

Invariantist, Contextualist, and Relativist Accounts of Gender Terms*

Dan Zeman

Department of Analytic Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Science
E-mail: danczeman@gmail.com

Abstract

In this paper, I explore a range of existent and possible ameliorative semantic theories of gender terms: *invariantism*, according to which gender terms are not context-sensitive, *contextualism*, according to which the meaning of gender terms is established in the context of use, and *relativism*, according to which the meaning of gender terms is established in the context of assessment. I show that none of these views is adequate with respect to

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the plight of trans people to use their term of choice to self-identify and be referred to accordingly. I then consider an invariantist view based on *self-identification* and explore some of its challenges.

Key Words: trans people, self-identification, invariantism, contextualism, relativism