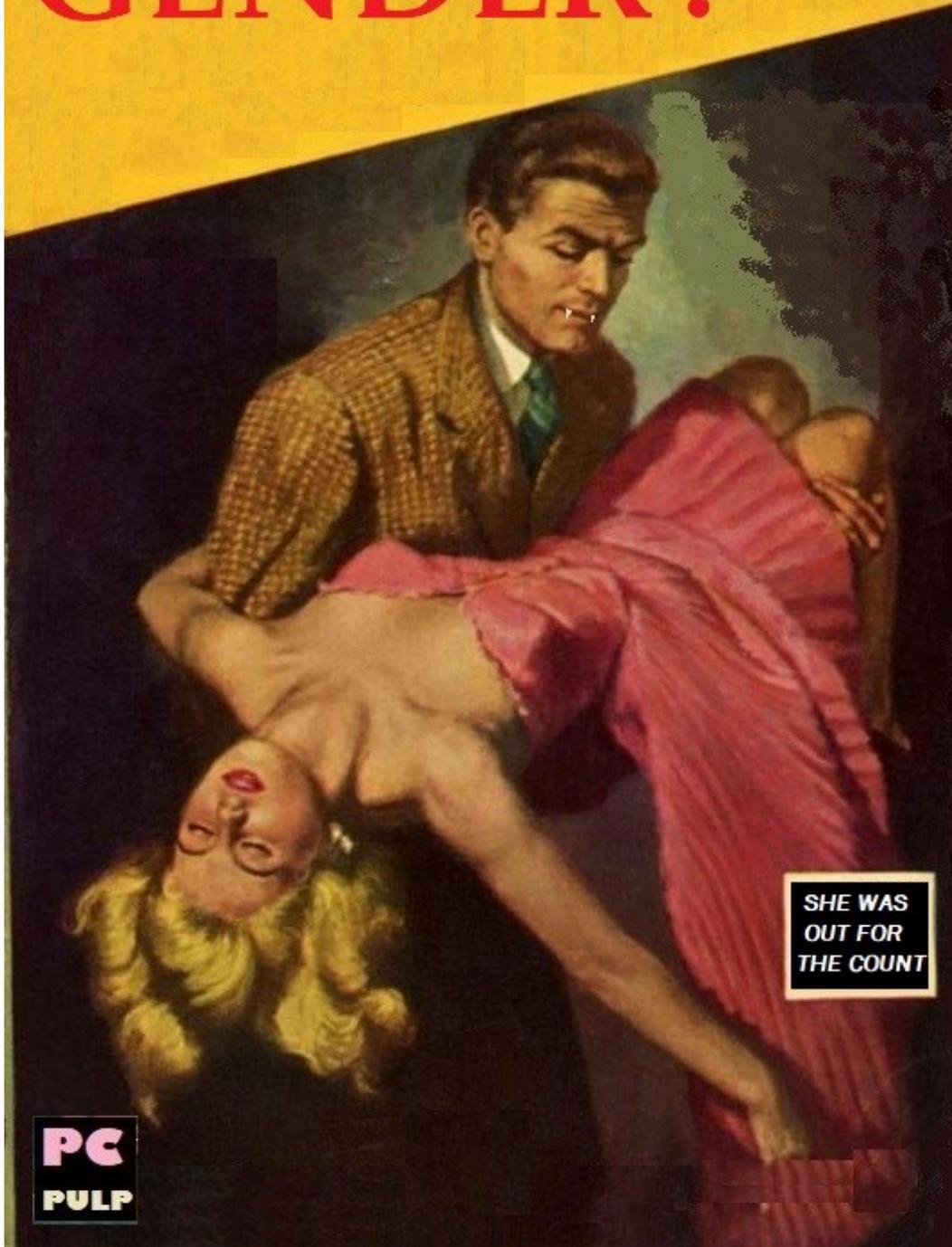
Soldiers in the Army of the Word

Trigger Warning! This post contains content of a poly(syllabic) nature and addresses the trans(actional) paradigm of human discourse to illustrate that wrongspeak and wrongthink are illusory, subjective products of an immature, oppositional mindset likely to deliver unfashionably binary outcomes. Okay? Glad we're all on the same page. (All three of us I suspect, by this point but hey-ho.) **Editor's note:** *To optimise your Outside Inigo experience, this post is best read out loud in a safe space.*

