

Letters

Various Authors

2021

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All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten.
Letters may be edited for length.

SEXUALLY DIMORPHIC

My partner brought home a copy of The Anarchist Review of Books and I wanted so much to love it.

But why have someone who is apparently unfamiliar with current radical feminist thought review Silvia Federici's work? (See Fifth Estate Anarchist Review of Books, Winter 2021, "Revolution at Point Zero," by Ashlyn Mooney.)

I hate to tell Mooney this, but we are part of nature, we evolved as children of the Earth, and this emphasis has absolutely nothing to do with "abstract gender essence."

We are animals, we are sexually dimorphic, but I realize that religion has so poisoned our lives that people confuse biological facts with pathetic human ideas such as "gender essence."

I could even live with that silliness, but when I saw the word transphobic in another essay that was it. Transphobic is a word that is hurled at radical feminists who have no problem with men wearing makeup and high heels, who have never murdered someone who calls themselves transgender or transsexual, but who know the difference between men and women.

Transphobic is a word used by people who fully support the medical/industrial complex and Big Pharma, and who know absolutely nothing about the effects of cross-sex hormones on the human body, who know nothing about the surgeries inflicted on men and women, who know nothing about the mental illness associated with not being able to accept one's body as it is.

Susan Elizabeth Siens

Unity, Maine

Fifth Estate note: An independent collective produced the Winter 2021 Fifth Estate Anarchist Review of Books.

This is their reply to the above letter:

"We believe that sex, gender, and nature are all evolving cultural constructs even if they are tethered to some forms of biological reality."

OUR FAILURES

I read the Fall 2020 issue and I'm amazed that an entire piece was devoted to discussing the CHAZ/CHOP and it didn't mention the multiple shootings. (See "Life in an Autonomous Zone: Seattle's Capitol Hill Organized Protest" by Rui Preti [FE #407, Fall, 2020].)

I supported the CHAZ (Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone) and was excited by it. But we have to recognize it was a disaster that got a kid killed. Anarchists need a little introspection about our failures.

It felt really insincere and dishonest to read that article just gloss over it. JR

Portland, Ore.

Rui Preti replies: My article is one among many contributing to reflections on the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone/ Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHAZ/CHOP) in Seattle during June of last year. It touches on both the positive and negative aspects as well as challenging some of the falsifications perpetrated by right-wing media and the local government.

However, in a short article it was only possible to briefly mention the problems related to decision-making, debates over tactics and emphasis, as well as coping with rightwing and other violence in the area. There are no easy answers to dealing with the kinds of violence that were present in and near the CHAZ/ CHOP.

Various news stories state there was an increase in gun violence in Seattle in 2020 over 2019 even before the CHAZ/CHOP came into being, and the higher rate continued after the zone was ended. The causes for this seem to be multiple, including that the frustrations of Covid confinement added to the usual increase in violence in poor neighborhoods all too familiar during warm weather in U.S. cities.

The CHAZ/CHOP was not planned, but came into existence during the Black Lives Matter protests as the result of the unexpected withdrawal of the police from the area on June 8.

The people who came to make artwork, provide medical, food, clothing and other assistance as part of mutual aid, and make room for anti-racist discussions, also continued to be involved in marches and other protest activities all over the city.

It is true that Black Lives Matter and anarchist participants were not prepared to transform the dynamic of a troubled neighborhood, which is the byproduct of long-standing societal problems. It is also true that they understood that the CHAZ/CHOP was not isolated from the rest of the city and its problems.

Community residents, especially some BIPOC people, said they felt that those offering mutual aid to residents experiencing trauma caused by criminal activities were more compassionate than the police would have been.

But, there is definitely a lot more we all need to learn in order to create the kinds of cooperation required to accomplish common goals and really pose a challenge to capitalism and the state.



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