

Gender Vandalism

By Glimmer

Queerness is a flow of disagreements. It is not purely an affirmation of “I am”, but also making a claim of “I am not”; it is a rejection of that which is imposed upon us within the confines of normative gender. It is taking the identity you were forcefully classified into, and defacing it. To vandalize it.

Discursive Categorization

Feminists of the past have attempted to understand oppression through a distinction between sex as a biological truth, determined by external and internal facts of our existence, and gender being social conventions, determining a contrast between a masculine and feminine experience. The traditional feminist understood the two to be separate. They acknowledged them existing as a result of categorization, but they viewed sex as a biological category and gender as a historical one. So feminist of the present, specifically those who call themselves “trans exclusionary”, adopt a brand of gender abolition that seeks to get rid of gender while maintaining the category of sex. This however, misunderstands how the two come about entirely, and how they work to sustain each other in an almost symbiotic fashion.

The relations of production, defined by the social structures that serve to regulate the relation between subjects in the production of goods, plays an essential part in understanding gender on a *material* basis. Gender does not naturally manifest within the body, so it is set aside. Sex however, is assembled from components we are born with. The penis, the vagina, the breast,

the chromosomes. These components are then distinguished, and put together into either the male or female classes. These components serve to reinforce a reality created around the categorization created for them that they find themselves in. The sexes now become subjects, who in relation to the components that make them up (such as genitals and chromosomes) are upheld by themselves, and the components that make up their category. As the anatomical components that make the foundation for sex are naturally occurring, they serve to validate the idea of sex as a biological truth. Now the idea of a natural sex becomes socially acceptable, and social acceptability reproduces itself as “acceptable” within discursive categorization, because it produces itself as categorization.

The problem presented is the emphasis on the *natural*.

The implication that biological sex is natural takes the concept of our anatomy being naturally occurring and applies that to the conceptions of male and female being so as well. This is where the traditional feminists fail to identify the social construction of these sexual categories. In order to fully grasp the categorical conception of sex, we must first understand *why* it was categorized.

The distinction first arrives from a grouping of anatomical characteristics. What is visible on an external inspection, the genitals, the chest area, the body hair, the bone structure, is then taken and grouped together. In the early history of humanity the analysis on the body was one done purely externally. There was no way to look into the body, or to determine chromosomal patterns. The intersex, as they were not part of the large majority who shared the similar external features were simply seen as abnormalities and deviations that did not fit the easy distinctive

majority. Through this simplistic analysis, two groups came about. This analysis however does not stop simply at the anatomy, but it extends into the application of these features within the context of the labour force. Quite simply, those deemed physically dominant based on the general bodily structure of their group were assigned the productive labour, and their counterparts the reproductive labour which sought to ensure the smooth continuation of their opposition's production. These distinct groups based on their socialization gave way to the male and female classes. The material conditioning created by this division of labour created separate experiences through which sexual classes became legitimized through their own makeup. As the distinction was made based on naturally occurring factors of physical biology, the social conditions applied to those factors were deemed natural as well and thus, the classes entered a feedback loop through which they naturalized *themselves*. The categorization is clearly an action which is performed, but it is passed as a natural occurrence. So as gender forms as a result of this social conditioning within sexual classes, the idea is then proposed that gender itself is natural as well. Then the internal aspect of the body is categorized as well, but now with an emphasis on a gendered relation. It is argued now that the biological differences in the brain create a natural relation between the two sexes. Both gender and sex then exists as historical categorization and social constructions that support the other. That continues to build off of the other, and keep each other intact through discourse.

The end result is a forceful categorization that cements itself into the social fabric, and asserts itself as an untouchable truth. The male and female class became the truth. They become un-arguable factors of our socialization which cannot be refuted. They become a fact of nature,

and the status quo builds around these axiomatic categories and become the standard for what is normal.

Validity

The dominant gender structure is composed of a set of default identities. These identities are validated and upheld as truths by the societal conception of nature. They are believed to be a part of a human essence, predetermined before conception. You are born with these identities already in you. This however, is the result of a conscious action; the validation done here is one that had to be performed. As these identities become a part of the status quo, they are considered the guideline within the dominant gender structure which imposes itself as a corrective force to any oppositional (or, different) expressions of gender. This was done by the colonials to the native americans as their own gender systems were erased through violence and replaced with the colonial normative gender structure. The normative identities (Cis man, Cis woman, and Heterosexual) essentially serve as a rubric for gender expression. So as a result, every identity that may appear within the gender structure must undergo the same process of inspection in order to be considered valid.

