

Gender Spectrum Theory

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fifth gender, placed there due the idea that these individual somehow combine the traits of the other genders. Fifth gender was found most noticeably in the Bugis culture, although certain genders attributed with Native Americans and First Nations individuals did fall into the criteria.

Figure 1

Created by Angela N. Tharp

The criteria for each gender in the linear spectrum was based off traits commonly described in each culture by

gender is a natural phenomenon, part of human nature. As will be discussed in the sections to come, genders beyond the binary (first gender [man], first gender [woman]) have developed and appeared throughout the world and throughout history. What commonality these phenomena have appears to be human, and cultural.

Hermaphrodites and the Gender Scare of Europe

If the possibility for multiple genders are part of human nature, then why do so many cultures lack accepted gender norms? Gender inequality, referring in this case to binary versus non-binary genders, appears frequently in first world countries. Countries influenced by first world countries, such as England and America, tend to look down at non-binary individuals. This is likely due to the sex-defining revolution that happened in Europe and spread throughout European territories in the 1880s.

In the 1880s there were patients going to doctors for various health related reasons, some regarding their lack of children, others regarding how it was painful or nearly impossible to have sex with their spouse. In some, if not most, of these cases the individual would be found to have

dictate as normal. This may mean the clitoris was engorged or that the penis was small. It could also mean that there was no vaginal opening, or a bottomed vagina (stops; has a closing point within the body) rather than bottomless one (leads to the uterus).

As more cases of ambiguous genitalia appeared doctors began gathering in order to discuss the apparent *hermaphrodites*, a word based off of the minor Greek God Hermaphroditus. The idea of a hermaphrodite pushed at the social norms of the time. Doctors from England, France, and at times Germany, were involved in discussing and diagnosing what a hermaphrodite was. Considering that these countries have societies structured by a strictly upheld gender dichotomy, the idea of someone having an ambiguous sex or gender was not well received.

As more information about patients came to light doctors began talking about what a *true* hermaphrodite was. At first it was just someone who had the external genitalia of both the male and female sexes, or were ambiguous in their

Over time the definition changed from the external appearance (which focused primarily on the clitoris and penis) to an internal focus. The gonads, an organ which produces gametes and are developed into either testes or ovaries, became the new focus of the definition. In order to be a true hermaphrodite individuals had to have the gonads associated with both males and females, i.e. a testis and an ovary. This allowed doctors to claim that hermaphrodites were not another sex natural to humankind.

Although
came with hermaphrodite symptoms, it did a great deal better than the original definition. Eventually ambiguous genitalia changed from being a sign of a hermaphrodite and became a sign of an intersex individual.

The bow and the basket often symbolize the two ends of the linear gender spectrum within Native American and First Nation cultures. The bow is a hunter, a man prepared to follow prey and capture it for food, or enter battle to gather the scalps of enemies. On the other hand, the basket represents the harvester, a woman who stays with the tribe and cares for the young while producing goods (such as

regards to every tribe, but in a general setting this is how things were viewed. Men were thought to be males, women were females, but what someone grew up to be was not always so clear.

Children were often monitored for their association with certain items and individuals. If a child lingered around women and girls, but was born a male, their gender may be called into question. The reverse was also possible with female children. In these cases, a bow and basket ceremony may be conducted so that the child can choose the direction their life will take. Not all tribes conducted this, or conducted the same rite of passage. Many tribes that had multi-gender

all the same.

If a child (born male) picked up the basket they

usually done around the age of eight. That child would later grow up into an adult that is neither man nor woman. They would instead be a third gender individual that had rights equal to men and women within the tribe. For a child (born female) who picked up the bow, a new name and clothing would also be given to them. This is how the tribe would address them (in the tribes that participated in renaming) from that moment onward. That child would then grow up to be a fourth gender individual, who also had equal standing with

Nanaguru

entering the house around the same time, are called *Gurubai*
Chotagurubai

(younger sister).

When an individual joins the hijra they also lose their old name and instead are renamed by their guru. All hijra have Hindi names designated for girls, except some *nayak* (head guru of the house) have Muslim names that are for men. This only happens when that *nayak* has been to Mecca. As hijra practice a form of religion that is a mix between Hindu and Muslim, they take these names very seriously and only certain individuals who have met

While hijra as a community claim to be pure and asexual, there are some houses which allow for prostitu

Challenging Gender Norms:

Five Genders among the Bugis in Indonesia). Similar to Figure 1, Pak Hidy explained how the five genders within the Bugis culture appeared in a linear spectrum. It is important to note that the Bugis culture does not have a word for gender.

Conclusions

The Gender Spectrum Theory questioned whether gender was human made, or natural to mankind. After researching different genders throughout history and throughout the world, it seems clear that gender is a natural phenomenon. There are too many independent sources of gender for it to be a coincidence. The three listed in the sections above are only a few of many cultures with many genders associated with their societies. Although invaders and settlers attempted to, and in some cases succeeded in, eradicating genders they did not understand, the binary is not all that has persisted to this day. Even in areas where the culture was touched by Euro-American influence, or imported religious influence, gender has continued to exist. For this reason, it seems clear that gender is not something created by the individual, but rather a natural occurrence within the species.

modern genders, those mentioned in Figure 1 outside of the linear spectrum, are not simply expressions of individuality. Rather they are new terms for genders that have possibly existed in human history since the first civilizations. More research is necessary to further develop the conclusions drawn here. However, if this possibility