

## GENDER & SEX

Modern societies are reverting to cultural roots in terms of gender. George Santayana wrote in *Reasons in Common Sense Vol. I* that 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' This is true of many societies that have either forgotten the history of gender claims among their people, or were forced to by the power of outside influence. These changes have led to a modern world society that is mainly a binary gender dichotomy. One heavily influenced by the idea that chromosomal sex, where there are only two types of individuals (males and females), translates into cultural gender. Male and female became man and woman with little to no wiggle room in-between. However certain cultures, specifically Euro-American cultures, are beginning to become self aware to the issues of gender again. The possibility for multiple genders to exist in one culture not only are likely, but are traceable on every continent and throughout mankind.

What needs to be remembered when discussing gender and sex in historical, cultural, or conversational contexts are the following: Gender is not attached to genitalia. Sex is more closely attached to genitalia, but is more likely to be deduced specifically through chromosomes. Sexuality is tied to both sex and gender, but is a separate entity from both. The best way to think of this is as a triangle with gender, sex, and sexuality as the three points. They each have connections to each other, and may even seem to blend along the lines that connect the angles. Because of this, and because of restrictions or expectations with a person's culture, some people go to great lengths to have their gender identity and sex match in a binary sense, even when it naturally doesn't align. This has led to a surgical movement in the medical industry called sex reassignment surgery, which is used most by transsexuals/transgenders, and intersex individuals. This allows the genitalia of an individual to change from the natural genitalia they were born with (male, female, or otherwise), and become or to be replaced by the genitalia of the sex preferred.

While there are two main sexes, male and female, it is important to keep in mind that nothing is so simple. Hermaphrodites have appeared in human populations throughout history and challenge the definition of sex and gender. It wasn't until recently that the word 'intersex' took the place of hermaphrodite for many medical anomalies. In the past hermaphrodites were told to live their lives based on the genitalia visible externally. The same is told today to parents who produce an intersex child that may then go through surgical procedures to have recognizable genitalia of one gender or the other within the dichotomy.

## TWO SPIRIT

Before European settlers traveled to North America, and for quite some time thereafter, tribes throughout the continent showed a remarkable tenancy for multi-gender tiered systems. The Eastern coast was less likely to have non-binary genders while the Western coast and Plains were more likely. In general, however, the accepted genders within a tribe were based off the culture of that tribe and how it was structured. If there was no need for a third or fourth gender within the tribe, then it was less likely that one would have developed within the society.

In tribes where there are multiple genders some may be considered third or fourth gendered. In some cases there may even have been fifth gendered individuals who combined traits typically thought to be attributed to either end of the linear spectrum [the five boxes in the diagram to the right]. In some tribes non-binary individuals, those born male, female, or otherwise, may have been given the same gendered term. While in other cases tribes had specific words for their non-binary genders, such as *hwame* and *alyha* from the Mohave tribe.