Queerness comes about as an antithesis to the essence of these normative identities. There is a disagreement between an individual and the assignment. This refusal to comply with the assignment and its rules is then given a name, a signifier to make sense of it. This refusal is categorized following the logic of the presupposed normative identities, creating them in such a way that they fit within the gender structure as a byproduct of it. So when a member of the male class feels attraction to a member within the same class, he is considered a homosexual. This

identity is abnormal as it deviates from the standard behavior that a member of the male class is supposed to display. However, the identity is still considered a valid one. It manages to incorporate the normative conceptions without subverting them. This validation is given by the oppressor, those who hold the normative identities, and they do so by simply acknowledging the homosexual identity as one that holds truth. Even through the violence, the identity is considered real. This legitimacy extended becomes palatable, it becomes something needed, and understood to be beneficial to liberatory desire of the queer gr. The need for this validation manifests historically throughout the growth of the larger LGBTQ+ community, and through the expansion of expression.

To validate an identity is to assert it as real. To take it into account, and verify the feelings it encompasses as tangible. The gender structure recognizes the identity, and thus allows it to exist. It accepts these expressions of queerness within it, but this acceptance is not purely positive. The identity is simply incorporated into an oppressive super structure, through which it experiences violence by virtue of its recognition. Here it is processed through the structure in such a way that it becomes identifiable, and the subjects under these identities can now be grouped and targeted in a specific way. These identities create a normativity of their own, which reproduces the ideas of normative gender and sexuality within them.

Moral puritanism takes a prevalent seat within the dominant superstructure. Its motivation then is to make sure the subjects existing within the structure are morally pure as well. So typically, a moral perversion denotes something that deviates from a certain normative standard. This standard is one that takes into account race, religion, gender, sexuality, and the capitalist structure. To the puritans during the American reconstruction period, anything that deviated

from the racial standard of whiteness was considered morally impure. The black man was a violent brute, whose ignorance made him a danger to the white American society. But the tool the puritan utilizes most effectively is that of sexuality. The ability to paint a certain group or a behavior as sexually perverse based on an extreme sensitivity to sexuality intensified by christian morality. The white Americans utilized this tool against the black populace by painting the black man as a predator, who fetishized the white woman, and the black woman as a hypersexual animal who sought after the good married white man. Moral puritanism rejects “sexual perversions”, but the idea of what these perversions are is entirely dependent on the structure's rules and conditions, its normative standard. This creates a structure in which anything that is not normal is morally impure in contrast. Now the action of a member of the male class finding pleasure in a member of his same class is identified, and it is categorized as a deviation from the standard. When this category is made, it is given a name, and it is validated as a reality. Through this validation, it is incorporated within the structure, and through its comparison to the standard it is identified as perverse. Now its reality is taken into account and it can be acted against. It can now be corrected, suppressed, and studied.

Valid Abnormality

The gender structures adopted a regenerative ability of self defense through the very identities it enacted violence against. The structure was capable of convincing the groups that encompassed these identities to believe that this validation extended to them was positive, and that the process of validation must be respected, and carried out by themselves.

The gender structure will allow other identities besides the ones it encompasses to exist so long as they pose no threat to it. I make this claim not to take away from these identities but to illustrate a conscious process.

Monosexual identities within the queer community are not debated as they are already recognized as valid identities; following this mode of thinking, we once again realize the contrast to heterosexuality that validates these identities. The cis lesbian who uses she/her pronouns is already valid. She abides by the idea of a normative womanhood, albeit non-traditionally in her queerness, but nonetheless still maintaining that cisgender identity. The idea of recognizing this validation is not meant to erase the lesbian struggle and relationship with oppression, but to simply acknowledge the degrees of privilege that come with being positioned in certain proximity to the dominant force of power. Acknowledging the reality that the cis lesbian's relation to normativity allows her the opportunity to use her proximity to power in order to reinforce the demands of the valid gender structure. To acknowledge the reality that the effort to carry out these demands makes the cis lesbian a victim to herself. This proximity praises subservience. It is presented to these queer identities as a desirable position they should seek to achieve. Through this semblance of privilege and acceptability, the 'valid' queers are incentivised to adopt a sense of loyalty to the gender structure, and through it an urge to protect it. Queerness now reproduces the structure of heteronormativity within its own community.