This week we're looking at three types of word-warrior one might encounter in the Blog Watch officer corps: General Gender, and her equally charmless fellow officers, Major Transplainer and Corporal Cant. (If you think that last word is missing an apostrophe please look 'cant' up in the dictionary. I will not be accused of Apostrophobia). These are not, incidentally, specific people, but tiresome stereotypes which will be familiar to any regular blogophile. To begin at the beginning, the trifecta of common weeds named above were planted in the loose, pre-web topsoil of 1990's academia, although the vegetables themselves sprout firmly in the flower beds of modern Yoof. Ah yes, the Yoof, bless 'em. Out of natural politeness I listen when Yoof tells me what they think. Really – I listen. Unfortunately, due to wholesale corruption of our education systems, thoughts of Yoof are mostly gnat's piss. But out of empathy, I nod and I listen. Out of pity, I may even persist as Yoof expands into their Brave New Wheezes for a perfect world the rest of us were too dim to imagine.

And then, quite suddenly -because I was kind enough to listen when they told me what they thought- Yoof begins telling me *what I must think*. And while I am still giggling, tells me *how* I must think, and *how* to speak, and (oh my ribs are raw from laughing) *how to write*. At which point I crash open the mighty oak doors of Castle Inigo, fling wide my collared cloak and soar into the black, brooding sky, wings spread, moonlight glinting on the twin ivory sickles of my canine teeth. For once again, dear reader, as oft times before, I must feast upon the blood of the young.

Blood has no GENDER!



SHE WAS
OUT FOR
THE COUNT

PC
PULP

From the lofty cloud of remove, I swoop down and fall upon *you*, General Gender, you, whose brief is to enforce *compelled speech*. Compelled speech, you see, is a thoroughly moronic idea, rather popular among dictators, tyrants, and a certain kind of hasty scribbler. We know them well: the self-appointed guardians

of a rule book somebody wrote in 2016 in the fresher's bar at The University of Fuckwit. But the troops under General G don't care. In the clogged U-bend of their imaginations, every fibre of the web trembles as they tweet. Not content with the facility to broadcast their second-hand opinions and received ideas, they want you down on your knees sucking gospel from their loins, gasping 'Yes, General!' at every emission. And if an alternative voice is raised in reply, it had better be cheering, applauding and agreeing. Because anyone found to be *just one word out of line* (that's you) will be judged guilty of wrongspeak and shrieked into silence by the Generalissimette's fearless Twitter troops, hurling poisoned adjectives from the Fortress of Solitude in their bedrooms.

But I do not fear General G-and nor should you, dear blogger. One of the secret joys of being three hundred years old (#VampiresToo) is watching the latest youngsters blunder through life's verbal minefield with their intellectual trousers round their knees, totally convinced they are ballet dancers. And I mean *toadally!* I have often observed, just before sinking my polished fangs into a carelessly exposed buttock, that each new generation thinks it has discovered (a) drugs (b) sex (c) more sex and (d) sexual revolooshun! "*Nothing, my sweet, could be further from the truth,*" I whisper, as they gasp their last. And - too late- they learn the cruel, eternal truth: that fountains of innocent blood must flow for the cursed ones to darkly live. "*Split that infinitive if you dare,*" I mutter, licking the crimson nectar from my lips. The General swoons and falls back upon his bunk.

