

What is the difference between masculine and feminine nature? Although it may seem like there is a clear answer, gender, in reality, is a routine accomplishment ingrained in everyday life. As of late, influencers have been challenging essential elements in categorizing a person as being defined as a particular gender in society. However, individuals acting outside of their gender norms are still heavily criticized. This criticism is identified as a stressor for individuals who want to express how they feel internally. The criticism leads to society identifying when an individual acts outside of their sex. Doing gender can no longer be seen as a gender display but as an ongoing activity.

I attended a private catholic high school. It was a traditional school in the sense that we had to wear uniforms and were expected to behave in a specific manner. For some background, the school prided itself on promoting a strong work ethic and responsibility through catholic education. Before the start of every school year, we were required to sign a handbook. It states that all students are expected to have a neat, well-groomed appearance and not participate in current fads in makeup, jewelry, and hairstyle. The boys were expected to have neatly kept hair that was not too long and were not allowed to have earrings.

One day in my French class, my classmate, Aaron, was sent to the dean. My teacher, Mrs. Delbrune, asked him what was on his hands. He said it was nail polish. When she asked why he replied that his friend had painted two of his fingernails for fun and did not see the problem, yet, she insisted it was not allowed and sent him to the deans. The dean gave him nail polish remover and had him remove the polish before he returned to class. He was also given a detention slip. I, and a couple of others around me, were curious if this was against the handbook. So, I pulled up

concerning boys and nail polish.

Why was it such a problem if it was not officially against their regulations? A similar experience occurred during Phys Ed. Our gym class was broken up to separate the boys and girls. We girls tended to do light, mundane workouts. We often did yoga, Zumba, kickball, or archery. Our gym teacher was absent one day, so we were put with the boys. We warmed up by playing basketball with them when we would have usually been sitting there, talking. That day we played soccer with the boys. We all found great entertainment in this and wished we did more stimulating activities like this more often. Next gym class, a classmate, Grace, asked our teacher why we were not participating in the same activities as the boys as we found it more pleasurable than what we normally partake in. My teacher told her that she should not be complaining and that she was helping us since girls do not want to participate in sweat-inducing work. We then proceeded to stretch and walk the track for the next hour.

Candace West and Don Zimmerman aim to change the understanding of gender to be defined as “a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures.’ It is critical to note that they used the term complex in their definition of gender. Complex implies a system that consists of many different parts, which is contradictory to what we are used to. We tend to associate gender with sex, the categories into which humans are divided based on their reproductive organs. They argue that we must see doing gender as a limited aspect of behavior that an individual can influence by observing it. Gender is not natural but is instead a performance that we put on.

comprises our physical, biological criteria for determining us male or female at birth. The external identifiers that place us in a specific category of sex criteria are our sex category. Our sex category can coexist or vary from one another. This is possible because you can claim a sex category that does not concur with your sex. Gender is the activity of reinforcing your sex category. A transexual is an excellent example of how doing gender is an ongoing process. Let us use an example of an individual who was raised as a female but adopted a male identity. He, unlike most boys, will have to consciously orchestrate how to act for people to perceive him as a male: this is doing gender. Many transexual people stated that they felt they were born in the wrong body; the sex they were born with does not coincide with their sex category. The term gender attribution process refers to how we look for essential criteria that would determine one's sex category. But, we must consider that the biological assignment we were given has nothing to do with our sex category. Many activities can be associated with a masculine or feminine nature. For example, it is thought that a man must give up his seat for a woman or that a woman is helpless when it comes to changing a tire. These gender attitudes are related to the perception of fairness. The more traditional the perspective of an individual, the less likely they will think they are being unfair; in other words, doing gender is expressing our genders to ourselves and others. Our bodies are a vessel for the self and provide tools for us to accomplish our never-ending task of doing gender.

I feel as though the high school I attended still believes gender is what is assigned at birth and not as the process embedded in everyday routine. The school conducts itself in a traditional manner, which is linked to unfairness. The unfairness stems from their conviction that gender should conform to sex. In the example of Aaron, it was not against the school's official rules for

question of why it was a problem. If my French teacher were to learn about West and Zimmerman's definition of gender, maybe she would not have reacted the way she did. Aaron was behaving outside of his sex category. He had painted nails, a feature widely associated with being female. While performing a gender attribution process for Aaron, she noticed that the only thing that did not line up with the gender he identified with was his nails. Maybe it was because she associates men going against traditional masculine ideals with queerness, which is not accepted in the catholic church. If this theory is confirmed, we need more people like Aaron to tackle gender norms to show individuals that there is no such thing as gender marking an activity.

The same argument applies to my gym teacher. Why does she assume she is doing us a favor by making us participate in tedious tasks if it means we do not get sweaty? I think she is conceptualizing gender as a role. I feel she would agree that girls should be accommodating and nurturing while males should be strong and aggressive. I believe that even though she is a woman, she is sexist and treats us unequally compared to the boys. Grace only wanted the opportunity to play basketball to relieve stress from the school day and have. If she does not see gender as an ongoing performance that we perform, then no one will be able to unlabel activities as having a masculine or feminine nature. If an individual goes against the so-called 'gender norms,' it will be seen as an act of rebellion rather than as the liberty of being able to express yourself.

Doing gender is a complex term that consists of reinforcing your sex category. In today's society, individuals are trying to push the boundaries of gender roles. Males may paint their nails, and females may want to participate in sports that may be deemed 'masculine.' Like my high

eliminate the concept of gender roles, as it should not be seen as defiance but rather as a manifestation.