

I wrote this after listening to the exchange in Holyrood on March 4th 2020 (3 days ago) in which the impassioned and eloquent Elaine Smith MSP asked that CIS (as previously used by Patrick Harvie MSP) be understood as a term which is offensive to many women, minimising and even erasing sex-based oppression, and that it not be used in the Chamber. ELAINE ASKED THAT WOMEN BE ALLOWED TO CALL THEMSELVES WOMEN. Her request was dismissed and her stance belittled by both Ken Macintosh, the Presiding Officer, and Patrick Harvie, who said that “while I am conscious that there are people who would not welcome the term cisgender being imposed upon them I am happy to say I am a cisgendered man.”

They told me I was a Ciswoman.

I asked what cis meant.

They said, *Ciswomen feel no mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.*

They say, *It's Latin*, as though it were the Word of God.

They say *it's just an adjective* (actually, it's a prefix)

They say, *It's not a slur...*

It is a slur

It's a slap in the face

It's a scold's bridle

They say, *It's just the opposite of trans.*

Cis women, stay in your lane. You have no monopoly on womanhood.

Cis gasps in a too-tight corset

Cis totters on too-high heels

Cis call her make-up her face and won't leave the house without it

Ciswomen feel no mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.

No speedbumps or potholes or square pegs in round **holes**

Ciswomen flow effortlessly from childhood into womanhood.

No need for de Beauvoir, no painful “becoming”

Just sleep-waltzing into full femininity

Ciswomen KNOW what to do with their hair

No effort, no burden, no caricature

It's never a **drag** – it's just who they ARE

Because they're worth it.

So, Ciswomanhood is **never** pushed on girls by advertising,

By magazines, by Tiktok and Tumblr, by mothers
Fearful of what happens to girls who don't "girl" properly,
By fathers, who approve of pretty compliant girls.

Real Ciswomen

"Feel like a woman" 24/7

HOW EXHAUSTING

Always on show, if only to yourself.

Skimpy clothes, high heels, make up,

Dieting, gossip, doing other women down.

How can Ciswomen be friends with each other?

Form alliances? Build a movement?

Ciswomen LOVE the chains that bind them.

IT WAS BAD ENOUGH

When the Ciswoman was Virginia Woolf's "looking glass possessing the magical and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice his natural size"

IT WAS BAD ENOUGH

When the Ciswoman was Betty Friedan's

Smiling middle-class housewife

Her brains curdling with boredom.

No wonder, in this sadistic porn-sick world we have not built,

We are ordered to be Ciswomen.

When #chokemedaddy is a Twitter hashtag,

A schoolyard catch-phrase...

IT WAS BAD ENOUGH

BUT NOW?

Ciswomen feel no mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.

Ciswomen feel no mismatch between their biological sex and their performance of femininity.

no mismatch between their biological sex and their drag act.

between their biological sex and their oppression.

So, Patrick. You're a happy "Cisgendered man". Yes, I believe it. You're happy celebrating your place at the top of the hierarchy, shouting women down, silencing us, ignoring us. Fine, Patrick. You do you. But we won't shut up and we won't lie down.

We are not your magic mirror. We are not your support humans. We are not your toys.

We are not ciswomen.

We are women.