This draft is superseded by the following book:

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In particular, the first three chapters of that book develop a refinement of the ideas presented here using a modified terminology.

Although this draft remains available for archival purposes, you are encouraged to read and cite the book, and to reference these ideas using the book's terminology.

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What even is 'gender'?*

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Draft of July 2, 2016

Abstract

This paper presents a new taxonomy of sex/gender concepts based on the idea of starting with a few basic components of the sex/gender system, and exhausting the possible types of simple associations and identities based on these. The resulting system is significantly more fine-grained than most competitors, and helps to clarify a number of points of confusion and conceptual tension in academic and activist conversations about feminism, transgender politics, and the social analysis of gender.

1   Introduction

Activists and academics often distinguish between 'sex' and 'gender', but the intended meaning of (especially) the latter is not uniform across different conversations. Even when 'gender' is explicitly defined, it is often called upon to do conceptual work that goes beyond the definition provided. As Mikkola (2016) puts it, 'The terms "sex" and "gender" mean different things to different feminist theorists and neither are easy or straightforward to characterise.' This presents a challenge for conversations about 'gender' involving more than one scholarly or activist community, and for foundational work on the philosophy of gender.

This paper explores the heterogeneity of 'gender' talk, with a goal of replacing the 'sex'/'gender' distinction with a more fine-grained system in which different 'gender' concepts can be situated and compared. A mature theory of gender may find some of my distinctions superfluous, or some of my categories reducible to others, but the goal here is

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to avoid presupposing such reductions, and to make explicit the presuppositions of various existing accounts. I hope this will provide a language in which the merits and drawbacks of different proposed reductions and identifications can be debated, and allow the more interesting distinctions picked out by different sorts of gender talk to be considered together without awkward collisions of terminology.

I begin by exploring some issues with the current overburdened terms.

1.1 Slogans

Let's begin with a popular baseline definition: 'gender is the social interpretation of sex'. As feminist theorists, we presumably have some prior (if vague) notion of what sorts of phenomena are associated with sex. Any of these that are 'social' will then belong to gender. The 'social' requirement, however, is so weak that it excludes, at most, only 'sex' proper.

To get a handle on how this plays out, consider a (very small) slice of the sex/gender system. (A) enumerates (and labels) a few traits, norms, and so on within the system, and Figure 1 takes a first pass at visualizing them and their interactions and dependencies. (Throughout this paper the figures are intended as an intuitive supplement, and are, in their information content, almost entirely redundant with the prose. Readers who find them difficult counterintuitive can ignore them without having to worry that they are missing anything.)

(A)   A slice of the sex/gender system:
       1   Breasts, facial hair, enlarged larynx...
       1-id   Liking one's breasts, discomfort with one's enlarged larynx,
               wanting facial hair...
       2   Neckties, skirts, mascara...
       2-id   Wanting to wear a necktie, preference for not wearing mascara,
               enjoying wearing skirts...
       3   The social categories 'Woman', 'Man'...
       3-id   Thinking of oneself as a 'man', wanting recognition as a 'woman',
               discomfort with being called a 'woman'...
       1↔2   The norms that facial hair goes with neckties and not skirts,
               that breasts go with skirts and not neckties, ...
       1↔3   The norms that being a 'woman' goes with breasts and not facial hair,
               that being a 'man' goes with facial hair and not breasts, ...
       3↔2   The norms that being a 'woman' goes with skirts and not neckties,
               that being 'man' goes with neckties and not skirts, ...

