

Caitlyn Jenner and Rachel Dolezal: Debating gender and racial identity

Some in the queer community have [summarily dismissed](#) any possible similarities between Caitlyn Jenner – who recently came out as a trans woman – and Rachel Dolezal, a white woman who posed as black for years, focusing instead on [the insulting way the comparison is being made](#). But a reasonable person could wonder what the difference really is between someone who is genetically white and feels culturally black, versus another who is genetically, chromosomally male and feels themselves to be female. There are differences—and important ones—but they're not necessarily as easy, or as obvious, as the queer community would like them to be.

For liberals who support trans rights and racial equality, there's an instinctive sense that Dolezal and Jenner are different, and that being transgender is in-bounds while being "transracial" isn't. The explanation commonly given is that Dolezal misrepresented her actual identity, while Jenner and other trans women are being true to theirs. This leaves a big question unanswered, though: If race and gender are both social constructs, and if both have been built around observable biological traits, then what is the crucial difference that makes a felt gender identity a true one, but a felt racial identity fraudulent? The short answer is that most trans people and their allies suspect that transgender people are born that way.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [It Isn't Crazy to Compare Rachel Dolezal With Caitlyn Jenner](#)