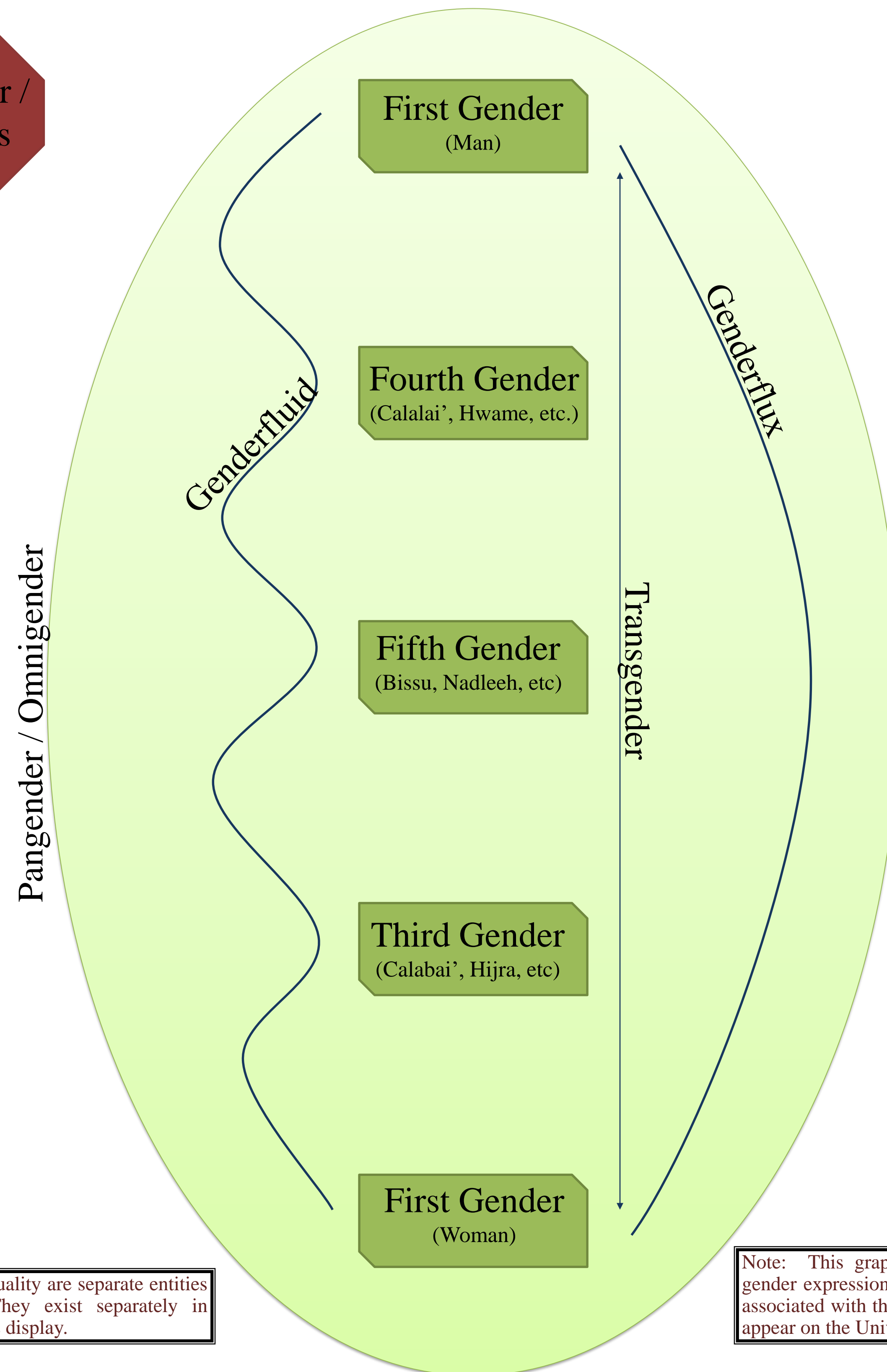


# Gender Spectrum Theory

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## VISIBLE GENDER

Agender /  
Neutrois



Note: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality are separate entities of human experience. They exist separately in history, modern life, and this display.

Note: This graph does *not* show all the possible gender expressions. These are only a few that were associated with the research or deemed most likely to appear on the University of New Haven's campus.

## BISSU, CALALAI', CALABAI'

In South Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Bugis culture continues to influence the society. Not only has their language remained prominent in some areas, but so have certain traditions such as their acceptance of five genders: *makkunrai*, *oroané*, *calalai'*, *calabai'*, and *bissu*. In translation, makkunrai would be a feminine woman while an oroané would be a masculine man, both first gendered individuals in a Euro-American culture's understanding. Calalai' can be translated to a masculine female, explaining that they were born with the sex of a female but are fourth gendered, nearer to the first gender man. Calabai' would then be explained as feminine males due to being born of the male sex while being the third gender, closer to first gender women. Bissu individuals, who fall under the fifth gender category, are said to incorporate elements common to the other genders. The sex they are born with does not determine their bissu status, although it's more common for a bissu to have been born a male. Each gender has an important role in society, regardless of the fact that old traditions and religions have been molded and melded to new ones. Clearer explanations of these genders can be seen in the diagram to the left.

## HIJRA

Throughout India, and other countries of South Asia, there is a group of people that go by the Urdu term *hijra*. These individuals are often born with male genitalia but are of the third gender, falling closer to first gendered women. In some cases intersex individuals will also be hijra, but again this sex does not change their gender representation. In the case of intersex hijra, they are seen as true hijra if they lack a penis, due to the fact that one of the main rituals or rites of passage in the hijra community involves the removal of the penis. The Nirvaanam is an rite in which the hijra asks their goddess, Bahuchara Mata for the right to become women. Once they receive signs of her blessing they either go through a traditional ritual or have the operation done by a doctor, either of which is usually done illegally. During the operation the penis and stratum is removed. It is believed that hijra are given spiritual abilities due to this procedure, which ties into their lack of genitalia. This gives hijra a place above other eunuchs in Indian society, where as other groups of eunuchs are looked down upon for their ulterior life styles when compared to binary gender roles.

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