Proposed alternatives to the gender structure come in the form of identities meant to subvert the normative standard. The non-binary label for example, presents this separation from the gender binary, but through its validation it is placed back directly inside of it. The label takes into account the existence of the binary, accepting it as truth, and asserting itself as an opposition to it. The non-binary gender is only produced as acceptable because it produces itself as a

discursive category (i.e. that it is produced along the lines of androgynous physicality, personality, and sociality), and as such, it becomes “acceptable” only as feedback to its categorization. That is to say that, because the non-binary gender abides by its social *expectation*, it produces discursive expectation at the advent of its “acceptability.” In this valid state it reproduces the ideas of cisnormativity, with the phenomena of the “Afab Non-binary Person” becoming a normative standard for example. Its validation simply comes from its own role within the gender structure as an antithesis to the binary.

The gender structure on its own is not concrete. It requires those within it to uphold an idea of normal and through that ensure that it does not fall. He/him lesbians, nonbinary lesbians, mspec lesbians, and several other identities who adopt the lesbian label in a way that deviates from the “normal” definition, bring to light the fragility of the label. At a certain point the widely recognized concept of the lesbian was simple: Women who liked other women. Now in our present day, new discourse has arisen and through it new ways to formulate ideas, and feelings, and assign meaning came with it. We widely recognize and accept lesbianism as non-men loving non-men, and some traditional lesbians who still believe strongly in the original definition of lesbianism may say that this new definition invalidates lesbianism, and they would not be wrong. This invalidation however, does not do away with years worth of lesbian struggle and history, just as the recognition of lesbianism as a validated identity does not either. The concept of validity ignores the actual conditions experienced within oppression. It does not take into account a resistance to oppression in order to make its verdict, it simply takes into account the relation to normativity. Lesbianism loses its revolutionary fervor through its place in normalcy. It loses the ability to become reactive, placed in a position where it is stagnant. Invalidating the lesbian label simply invalidates the categorization that brought about the label. It spits in the face

of the original process that determined lesbianism as an existing identity, but in order to classify it as perverse. The invalidation of the identity is a metamorphosis from the original concept as it attempts to abandon the original result of the lesbian discourse. This invalidates that first definition by boldly acknowledging what the guidelines state, simply saying “no”, and then painting a new result over it. It vandalizes the definition.

Pathology

The state has an interest in queerness. As queer identities become sown into the fabric of normative society, the institutions that make up this society seek to expand the gender structures control. The puritanical control over queerness aims to keep “sexually devious” behaviors at bay and prevents the expression of queerness through the legal, medical, and psychiatric industries to name a few. This effort is overt as it is based on moral universality and the need to enforce oppressive states of normativity. However, these material manifestations of control are not absolute, nor do they stand alone. While queer suppression is highly encouraged under capitalism, the free and open expression of queerness is simultaneously encouraged as well. The medical industry and the state are not seeking to just repress queerness, but are also telling us to express it to its fullest extent . The state has an interest in queerness; it has a fascination over the socially unacceptable because it wishes to study it. It wishes to extract this knowledge out of the body so they can produce its truth. It wishes to objectify queer individuals and pathologize their identities to the point where there is a right and wrong, and these identities and these sexualities and these genders have an explanation, and a cause, and a reason. Now when these truths are created around why certain sexualities manifest and why certain genders are expressed, then you can

continue to reinforce the idea that these identities are naturally occurring defects that deviate from the normal and healthy standards which are naturally occurring as well. Queerness becomes a subject of biology. Now the capitalist superstructure can propose the idea that you were simply born with this defect but are otherwise natural. Defective, definitely not the desired outcome, but natural! Recourse to a higher power reproduces as the only way of justification under capital, and under christian morality. You're now accepted, because the therapists and the psychiatrists said you could be. Because they gave you the permission to exist, thanks to the sheer good grace of their authority validating you.

