

Baroness Minouche Shafik  
Director  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
Houghton Street  
London  
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27 July 2021

Dear Baroness Shafik,

We are writing to you as we were very concerned to read about an academic conference that took place recently at the LSE. This conference was organised by the Department of Gender Studies and contained a session titled 'No Time, No TERFs, No Norms'. This session consisted of four papers on transgender issues. One of the papers was titled 'Trans\* Endemics: Embodying Viral and Monstrous Threat in Times of Pandemic' and presented by Matt Thompson. It is this paper which we see as the greatest cause for concern.

Thompson's (who defines as 'they') paper, far from being a piece of scholarly and academic discourse was a long rant against those he disagrees with. The term 'TERF', standing for 'trans-exclusionary radical feminist' is an abusive term used by trans activists against those feminists who desire to protect single-sex spaces. Thompson uses his paper to attack his opponents in the foulest language; there are no fewer than eight uses of the 'F' word. Thompson states:

*But, what if trans\* is threatening? What if, all along, instead of pretending that trans\* is nice and pretty and wouldn't dare hurt your precious gender, we've been yelling: yes we f\*\*\*\*\*g would! In a heart beat. Give me a stage to stand on, or a website to upload a recording to, and I will cut your gender to shreds with my words like knives.*

Having used this knife metaphor, Thompson continues in a much more violent and threatening tone ending his paper on the following note:

*If TERFs think trans\* is an endemic threat to feminism, let us be the threat to feminism. We are the endemic, the viral, the toxic onslaught of ideology that attacks the very core of what you hold dear. We go unnoticed, right up until the moment they scream for mercy.*

*Am I a threat to you? Do I send chills down your spine?*

*Picture this: I hold a knife to your throat and spit my transness into your ear. Does that turn you on? Are you scared?*

*I sure f\*\*\*\*\*g hope so.*

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We find it astonishing that such angry, threatening, violent and offensive attacks on others are considered worthy and appropriate to present to students in one of the world's most distinguished universities. The paper presented does nothing to advance learning or understanding of the issues around gender. On the contrary it would appear to fly in the face of one of LSE's 'guiding principles' as stated on its website:

*...to ensure LSE is a vibrant and stimulating place to work and study, where different perspectives thrive through robust but respectful debate.*

Presenting papers which end with violent threats against those who disagree with you does not constitute 'respectful debate'.

In light of this unfortunate event and the negative publicity it has caused, we would like to ask the university what they plan to do to address this issue and what measures they intend to take to stop such outrageous abuse from happening in the future.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



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