If we recognize any notion of biological sex, only the sex characteristics in 1 will belong to it, so 'sex' will pick out just what is highlighted in Figure 2.
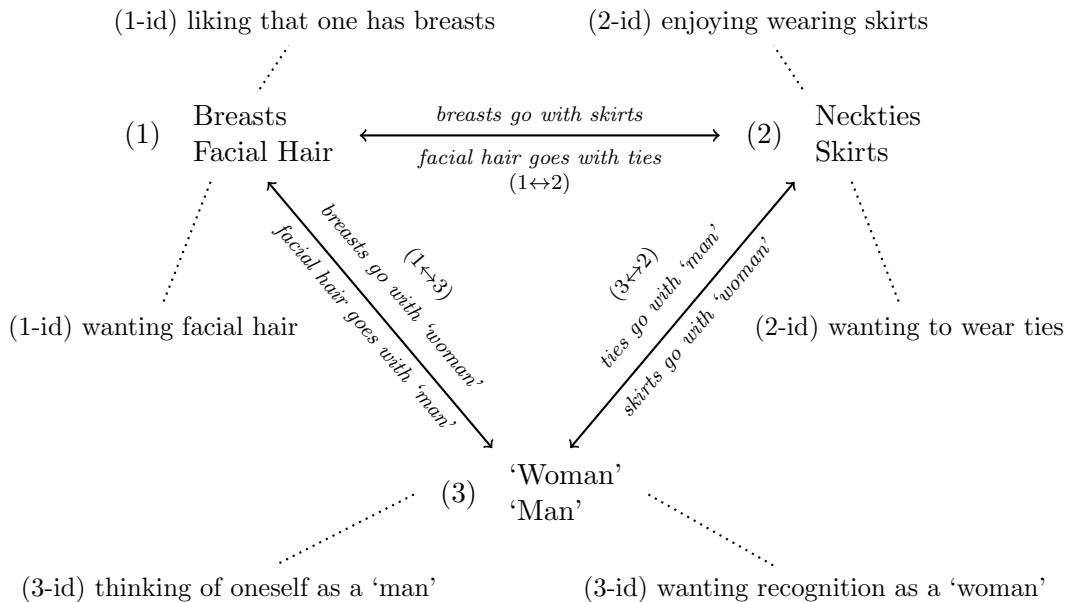
Figure 1: A Slice of the Sex/Gender System

Everything else on the list – and indeed everything in the system except perhaps 'sex' proper – is plausibly 'social', so 'gender' now becomes a wastebasket: any part of the system worthy of study or recognition, but excluded from 'sex' proper, will be assigned to 'gender'. 'Gender' thus includes everything in (A) except 1, yielding the unwieldy and conceptually heterogeneous picture of 'gender' that includes everything highlighted in Figure 3. (Compare Mikkola's (2016) enumeration of 'social role, position, behaviour or identity' as belonging to 'gender'.)

This wastebasket approach is not a recipe for a coherent or useful category: few valuable generalizations can be made across such fundamentally different components. What it *is* is a recipe for is innocent misunderstanding or less innocent equivocation. Many theorists and activists who speak of gender do not really mean to speak of all the things enumerated above, and, even when two speakers are using 'gender' with the same extension, they are often focused on very different parts of the system.

When two theorists of 'gender' have in mind different components, they may find themselves in dispute not because of substantial disagreement, but because they misunderstand the intent of each other's 'gender' talk. More troublingly, the unification of diverse phenomena under the heading of 'gender' gives cover to bad arguments – one may motivate a perspective on 'gender' by focusing on one part of the system, and then pronounce on
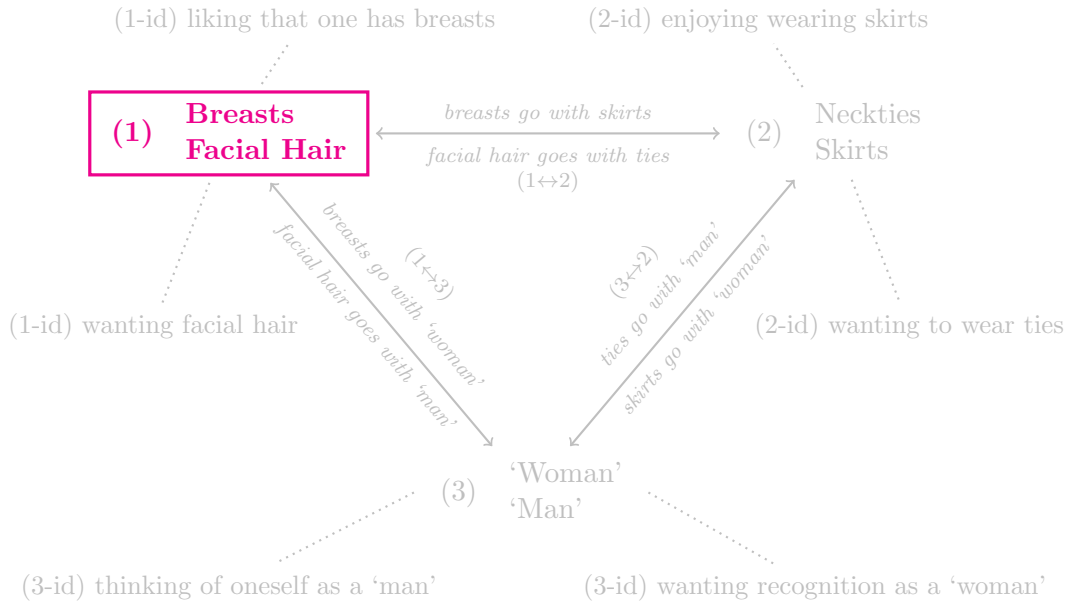
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Figure 2: 'Sex'

'gender' as a whole, including logically independent 'gender' phenomena not covered by the original argument, but connected by the illusion of 'gender' as a natural category.

