



Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law

Dean Spade

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Wait—what's wrong with rights? It is usually assumed that trans and gender nonconforming people should follow the civil rights and “equality” strategies of lesbian and gay rights organizations by agitating for legal reforms that would ostensibly guarantee equal access, nondiscrimination, and equal protection under the law. This approach assumes that the best way to address the poverty and criminalization that plague trans populations is to get recognized by law and included in the state's institutions. But does changing what the law says about a targeted and marginalized population bring material relief? And what if many of the problems that shorten trans people's lives stem from the ordinary, banal ways that gender norm categories are administered by virtually every state and private institution?

In *Normal Life* Dean Spade presents revelatory critiques of the legal equality framework for social change and points to examples of transformative grassroots trans activism that is raising demands that go beyond traditional civil rights reforms. Spade explodes the assumptions about what legal rights can do for marginalized populations and describes transformative resistance processes and formations that address the root causes of harm and violence. Setting forth a politic that goes beyond the quest for mere legal inclusion, *Normal Life* is an urgent call for justice and trans liberation, and the radical transformations it will require.

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