Junior officers are simply the pits. They shouldn't be let loose with loaded sentences until they know the difference between the enemy and the conscript in the overhead bunk. People incapable of grasping how civilisation works invariably try (and fail) to twist the language for their own shallow purposes, because they recognise, dimly, that words can be powerful tools. That is why the most ridiculous orders have to be **SHOUTED!** Otherwise, stupid commands are revealed to be nothing more than limp wishes leaking from a slack mouth. (Yes, Major, I'm talking to you). But oh, how the rank and file love a loud monosyllable. "*It's my right! My Right! Right, Left! Right!*" Unable or too idle to compete in an arena of complex ideas, their basic training requires a suicidal attack upon nouns – the softest target for a simple mind. E.g., 'nazi' is a 'bad' word (boo, hiss) so call anyone you disagree with a 'nazi'. Brilliant. Of course, brainless repetition removes the power of the word (because everyone outside your army is quickly labelled a 'nazi') but the new recruit is too busy shedding tears of righteous joy to notice. Freshly posted from Gender HQ, Major Transplainer pins a medal of retweetment to their heaving breast(s), and after a swift lap of honour round the kitchen, the blinking eye of the young sapper fastens on the next target: pronouns!

Ah, pronouns -doesn't a shiver run down your spine at the mere prospect of a pronoun war? Unless a quaint enthusiasm for the functional nature of evolved language inclines you towards a remark like "*we sorted out the pronouns ages ago, thankyou*". If so, beware! A squad of poorly-trained pronoun snipers are lurking in the non-binary bushes, just itching to catch you in their (extremely) cross hairs. These are not very rational individuals, but that's how the new boss -Major Transplainer- likes them. No matter if recruits are narrow-minded narcissists, activists, shallow-end theorists, adamant that any opinion beyond their own is an *ipso facto* outrage aimed directly at their precious, fragile ego. Battle has been joined and the Major nods in approval. *Slash and burn! Shock and Awe! Tear down the walls of something or other and we shall be free!* Physical and linguistic reality must go in history's dustbin because a cabal of the morbidly self-obsessed decided (five minutes ago) that principles of syntax and vocabulary employed for the last 2000 years are insufficient to describe the startling, unique nature of their own divine selves. Right! Left! Right, left, right! Ah, the tramping boots of the pronoun patrol.

For the record, just because I regularly gorge on human blood doesn't mean I'm humourless. Nothing - literally nothing- makes me laugh louder and longer than an uninvited online lecture from somebody demanding my "respect" because it is their "right". Followed, of course, by a handy set of instructions

explaining how, with what and to whom I may speak. Complete with guidelines to help craft my “apology” for having caused “offence”, as I invariably will, sooner or later. *Permission to speak, sir?* Who died and put Major Transplainer in charge of the Ministry of Communication?

Awake and alone in a casket of stone, I caress my tired forehead with pallid fingertips, as chill night air seeps into the foetid crypt beneath Castle Inigo. WTF happened out there? First that damnable conformity swarm built nests in every corner of the school and college system, then hives in the HR department of every business. And now -O sweet Prince of Darkness!- now every night I hear the thin, reedy buzz of the Transplainer drone as it scours the sky above blogland in search of wrongpost. *Respect our choice!* is the rallying cry. *It's my right!* (Laugh till you choke to see the most traditional possessive pronouns possible -MY and OUR- leap from the prose of those who have declared war upon traditional pronoun use).

But these are POSSESSIVE pronouns, and possession -of power over you and the language itself- is the big red carrot seducing volunteers into the pronoun patrols. The stick, naturally, is the threat of exclusion from the unarmed forces. Followed by a sheepish return to the drudgery of civvy street, and the terrible realisation that the most interesting thing between your legs is your tail.

From my perch in a tall Sycamore, I gaze down upon the modest, redbrick lair of Major Transplainer. I recognise the Major's regimental hat and coat, glimpse the flash of polished medals beneath those broad lapels. I cut a lonely, hunched figure, forever shuffling to and fro across the moonlit lawn, in search of who knows what. But fie upon thee, word warrior! Why waste precious seconds of glorious gloom? Dawn threatens on a thirst not yet assuaged. One bound and my cloak flares like a mainsail in a typhoon! I swoop in a burst of batswift bravado to land, silent and smiling, an arm's length from the Transplainer-in-chief. I ache for the kill but my thoughts begin to race, like mice in a sewer. Why, indeed, did I swoop? I swooped because hardly anyone under the Major's command can explain their own existential identity, let alone supply a manual for the troops. If there's anyone out there -even a humble private- who can successfully construct a new version of English that is demonstrably BETTER FOR PURPOSE I would be first up with applause.

