

## Ending the Pursuit: Asexuality, Aromanticism and Agender Identity

**Michael Paramo**

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Michael Paramo's personalized social science study *Ending the Pursuit* is an intersectional analysis of the history and culture of asexual, aromantic, and agender identities.

Interweaving historical references, scientific studies, internet discourses, memoir, and poetry, the book aims to unearth the origins of asexuality, aromanticism, and agender identities while dismantling misconceptions about them. The history of these marginalized identities is intricate; their portrayal through Western, cisheteropatriarchal lenses only obscures their representation. To illuminate them better, Paramo breaks down aspects of attraction from both historical and contemporary perspectives, showing what such identities have to teach about sexual and gender expectations today.

Moments of vulnerability breathe life into the text; most effective is Paramo's inclusion of personal anecdotes. His candid account of his family's acceptance of his gay identity contrasted with their rejection due to his asexuality underscores the widespread misunderstanding of these identities. Furthermore, Paramo's interspersed poetry infuses the text with an artistic and vulnerable energy that counters presumptions of coldness that are often misattributed to asexual, aromantic, and agender people:

*The love machine spins my gears  
Alters codes in my brain  
Flips the switch on/off  
Loner on the road to nowhere  
Out of love, but still  
Intuition lights the stars  
On fire, shows me otherwise  
Worlds, the universe  
Are nothing but*

The text veers more academic with its historical analyses, which is authoritative if lacking some accessibility. Its frequent callbacks to the institutionalized, capitalist, Western cisheteropatriarchy exemplify related denseness, though it still initiates a multidimensional and multilayered conversation regarding sex, gender, race, and class.

*Ending the Pursuit* is a comprehensive exploration of asexual, aromantic, and agender identities in history and society.

ALLISON JANICKI (September / October 2024)

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