

Introduction to Gender Acceleration

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For some people, gender is not something they think about a lot. For others, it's something they can't stop thinking about. Conservative media often refers to the recognition of nonbinary genders as "destroying tradition" and "destroying gender norms." While this is often said as if it is a negative thing, gender acceleration (also called gender abolition) aims to do exactly that. According to The Gender Accelerationist Manifesto, gender acceleration is defined as "using gender's own process of decay to destroy the gender class system" (Flores, Storm). This is simply accelerating the process in which gender becomes obsolete. While this may sound radical, gender acceleration is the gateway to freeing our society from patriarchy and class discrimination.

Understanding gender acceleration is not possible without a basic understanding of the differences between sex and gender, and how they are categorized in today's world. Sex is usually determined by genitals and chromosomes. Gender is how one defines themselves. Gender, just like all materials that make up humans, is indefinite (Saewol). The word "indefinite" means having no exact limits. Gender is not determined by sex; and claiming that it does forces everyone into an identity that they didn't choose. The categorization of people as male/female, men/women, and girls/boys is just a way to label physical attributes of humans. Not only does this exclude the estimated 1–2% of the intersex population (according to the Intersex Society of America), it also forces anyone who identifies outside of the gender binary, to be labeled as the "other." This is an outdated system rooted in colonialism and capitalism, and it is due for change. Since many people don't really think about their gender and why they identify that way, our internalized perception of gender is often overlooked.

The current gender system is defined by the following characteristics (Flores, Storm):

1. Recognition of only two genders- male and female
2. Gender viewed as unchangeable and fixed at birth
3. Marriage is an economic contract between a man and a woman
4. Marriage is a personal choice, and it is entirely between the two getting married
5. In marriage, the man is supposed to economically support the family, while the woman tends to the household

This view of gender and sexuality was not common practice in many cultures. The gender system that we know today was imposed mainly by Europe, and it only reached the Americas because of colonization (Ballestín). Of course, one of the things listed above was an improvement from previous European marriage standards, but it still put humans into immovable classes assigned at birth. Third genders existed (and still exist) all around the world, such as the Indigenous two-spirited people, Indian hijiras, and the Indigenous Hawaiian mahu. The concept of genders outside of male and female is only foreign in countries dominated by colonialism. In fact, our gender class system is a tool for spreading colonialism: "Gender itself is used as a tool for centralizing and colonizing. As Europeans moved outside of Europe to further colonial projects, they brought their ideas and conceptions of gender" (Nakizaru). Gender roles were imposed upon Indigenous people of the Americas as a way of controlling reproduction. Society is ready to progress beyond this limited view of gender identity through the acceleration of class decay.

Gender is, by definition, a class. It is a social ranking that determines how you are treated by the people around you. The term "class" usually refers to a group of people with similar economic

status: the lower class, middle class, and upper class. Class abolition is an ideology that aims to get rid of the difference in wealth, education, and income, and achieve a society where everybody has access to their basic needs without anyone hoarding more resources than they need. Once you understand that gender is a class, it is clear how class abolition and gender abolition go together (Flores, Storm). Class abolition is part of the process of gender acceleration, as gender is only a form of controlling and increasing reproduction. In order to reproduce, Colonialists instilled the idea that penises are male, and vaginas are female, therefore they should go together (Saewol). The very idea of heterosexual and male or female as a default is inherently capitalist because it was created to encourage unmanageable population growth, just like how capitalism encourages excessive accumulation of wealth. Capitalism and the gender binary are reliant on each other, so they are fought in similar ways. "People fight capitalism through a refusal to work, a general strike against it. Similarly, a collective "no" to gender rejects the class system and allows us to take it to its knees" (Flores, Storm). Class and gender go hand-in-hand, and they are to be abolished together.