Yes, I swooped because I refuse to take orders from every keyboard Castro who wants my sentences rejigged to 'respect' some subjective decision they made in 2017/ last week / after supper/ eight seconds ago. Newsflash! Respect must be *earned* to have any worth. An understanding of the word might help. Review the etymological relationship between '*respect*', *inspect*, *aspect* and *spectacle*. Hint: the pivotal concomitant is the discriminatory element of *observation* -and the consequences thereof. P.S. if you think 'discrimination' is by definition a bad thing you need another visit to to Dr dictionary.

Sensing my presence, the pacing, uniformed figure turns to confront a fate worse than shadowbanning. "Good evening Major," I address my nemesis nose to nose. He looks askance at the calm, neutral expression I have crafted to placate him. "Bad news, my friend. HQ has decided you are too far behind the lines to be taken seriously." The Major's body reacts: tongue tied, pulse quickening; I can smell every cell of the boiling blood, so close...so close... "The hour of reckoning is at hand. You have been... observed...and are clearly unworthy of the uniform and the badges of rank displayed upon it. You started this war but cannot articulate why anyone else should risk their online avatar to hand you strategic dominion over a language you neither admire nor understand." And, ripping the mask of bland indifference from my face, I grip the Major's neck in five taloned fingers, bare my fangs, and with a great roar of exultation, plunge...

Oops! Got a bit swept away there, but that's what happens when you mix your metaphors like fruits in a veg cocktail. Anyway, as I was going to say, it's not actually that hard to gain my respect. A willingness to buy your round in the pub is a good start. Or displaying enough courage to think for yourself. Or having the strength of character to accept that your online outpourings may provoke nothing but ridicule and indifference. (Count Inigo's precise expectations, every time). You may be next year's Hemingway; more likely you are this afternoon's anonymous troll.

But the General Gees and Major Tees have a vast, unwary legion marching in their pronoun patrols – fanatics with a tetchy, insatiable desire to give orders. A desire indulged in the cheapest of currencies : volleys of snide, carping groupthink, aimed at carefully selected soft targets. It's a sport for couch potato cowards, and every adult in the room should burn with shame for colluding, if only by silence. But in the *War of The Words*, worse is always to come.

Hot on the heels of the General's latest ill-conceived conflict, you may expect the timely intervention of Corporal Cant – the box-ticker who arrives after the battle to put the boot into the wounded. What a Cant! **In a spirit of mutual dependence, Cant feeds on Transplainer who feeds on Gender and vice versa vice.** The ire of the one is the drug of the other two. Together, they form the Slight Brigade, so look out, loser! No sooner have you been court-marshalled and found guilty of desertion in the face of enemy adverbs, along comes creepy Corporal Cant –*the sort you thought was old enough to know better* – to hand you a white flag, explaining the terms of your expected surrender to the charge of the Slight Brigade. **Spoiler – they tried this on me once, elsewhere, in another century. They soon learned the error of their ways. Undead servants of the Horned One are very hard to kill without Jesus on your team. And I ain't seen Him on Twitter recently.** Lesser mortals may wish to reflect, however, that the Slight Brigade's firing squad is equipped with smartphones, not rifles. You have nothing to fear but fear itself.

So what care we for the officer corps? No more than we do for the pale, anaemic mob that tramps behind them. Vituperative old vampires don't use Twitter, and never shall. If I really want to hear a babble of desperate bloviators howling at the moon I can always drop in to The Bogsnorkellers Arms at Wolverhampton. In the bear-pit of 21st century discourse, very few grizzlies -and by no means every Pooh- are waving the flag for free speech. But the subject remains close to my black, battered heart, because words are priceless thoughts in action. When you can't speak your mind you will soon stop thinking, because your thoughts will serve no earthly purpose. You might as well spend your days asleep in a coffin with the lid shut.

