### Essentialism K

#### The aff essentializes women always being the victim and men being the perpetrator. Truitt 14:

Truitt, Jos. (Truitt is an Executive Director of Feministing in charge of Development)"THE DANGERS OF A GENDER ESSENTIALIST APPROACH TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE." Feministing. N.p., 2014. Web. 08 Jan. 2016. <http://feministing.com/2013/01/31/the-dangers-of-a-gender-essentialist-approach-to-sexual-violence/>. BS

Rape is absolutely a gendered crime. This is true of how it plays out in the real world, and of our concept of rape – both the act and idea of rape are used to perpetuate a patriarchal gender hierarchy. Violence in general is function and gendered, as Eesha Pandit made clear in her powerful theory of violence. We know sexual violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. But we don’t actually know how strong the gender disparity is largely because of how gendered our concept of rape is. The FBI has only recently begun changing their archaic definition of rape from “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will,” an incredibly narrow definition that means FBI statistics exclude lots of female survivors, and anyone the FBI doesn’t identify as female. Because our idea of sexual violence is gendered in such an essentialist way, we don’t actually have a broad picture of the gendered ways these crimes play out in the real world.¶ This is part of how the gender binary works. It sets up two boxes: one for the people in power – men – and one for the people to oppress – women. Anyone who doesn’t fit our culture’s narrow definitions for man or woman, and anyone who isn’t a man or a woman, falls outside, where it’s difficult to even make people recognize our humanity, let alone our experiences of oppression. There’s a ton of problems with this set up, not the least of which is painting women broadly as victims and men as perpetrators. Another way gendered violence functions is by erasing the many people whose experiences of sexual violence don’t fit this model – survivors who are men (cis or trans), trans women, genderqueer, two spirit, or in some other way gender non-conforming, intersex folks, and survivors of crimes perpetrated by atypical attackers, like survivors of queer relationship violence. Sadly, feminists end up perpetuating this exclusion when we talk about victims only as women and perpetrators only as men. Rape is absolutely a gendered crime, but the act of rape itself doesn’t necessarily follow those rules. We need to be able to hold an understanding of rape as a genderless act at the same time that we recognize it as embedded in a gendered culture of violence. No one said feminism was easy.¶ Sadly, Red’s experience is not unique. We have a very hard time recognizing and understanding sexual violence that doesn’t fit the standard narrative. I have to wonder how much this plays into the widespread shocked reaction to cases like that of Jerry Sandusky or the Catholic Church. It’s also been difficult for these cases which involve the abuse of boys to come to light. I have to wonder about the cases involving men we don’t hear about, not to mention cases involving gender non-conforming people, which most of our culture doesn’t even know how to talk about.¶ Lori and I have written a good deal on this site about expanding abortion care to people who aren’t women but who need abortions. As I wrote about that topic:¶ Yes, the majority of people who have abortions are cis women. Recognizing that not everyone who needs to access the procedure is a woman does not erase this fact, or do anything to make abortion less accessible to this majority. I certainly do not want to see women taken out of the discussion at all – I just want to see it expanded to include everyone who’s lived reality includes abortion. But the idea that abortion politics should be focused on cis women because they are the impacted majority is pretty much the opposite of a social justice stance. It’s the people in the margins – usually a minority – who most need their voices and concerns lifted up. Because they are the easiest to forget about, the easiest to exclude.¶ The same is true when it comes to sexual violence. We absolutely must continue highlighting the gendered nature of sexual violence. But it’s vital to do so in a way that doesn’t leave people out. There are real world implications to only seeing victims who are [as] cis women. Respondents to the National Transgender[s] Discrimination Survey reported harassment and denial of equal treatment in domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers, as well as other health care facilities and at the hands of law enforcement. Trans and gender non-conforming people are often excluded from services all together. I want to be clear: letting the Violence Against Women Act expire is absolutely despicable. As Zerlina highlighted so personally, this legislation funds vital services that real people depend on. While VAWA’s name is very gendered, in principal the legislation is supposed to be gender neutral. In practice, it’s an ongoing process to make sure services VAWA covers reach as many people as possible. In an incredibly disturbing turn, the House GOP’s apparent reason for letting VAWA expire was that it would offer too many services to immigrants, Native Americans, and LGBT folks. Yes, they killed VAWA in an attempt to ensure vital services wouldn’t reach my community. We absolutely need VAWA, and we need to keep expanding its services to people who aren’t cis women. One piece of positive change that has occurred within government: last year, the Department of Justice released national standards to prevent prison rape that include protections for trans and gender non-conforming folks. We need more changes like that, and less changes like killing VAWA because it might help too many LGBT folks.¶ Given how overwhelmingly gendered sexual violence is, it’s easy and understandable to slip into essentialist language when talking about the issue, to paint all victims as women and all perpetrators as men. By missing parts of the reality, we’ve left space for folks like Men’s Rights Activists to fill. Obviously, the feminist take on rape has much more to do with reality than the MRA take. But when you’ve got one side going “what about the menz!” and another side responding “but victims are overwhelmingly women!” you’re having the wrong conversation. As feminists, we need to find ways to do this work that serve everyone who’s been targeted with sexual violence.