These medical powers put forth the idea of a natural queerness, one which is born as a result of chemical imbalances and genetics. This idea is beneficial to the gender structure, as it can support the social conditioning within the gender binary as a natural occurrence. It serves to replace the observable process through which societal conditioning breeds queerness in favor of the concept of a certain predetermined queer essence. It is positioned beside the same guise that determines sex and the gender binary as a result of nature. When queerness becomes a natural concept, one which is excused by the ideas of the medical field, it loses its ability to oppose. It throws a blanket over the alienating conditions within gender that lead to a contradiction. When someone realizes they are queer, they aren't just coming to the conclusion that they are gay or lesbian or bisexual or trans, but they are first coming to the conclusion that they are not straight and/or cis. It is not an immediate understanding of "I am", but an initial thought of "I am not". In order for us to have an understanding of our queerness, we first must have an understanding of what is normal. The instance of attraction within members of the same sex may be something that occurs naturally, yes, but the conceptualization of that attraction being queer does not. The conceptualization of belonging to the same sex-defined class does not either. We become aware

of the contradiction in our attraction from the preestablished understanding that the place we had in our sex-defined class was normal, and in that class we had to be attracted to members of the opposite class. Now when one felt as if they did not belong in that class or did not feel attraction for who they were supposed to, they realized they were not normal. That they were queer. The “born this way” narrative does away with intersectionality as it serves to present queerness as a universally congruent experience. It presents a violent framework based on two sides of a coin: Either you are born this way , or you must choose to be this way. In a sense it makes a medical excuse for queerness that presents it as a vile condition that you could only logically partake in against your own will. It presents the idea that queerness cannot arise from any interpersonal experience because that would validate the idea that it is a choice, and the connotation around the action of choice in this context is an extremely negative fact. The idea of a ‘choice’ is conceptualized as a willingful acceptance of a concept so vile, that it is nonsensical. This creates a rigid queer experience where the body and mind have no affect over this affliction. That there is no chance for exploration or change. Any sort of queer autonomy or agency is met with resistance and painted in a obstructive light. The idea that certain experiences may be the result of a “phase” are painted in the same light. The imposition of biological queerness discourages the beautiful experience of growth under queerness. It is a rejection of the experimentation that makes way for the journey towards an acceptance given by the individual to themselves, instead opting for the acceptance of a biological diagnosis.

Queer Assimilation

Capitalism encourages acceptance. Assimilation as a tactic facilitates oppression while perpetuating it discreetly. A minority group slowly integrating into general society does not

harm capitalism. On the contrary, it boosts the effectiveness of exploitation since assimilation simply extenuates the conditions of the exploited. The idea shifts from queerness being a pervasive force caused by a moral deviancy into a factor of natural composition. This idea of nature proposed by capitalism however, *is* capitalism itself. Capitalism asserts itself as the standard of the human condition, and erases its own pervasive effect upon those subjected under it. The implications of a certain human nature no longer being malleable and ever-changing but instead fixed within the conditions that capitalism sets. The individuals do not become greedy and selfish due to the pressure to accumulate capital for immediate survival, but instead it is proposed that they are simply born into the world that way. This way capitalism is able to erase its coercive effect, hide the complexity of the human experience and its fluidity, and instead delegates it simply to a fixed affair of determinist essence. The same is done here with queerness. Queerness is given a fixed essence, which cements it as a natural part of the capitalist superstructure. Now we can be integrated, and we can become parts of society along with all the other groups who are considered to be naturally occurring, and the capitalist superstructure can continue to claim that the gender binary is the result of nature while we comply.

Mainstream society, while having homophobia ingrained into its construction, actually favors the integration and acceptance of the queer community because through it, it can then continue to oppress queer individuals while creating the idea that the violence enacted against them is self-inflicted. The capitalist superstructure will shift itself to accommodate oppressed minorities ever so slightly by giving them the right to vote in the case of women and black people and gay marriage in the case of the queer community, for example. These become meaningless gestures to promote a progressive change. To deflect blame. Because if you give queer communities the “right” to get married and the “right” to have their pride parades and the