In summary, I suggest that bloggers everywhere at least *try* to remain sanguine on the matter of free speech. If you are moved to disagree, I will be delighted -and a little surprised- to hear your rational, logical rebuttal of [that most precious freedom of all, \(https://outsideinigo.home.blog/2019/11/24/if-its-free-its-worth-paying-for/\)](https://outsideinigo.home.blog/2019/11/24/if-its-free-its-worth-paying-for/) upon which the glittering temple of civilisation stands, erect as a titanium dildo. In other words, go on, tell me why I'm wrong, me and the ancient Greeks and Romans whose wisdom towers above the blogging output of the entire western world (times a million) like Everest over a goosebump. Go ahead, wise ones, make my my day. There's one condition, though. Any responses or online abuse containing a single reference to me as *him* or *he* will be rejected out of hand. I must -now and forevermore- be addressed using the one and only title by which I may be accurately identified : **CountInigoEternalOverLordOfGraveDefyingNobilityKnobs.** And remember, the blog is always open for comments, even when the crypt is closed.

TAGGED ARMY, BLOGGER, LANGUAGE, VAMPIRES



Published by InigoMore

My wife is the sex blogger May More. I am an ex-journalist and author with a lifelong enthusiasm for music, food, whisky, sex and horses. Not necessarily in that order. [View all posts by InigoMore](#)

25 thoughts on “Soldiers in the Army of the Word”

1. **missy** says:

FEBRUARY 24, 2020 AT 5:56 PM

What a fantastic piece of writing. Not only do I agree with the points you are making about the use of words and the English language, but I have not read such a well written piece in a very long time. Like you, I believe that we should be able to express ourselves as and how we choose, realising the impact that words can have and accepting the responsibility that goes with that. As an English teacher I also appreciate your craft and thought that this was technically brilliant. An excellent piece of satire



REPLY

InigoMore says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 12:12 PM

I'm flattered. And a bit exhausted, cos I usually need £400 to run to 2 and a half thousand words.

😊 Incidentally, it might look like satire to you but my therapist came round this morning with a crucifix, three stakes and a mallet.

REPLY

1. **missy** says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 7:44 PM

Well once you are invited in to sit on their couch, there will be no stopping you. And I am pleased that you put up with the exhaustion to entertain us. You reminded me why I started blogging though which is definitely a good thing. 😊

InigoMore says:

FEBRUARY 27, 2020 AT 8:11 AM

Muchachos!

2. **melodyinsights** says:

FEBRUARY 24, 2020 AT 6:53 PM

This is a masterpiece of word-smithing irrespective of the content and views expressed. If I could aspire to half the skill, I'd be happy. It was an absolute joy to read and has me even more salivating for your upcoming publications.

Language is one of the most precious things we humans have. And we're particularly blessed with English, which most sources agree has the most words in its lexicon. To find people actively suggesting I restrict my use of that mountain of available words in case I offend them and their lack of vocabulary is a crime against humanity and one I can take quite personally.

Reading between the lines I can see many sources with which I generally concur and often read myself. In political cant, the Overton Window is so effing narrow these days that bland conformity is the order of the day – shut up, do what you're told, pay up and perpetuate the nonsense. I want debate, not enforced conformity of thought and I want that debate to countenance the 'unthinkable' as valid options.

I did smile at the pronouns. Read my Twitter profile, it says "... thingy/it will suffice". I don't consider that I have any right, beyond common respect, to dictate how people see and interact with me. When fragility and vulnerability are rewarded it's too easy to give up our license of individuality and be one with the unthinking mob.

Are you sure you're not moonlighting as a script writer for Andrew Doyle ? 😂

So much more to engage with here, but I'll leave it for now to bask in the glow of punctured egos.

REPLY

InigoMore says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 12:10 PM

I must admit I was quite knackered after knocking out that piece. Overton window? Overton keyhole, more like! I totally concur regarding debate – it is in that arena that all ideas find their level, and in the absence of things truly, deeply offensive, a tide of unchallenged conformity will drown our brains at birth. As for Mr Doyle, he hasn't rung yet but I could certainly use the work if he did...

REPLY

3. **Sweetgirl** says:

FEBRUARY 24, 2020 AT 7:48 PM

Bravo ... loved this!