### Impact

#### That essentializes two gender categories which cements the feminine as passive and victim, which suppresses resistance.

**Minow 93**

Martha, Professor of Law at Harvard, “SURVIVING VICTIM TALK”, August, 40 UCLA Law Review 1411, lexis

**People who invoke victim language** may **do so to obtain sympathy and avoid personal responsibility.** In the process, though**, this language** also **suppresses societal** and structural **dimensions of oppression** and harm.The language of victimhood, as a result, seems to produce a dilemma, which is explored by Professor Collins in her book on Black feminist thought. She treats issues of violence and abuse in the broader contexts of racism and sexism. The book concludes that African-Americanwomen have been victimized by race, gender, and class oppression.But **portraying** Black **women solely as passive, unfortunate recipients of** racial and sexual **abuse stifles notions that Black women can actively work to change our circumstances and bring about changes in our lives**. Similarly, presenting African-American women solely as heroic figures who easily engage in resisting oppression on all fronts minimizes the very real costs of oppression and can foster the perception that Black women need no help because we can "take it." n71 **Focusing on victimization undermines capacity for choice and action; however, focusing on capacity for choice and action may minimize real facts of victimization. The passive and helpless connotations of victimization lie at the heart of this dilemma.**

### Alt

#### The alternative is a process of unlearning preconceived notions about gender categories--- this is key in educational settings

DePalma, 13 - Ph.D. in Education. University of Delaware, Faculty of Education Sciences, University of A Coruna (Renee, “Choosing to lose our gender expertise: queering sex/gender in school settings,” Sex Education, 2013, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1–15, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2011.634145)//X