“right” to healthcare, all while still leaving oppressive policies intact with the promise of maybe, just maybe, changing them one day, then you can create the illusion that implies that their liberation is something that can be given to them. Then you can command subservience. Then you can promote reformism. Then you can create the idea that these rights are rewards for good behavior, and if they don’t cause any problems and comply with the system enough that they become *deserving* of liberation. Then, and only then, will they be liberated. This creates the idea that if they have not been rewarded with this liberation yet, then they must be at fault. They themselves are to blame for their oppression, and thus it promotes compliance with the structure. They tell these groups that they may protest, but only as long as it is peaceful. They tell them they may get hormones, but so long as they can decide that we actually need it according to their standards. They tell them they may express themselves, but so long as it makes sense to them. The queer groups now result to adopting the corrective approach to identity and imposing it on to themselves, policing their own behavior out of a sense of self-hatred. Reformism promotes a redirection of the anger felt by the oppressed subject against the world around them, and applying it now against themselves.

The path to liberation is a rejection of reformist respectability politics. A call to abandon subservience.

Liberation will not be given, it will be created. It will not be given through passive legislation as a reward for good behavior, and it will not come from the oppressors' acceptance. But this does not mean that it is impossible. Queerness is not just a hopeless state of being, surrounded only by suffering. It is a metamorphosis, it is a welcoming of euphoria. It is the ability to renounce the state of being forced and assigned upon you in favor of a new and constant becoming.

Exclusion

Through this material analysis we conclude that queerness exists within a state of rejection and exclusion, but this is not a hopeless fact in and of itself. I propose instead, a call to relish within exclusion. An affirmation of difference. A call to abandon validity.

This allows queer individuals to create their own communities, outside of those they were never included in. The push made is not one that fights to be allowed into these hierarchical communities, but instead to operate their own systems in order to help themselves. To eliminate the reliance on big charitable vertical powers, and instead move resources we need horizontally across our communities through mutual aid. To not sit in compliance while we're denied our healthcare and denied HRT and instead to learn how to treat ourselves when no one else will. The same applies to our own protection. We cannot rely on cops. The protection found in our community has to come from ourselves. We need to be armed, to learn how to defend ourselves and use those weapons, because when the time comes, those who wish to get rid of us will already know how to use theirs.

We are not helpless. The assumption is typically made that our struggles are empty ones, because we will not see a complete gender abolition in our lifetimes. While this may be true, it is a misguided talking point. Gender abolition is happening right now. Gender abolition is born when you are able to abolish the gender in your own mind. It lives when you get someone else to do so as well. Gender abolition cannot come without our own rejection of gender, without an abolition of ourselves.

Our liberatory efforts are extremely intertwined with the ways in which we view queerness. If we view queerness through a liberal notion of identity politics, we will work in the best interest of the very superstructure we wish to escape. We must rewire the thought process that validates oppressive systems we're told to comply with, in order to achieve self reliance.

Abolition

The initial step towards entering a state of personal liberation, is the state of Gender Vandalism.

The current pathway that the mainstream LGBTQ+ community wants to take is towards gay assimilation, of gay compliance. We must not adopt this method.

Gender survives when it is able to convince us that it is deserving of respect. It makes us care for it, and nurture it in such a way that we maintain and support it. The counterrevolutionaries will tell us that it is our lack of respect for gender that positions us under oppression. That when we behave outside of the acceptable guidelines of gender expression, then we create an incentive for our oppressor to oppose us. They tell us then that the oppression comes not from gender as a system itself, but from our use of neopronouns, from lesbians who explore their identity outside of traditional womanhood, from the nonbinary umbrella expanding. This way gender continues its process without having to oust itself as the culprit. We are therefore taught that gender is innocent and ultimately deserving of compliance. In this, we deny life. We ascribe innocence to something outside of us, and accuse existence, where existence, our own experience, is innocent!

This call for compliance manifests itself even in sectors that claim to be against gender through the idea of biological sex. They will distinguish nonbinary people based on their biological sex, but instead of referring to them as “male” and “female” they turn to the terms “Assigned Male at Birth” or “Assigned Female at Birth”. You may also encounter those who boldly call themselves gender abolitionist, but claim that biological sex is undeniable. This is the phenomenon of bio-essentialism. Gender as an applied force to the bodies’ aesthetics is able to thrive symbiotically through the acceptance of “biological sex”. Now the aforementioned psychiatric pathology and medical pervasiveness manifest once again as a dominant power which validates gender under the guise of professionalism. With this passage, the ontology of gender is given truth through the body's anatomy.