The first thing to come to mind when someone talks about gender issues or politics is usually transgender people. Within the gender class system, when someone is not content in the class they were assigned at birth, they switch classes. Others are not comfortable in either of the assigned classes, so they identify in an entirely different class. When they do this, they are labelled as transgender. In an ideal society, nobody should be forced to live with any identity that they don't choose. Trans people say "no" to their assigned gender. "When you get assigned the male class, but you loudly assert the opposite, you have said "no" to gender. Gender gave you what you are, but you turned away in disgust. You are not a man, you are something else." (Flores, Storm). Many trans people undergo a transition to "pass," but in a genderless world, they could live their lives respected in whatever identity is the most comfortable. Of course, medical treatment such as gender affirming surgeries and hormone replacement therapy should remain accessible to those who want them. Transgender people are a part of gender acceleration, and they are not to be pushed out of their identity for the comfort of cisgender people. They have begun the war on gender, now gender acceleration can finish it.

By now, many may be wondering how to become more supportive of gender nonconformity and abolition. Movements to be inclusive of nonbinary people are a start, but the normalization of gender nonconformity is the more plausible first step. Think about how you perceive masculinity and femininity. When you see a person and assume their gender, don't fret. Instead, think about why you assumed that they were one gender. Once you understand that all of the acts to appear feminine or masculine are just performative, you can begin to learn how to undo the bias that our binary gender system has ingrained in all of us. This is explained in an analysis by Judith Butler, a philosopher and gender theorist. "Performative acts, that is all the little actions you take which construct an identity, are key to understanding how gender functions on an individual level. We find these in the most basic things we do and say, "I am a woman", "No, I can't play with that. It's a boy toy", "Boys will be boys". These acts produce an identity, both within ourselves and within others. You identify as a woman or a man and identify others as men or women by engaging in these acts" (Butler). Breasts are considered feminine because people with breasts are usually assigned female at birth. But when you look beyond this understanding of basic biology, you start to question why we assign labels to certain genitals. Besides biology, you may also question the gendering of clothes. Why are skirts feminine? One will begin to realize that it is only because you were told that they were. Another approach, although not for everyone, is to

identify outside of the binary as much as you are comfortable. If you're happy with your assigned sex, try to dress in whatever clothing you enjoy. Men should embrace femininity the way women have embraced masculinity in the 21st century. As mentioned earlier, if enough of the population reexamined their ties with their assigned sex at birth and presented themselves however they wanted, a queer revolution is possible. This would also force the population to think about their ties with heterosexuality. As more and more people step outside the binary, the idea of being queer would become more normal. These are the most tangible actions one can take to support gender acceleration.

Those who have a more shallow relationship with queerness or who aren't queer themselves may be skeptical of this movement. Many find comfort in the gender binary, and that's okay. There is no reason to force anyone to identify as anything they aren't comfortable with, and it's okay to be attached to your identity as a man or a woman. However, you just must be willing to accept possibilities outside of the gender binary because they have existed and will continue to exist for thousands of years. Gender has its own way of becoming obsolete over time, and gender acceleration is the key to making his happen. Gender acceleration is not forcing anyone out of a comfortable identity, it is simply normalizing the idea of being outside of your assigned sex and allowing people to choose their gender identity rather than assigning it to them (Flores, Storm). The only reason this is such a radical idea is because of the Eurocentric gender standards that we have internalized. Change makes many people uncomfortable, so any movements against gender will be met with hyper-masculine backlash, but we must fight through the backlash. If you consider yourself an LGBTQ ally, you should consider joining the fight against gender. The gender binary was the basis for almost all queer oppression, and to abolish it would normalize queer relationships. If you are a woman, there's a good chance you have been held back by the sex you were assigned. If we broke down the gender norms that keep women from being treated as equal to everyone else, all women (or woman-aligned people) would ultimately benefit. It would break down the power systems between men and women that cause men to rape and look for domination over femininity. Education is the other important part to joining this revolution. Queer history wasn't taught in school, and queer theory is often overlooked, even by the most well-read Communists and leftists there are. Learn the history of the people that fought before you and learn about all views of gender and sexuality. Once you learn that gender is indeterminate and begin to unpack your relationship with your sex and gender, you can join queer people in the fight for gender acceleration. The gender binary has caused suffering for LGBTQ people and women for hundreds of years, and if enough people abandon it, we can escape this binary class system that has weighed us down for so long. We must challenge these norms for gender and sexuality and produce a Queer Revolution. Gender acceleration is the escape from class-dominated society that we must strive towards.

Citations

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