Most people, school teachers and children included, are altogether too sure about what gender is: there are two ‘opposite’ sexes, man and woman, and gender is the inevitable categorical expression of natural sex. Like all commonsense views, however, the gender binary has been socially constructed through normalising discourses (Fairclough 1988) that frame certain ways of thinking and doing as ‘commonsense’ and thus unassailable. As Judith Butler points out, resisting these constructed norms requires a conscious effort to deconstruct our understandings, to ‘lose our expertise’: One could conclude that in learning skills of this kind – how to live the norm, how to abide by its rules of application – one is being subjected to power, and that what seems like an ‘activity’ is actually a passive inculcation. If that were our conclusion, then it would follow that only by going on strike against such norms, only by unlearning the rules and losing our ‘expertise’, do we have a chance of exposing the field of norms and their coercive effects. (Butler 2006, 533) If gender normativity consists of socially constructed associations and categories that become accepted as normal and natural, queering entails constantly questioning this social order. If queer (as a noun or adjective) describes that which troubles our implicit sense of a natural organisation, queer (as a verb) is the process of consciously engaging in this troubling: transgressing normative categories or associations, recognising and critiquing the social processes behind what feels natural, or simply refusing to believe in these categories. While queer theory is usually associated with sexuality, I wish to concentrate on specifically queering sex and gender in this paper in order to explore some of the complexities particular to the policing of sex/gender norms. Research in primary school settings shows that this policing begins even among very young children. As one primary teacher put it: People seem to be very definite in their ideas of what a ‘proper’ boy or a ‘proper’ girl should do or be interested in. It takes very little deviation from these so called norms for a person to be singled out and picked on. (Stonewall 2009) Some of my own earlier research in primary school settings has further supported Butler’s (1990) assertion that sex/gender/sexuality tend to be socially organised into an oppositional, binary gender system that conflates sexual desire and gender expression, so that gender transgressions are often interpreted as signifying existing or potential same-sex desire in children (DePalma and Atkinson 2007). It is important that children (as well as adults) learn to distinguish between sexual orientation and gender identity, because children who present gender-variant preferences and behaviours can be automatically read as gay, or proto-gay, an assumption that is simply inaccurate (Slesaransky-Poe and Garcı´a 2009). At the same time, the very fact that these categories are co-constructed in the public imagination requires a kind of sex education that directly addresses these assumptions. Sexuality and sex–gender tend to be conflated in broader society; for example, sexual function has been considered in legal recognition of gender (Sharpe 2006), attacks that have been considered ‘gay bashing’ are often motivated by gender presentation and might be better referred to as ‘gender bashing’ (Namaste 2006), and in some communities the lines between gay and transgender blur in the focus on the shared distance from the heteronormative (Valentine 2006). Any work supporting sexualities equality must explore (trans) gender as a separate but crucial aspect of heteronormativity, an aspect that has traditionally been eclipsed by gay and lesbian studies. As trans activist and scholar Susan Stryker argues, transgender activists have made a special contribution to queer politics; ‘people with trans identities could describe themselves as men and women, too – or resist binary categorization altogether – but in doing either they queered the dominant relationship of sexed body and gendered subject’ (2008, 147). Recognising the links between gender normativity and heteronormativity requires us to address the extent to which the policing of sex and gender functions to construct gender anxiety and cissexual privilege (the assumption that the sex assigned at birth is somehow more natural and genuine, see Serano 2007), to propogate genderism (‘the pervasive and systemic belief in the naturalness and superiority of gendernormative’, see Airton 2009, 132) and to marginalise gender-variant and transgender people (Whittle, Turner, and Al-Alami 2007). An interrogation of trans realities provides a crucial dimension to queer politics: it explores ways of marginalisation that are specific to our assumptions of the biological stability of sex–gender categories, just as much work has focused on marginalisations particular to lesbian, gay and bisexual experiences. I use the term ‘trans’ here as an umbrella term that: (E)ncompass(es) discomfort with role expectations, being queer, occasional or more frequent cross-dressing, permanent cross-dressing and cross-gender living, through to accessing major health interventions such as hormone therapy and surgical reassignment procedures. (Whittle 2006, xi) Not everyone would define the range of trans experience described by Whittle as potentially queer (as a verb, with the potential to unsettle our understandings of sex– gender–sexuality). Jay Prosser has argued that transsexual, the end of the spectrum in Whittle’s definition that implies a move from a recognisable sex category to the other, is irreconcilable to queer: There is much about transsexuality that must remain irreconcilable to queer: the specificity of transsexual experience; the importance of the flesh to self; the difference between sex and gender identity; the desire to pass as ‘real-ly-gendered’ in the world without trouble . . . (Prosser 2006, 279) Yet Susan Stryker, in her definition of transgender, includes transsexual as a bodily effect that troubles normative understandings of the indisputable and immutable nature of the gender assigned at birth (cited in Leung 2006, 685–6). I agree with Stryker: when confronted with trans experience of any sort, we are invited to unlearn what we think we know about what sex, gender, and sexuality are and how they correlate. Drawing upon data collected as part of a broader participatory action research project addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equalities in English primary schools, this analysis involves a deep interrogation of sex and gender as identity processes separate from sexual orientation, but which work together with sexuality to both support and potentially challenge heteronormativity.

### ROB

#### The role of the ballot is to perform a feminist analysis of the aff. Feminists in academic communities like debate must work in multiple ways to gain greater acceptance- the ballot should reward different research practices

Sefconvic and Bifano no date

Enid M. I. Sefconvic and Diane Theresa Bifano, “Creating a Rhetorical Home for Feminists in the "Master's House" of the Academy: Toward a Gendered Taxonomy of Form and Content” SB

We conclude that women need not cede any rhetorical tools as those that build the "master's house." To abandon the tools of reason--the systematic approach to gathering, analyzing, evaluating data and generating theory; logical argument in which claims are supported by evidence or the techniques of metadiscourse that are the cement of reasoned discourse--would renounce one fundamental process for human progress. **Women (and men) must continue to work toward greater acceptance of feminist research and approaches and styles of presentation and argument that break with traditional norms. Reason is as much as property of females as males, gays and lesbians as heterosexuals, people of color as those who maintain hegemonies of thought and power that claim to be colorless.** Feminist research may benefit from being expressed in a masculine style, just as feminine style may illuminate traditional scholarship. ***The map toward empowerment--not just for women but for humans*--includes the development of a hybrid style of academic discourse, the heralding of alternative rhetorical strategies in traditional publications, *acceptance of non-traditional and qualitative research by tenure committees, and challenges to standards of academic hierarchy that preserve gendered, racial and ethnic power distinctions*.** By offering a schematic for identifying gendered form and style, our taxonomy contributes to deconstructing habituated patterns of gendered repression through language. Just as the Berlin wall fell brick by brick at the hands of ordinary people resisting hegemonic categories, so too must the master's house be dismantled. The bricks, the mortar, and all the fittings--including the techniques of metadiscourse--may yet furnish an abode accommodating all humankind.