Sweetgirl

REPLY

InigoMore says:

MARCH 2, 2020 AT 1:46 PM

Many thanks, sweetgirl. And apologies -your comment went and hid in a folder of its own choosing. It was a necessary post and long overdue. 😊

REPLY

1. **Sweetgirl** says:

MARCH 2, 2020 AT 1:50 PM

I shall wait and see how many people unfollow me for finding this post entertaining and amusing....

4. **HisLordship** says:

FEBRUARY 24, 2020 AT 8:13 PM

I laughed on multiple occasions during this rollercoaster of clever satire (yes I said clever). At times I had to read paragraphs twice to pick up on content missed, akin to watching Ben Hur and seeking the rogue VW Beetle in the chariot race!

Laughs aside, I see this as serious piece of star gazing for predicting the future. There are so many warning signs for those with knee jerk pen strokes condemning those that don't conform to ideals. Weaponising language, and my apologies stealing a well used political phrase, is just propaganda. I

won't draw comparisons to political movements in history that used language to alienate races, however, there is always a danger that not everyone wants to be part of the argument or sign up to having new labels associated to their civil liberties. Freedom of speech is a two way street and having it policed vocabulary speed traps doesn't just control language, it stops people from exploring and pushing boundaries. If we go out of our way to offend people, then a bloody nose is to be expected at some point, however, unknowingly or intentionally offending a person or a group should be met with tolerance, and dare I say it, old fashioned grace when an apology is offered.

REPLY

InigoMore says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 12:02 PM

Glad to provoke laughter – it's a subject where humour too often vanishes. I confess I am always bemused by the idea that being offended is such a grievous thing. I find around 95% of all commercially-produced radio, tv and newsmedia output to be gratuitously offensive, so I just stopped watching, listening and reading that stuff. The serially offended are always free to vote with their eyeballs. I quite agree with you regarding willingly tendered apologies. When apologies are demanded, however...(insert vampire riff...) 😊

REPLY

5. **Sam** says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 3:20 AM

Beautiful, Loved it

REPLY

6. **SassyCat** says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 12:05 PM

Well done you!

In the words of Robert DeNiro...

"You! You're good!"

REPLY

InigoMore says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 AT 12:14 PM

Many thanks. In the words of Dracula greeting Jonathan Harker at the castle door, "You! You're welcome!"

REPLY

7. **Marie Rebelle** says:

FEBRUARY 27, 2020 AT 6:16 PM

I have read your piece several times, partly because, like with HisLordship I had to read some things more than once to grasp everything, and partly because I wanted your words to settle in my mind. I want to thank you deeply for writing this piece, and I think you know why. It has taken me weeks (more like 2-3 months) to come to the point where I finally could overcome the hurt I have experienced and the point where I realized if people don't like what I write, they can do the same you do with commercials, just stop. I am respectful of all people, regardless of who they are, and the least I expect is to be treated with respect too. They say respect should be earned, but if we don't know each other and only interact online, the least we can do is to be respectful, and sadly I have seen enough who don't even know what the word means.

As a last thought: You have brilliant writing skills!

Rebel xox

REPLY

InigoMore says:

FEBRUARY 28, 2020 AT 6:38 PM

Your thoughts are much appreciated and well taken. For my part, I have not the slightest doubt you understand the nature of respect, and also of dignity, two qualities which you display-regularly- in spades. x

REPLY

8. **Violet** says:

FEBRUARY 29, 2020 AT 7:59 PM

As far as I'm concerned, the only value that this post has is the clarity it provides me as to where the combative and divisive lines really are in this community, and who to unfollow/stop reading/and block. Thank you for THAT, it's very helpful. The rest of it though, is rather tone deaf, out of date and reeks of the selfish cowardice that Boomers are known for. Congratulations, you've arrived.

REPLY

InigoMore says:

MARCH 1, 2020 AT 7:10 PM

Thankyou Violet. It's a constant source of amusement that the ability to ignore and dismiss content that one finds offensive (a common practice among adults) is apparently in such short supply online. Mercifully, my dated, tone-deaf cowardice allows me to speak my mind without trembling at the prospect of crude, personal attacks from open-minded, measured thinkers like yourself. 😊

REPLY

1. **Violet** says:

MARCH 1, 2020 AT 7:45 PM

I'm so glad we understand each other SO clearly.