We are not females. We are not males. We do not have the body parts of either. We do not think like either. We have no biological sex.

Gender as a discursive force must be rejected. Bio-essentialism, dysphoria as a diagnosis, transness as an occurrence of nature, all of the ways through which gender cements itself as a truth must be refuted, and stripped of respect. Once we separate ourselves from these notions of thought, then we can begin the process towards organizing, towards creating a discourse aimed to break down gender. We create a new means through which we interact with gender and through which we identify its effect. We open up the door for a new queerness that seeks to abolish itself.

The only path forward is an acknowledgment of gender, and a mindful destruction of it.

An often unexplored aspect of gender abolitionist theory is the distinction made between gender on the personal level and gender as the system of categorization. Gender abolition does not seek to sever the tie between an individual and their gender identity. The labels adopted by queer individuals under the western conception of gender identity still serve as a source of empowerment and solidarity under the gender system in the sense that individuals can come together based on a shared experiences and a shared struggle. However, the misconception comes in the idea that the attachment is to the label itself, and not what it signifies individually. The labels simply serve as a descriptor of the interaction between the individual and their material conditions within gender. Labels are only meaningful insofar as they apply to each person who uses them. The personal link to queerness can coexist with the attack on the gender system.

We study gender as our enemy, we understand it, we begin to comprehend its power. We take part in the discourse, but no longer abide by the guidelines that dictate the way we speak and interact with it.

We trespass, and we vandalise.

We engage in transness, but no longer with an emphasis on transition. We are no longer “MTF” or “FTM”. We are no longer “AFAB” or “AMAB”. We no longer wait to be told whether or not we’re dysphoric. We spit in the face of these terms.

We engage in lesbianism but no longer with this emphasis on a distinction between maleness and femaleness. We ourselves no longer being women, create a new lesbianism. A lesbianism that means anything we can will it to mean. Lesbianism has already been vandalized. It was taken from a sexuality that was defined as “women loving women” down to “non-women

liking non-women”. When lesbians started to use pronouns that were not she/her. This angered those the label was originally centered around. The white cis woman. This anger is confirmation that this vandalism worked. We see first hand through these acts of vandalism and the reaction to them that these labels and definitions are not set in stone and are susceptible to change, and will continue changing.

We take every concept that gender presents to us and invalidate it ourselves. We vandalize everything down to the very building blocks used to create these identities. Every label is vandalized until they evolve into something unrecognizable.

The reactionaries are absolutely right when they claim that neopronouns and the rest of these gender vandalist identities make a mockery out of ourselves. Our community is the product of discourse. The result of the alienation of individuals. We have no reason to respect and appreciate the prison we were put into with the classifications of our abnormality. The assignment of our queerness is not one that merits compliance, but instead a complete disregard. We mock the position we’re put in. We paint over our prison walls.

The Gender Vandals will aim to stray away from pursuing a passive acceptance from our oppressor, and instead reveling in a radical acceptance of ourselves. To steer clear of the pervasive discourse that pits us against our own communities, and instead create a discourse that unifies us and targets gender. We are imprisoned within gender with the promise of one day exiting and entering the free world with those who have been accepted. But that's where the misconception comes from, the assumption that our oppressors are not oppressed themselves by gender. The idea is presented that through assimilation we will be free as they are. However, cisgender people and heterosexuals are stuck in this very prison with us. Gender operates in such a way that those in the positions of power who infringe gender inadvertently harm themselves in

the process. The cis woman will create for herself a state of fear within this prison, constantly victimizing herself to the point in which she begins to fear the very women along herself. She will create a standard for womanhood and beauty so unattainable that she herself cannot sustain. The cis man will perpetuate misogyny as a prevalent force that reaches every corner of the prison. A prison in which he himself resides, leading misogyny to eat away at his own gender. Every single one of us is trapped within this prison, serving life without parole.

Abandoning Gender

This leaves us with the only means of escape being the inevitable destruction of this prison. A destruction that nears each time a member of the prison realizes this. Every time a prisoner learns of the true nature of the prison, and begins to chip away at its walls. We do not know exactly what lies outside of this prison. But we must find out.

We will not settle for this prison's conditions. We must stop at nothing but liberation. So we will jump out of these uniforms, and out of these cells, and meet the prison with force. We will vandalize it!