9. **Kayla Lords** says:

FEBRUARY 29, 2020 AT 9:00 PM

I'm not a part of any of the marginalized groups you so openly mock and vilify in the name of what I suppose is meant to be intellectual humor and satire. Instead, it's one of the most insulting, degrading, lowly things I've seen in a very long time within the sex blogging community. And I'm horrified at the response you've received in the comments. Bloggers that I hold (or is that held?) in high esteem, enjoying something so short-sighted and narrow-minded.

How can people who bare their souls, asses, tits, vulvas, and cocks on the internet — for which they would be completely crucified in much of their non-sex blogging lives for — stand in judgement of the communities you mock in this post? To ask to be addressed by specific pronouns or to have their identity respected is the absolute LEAST any of us can do. It is the simplest thing in the world to be KIND. To not worry about what other people do with their bodies and identities and simply accept that we're all different.

I've never had to justify my existence — and I imagine most of the people commenting here haven't either — so who are we to sit in judgement upon people who have, and who ask us to respect who they are, yes sometimes in ways we don't like or in tones we don't appreciate? And how in the hell can any of the people I'm seeing in the comments above ever demand kindness or politeness from someone who disagrees with them, when all of you seem perfectly happy to mock people in (essentially) a public space? It's absolutely hypocritical.

And don't tell me that I don't have a sense of humor. This isn't humor. It's insulting, cruel, bigoted,

and absolutely beneath us all.

I know this comment won't change hearts or minds. I know that everyone here — from you the author to the people who comment in support — feel completely justified in your way of thinking. And I think that saddens me most of all.

REPLY

InigoMore says:

MARCH 1, 2020 AT 7:01 PM

Many thanks for your input. It's a pity- but not surprising- that your criticism can apparently not be supported by quoting any specific example of my insults or degrading remarks, mocking or decrying any individual, because I don't do that -unlike the legion of self-appointed net referees to which you appear to belong. I stand for free speech, and it's not negotiable. Offense is a subjective experience that can easily be avoided by behaving like a grown up and directing one's attention and energies elsewhere. Which I respectfully suggest you do. Virtue signalling changes nothing.



REPLY

10. **Molly** says:

FEBRUARY 29, 2020 AT 11:23 PM

I have thought long and hard about leaving a comment here but when all I see is praise for this piece I feel compelled to speak out.

I am disgusted by what you have written here. Oh yes you have presented it as humorous satire but what it really is is hateful and degrading and also pretentious as you judge anyone who doesn't see it as a jolly joke to be too stupid to understand your big words and clever language. Well I am happy to sit on the stupid bench on this one.

In a world where you can be anything, be kind. I am hugely privileged in this world. For the most part I can navigate it fairly freely, as long as I hide my kink and sexuality but that is easy for me to do and if I choose not to I still get more of a pass in this world than others do. The sex blogging community is where I truly found my freedom though. For the first time in my life I felt accepted. I have made amazing friendships and found partners. It has blessed me with so much. I have been able to be my true self and not been judged for those things. Everyone in this community deserves that but it seems like not everyone believes in that.

To see this written by someone within the sex blogging community is deeply distressing to me but to see members of this community, many of them who lead their own projects, cheering along with the mocking of marginalized groups within our community has completely floored me. This piece is not funny or clever. It is mean and cruel and I can't understand how anyone who identifies as sex positive can support it but it seems like they do. That breaks my heart a little.

I suspect that my words will not change that which also makes me sad but I find myself compelled to defend what I believe in and speak out.

Molly

REPLY

InigoMore says:

MARCH 2, 2020 AT 1:43 PM

Aaaargh! Green Kryptonite! I'm done for....

REPLY

1. **Life of Elliott...** says:

MARCH 6, 2020 AT 5:08 PM

I enjoyed your story very much. I did not know that characters from Macbeth read your blog.

REPLY

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