The situation is complicated by narrower characterizations of 'gender', which are often given often without any explicit recognition that they depart from the 'social interpretation of sex' picture. Consider, e.g., a traditional simplified 'trans 101' line: 'sex is what's between your legs; gender is what's between your ears'.[1] This characterization of 'sex' has some problems, but let's focus on the treatment of 'gender'.

This slogan's notion of 'gender' is more internally-focused[2] and narrower than the 'social interpretation of sex' characterization: the focus is on personal identity, as understood in terms of an individual's distinctive mental traits – roughly what is called one's 'gender identity'. Thus, it is usually understood as including only 1-id, 2-id, and 3-id from our above list, as highlighted in Figure 4.

Other slogans can be found in circulation, including 'sex is male and female; gender is

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[1]Many transgender activists and educators regard this slogan as misleading and harmful (correctly, in my view as a transfeminine person), but it still has widespread cultural currency.

[2]I leave aside questions about which notions of mental content can accurately be characterized as 'between the ears' because it is clear that, in the settings where this slogan is used, it is meant to cover most forms of mental content, independent of such foundational concerns.
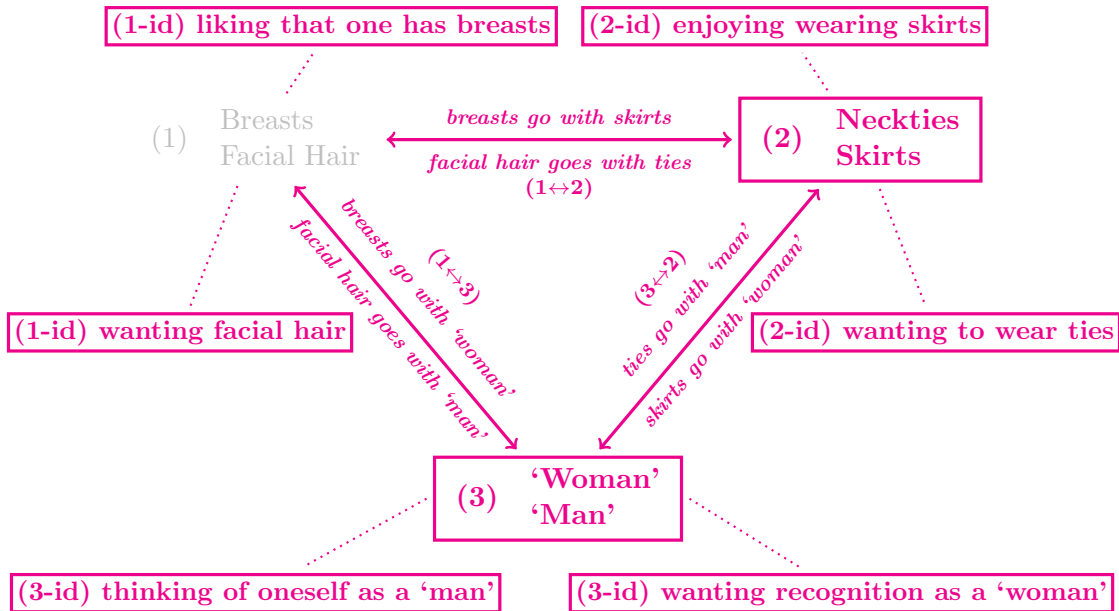
Figure 3: 'Gender' as 'the Social Interpretation of Sex'

masculine and feminine' and 'sex is male and female; gender is man and woman'.[3] Setting aside the difficulties of 'male' and 'female', the first of these seems to include under 'gender' one or both of 2 and 2-id, while excluding everything else (cf. Figure 5), and the latter seems to limit 'gender' to 3 (cf. Figure 6).

Different slogans have 'gender' picking out entirely different parts of the system, and some bite off much more than others. These differences in breadth and focus invite misunderstanding and equivocation.

To see how these differences can cause problems, consider the traditional (simplistic and widely criticized) characterization of transgender experience in terms of mismatch between sex and gender. Here 'gender' is understood as something like gender identity – roughly what's picked out by 'what's between your ears'. Meanwhile, arguments that 'gender' is oppressive employ something like the expansive 'social meaning of sex' characterization, with a focus on the norms that render sex socially meaningful – that is, they are most concerned with 'gender' as sex-specific norms of the sort exemplified by 1↔2, 1↔3, and 3↔2.

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[3]Both of these slogans have the further problem that they leave out the possibility of nonbinary or intermediate options for sex and gender – this is an important criticism of these slogans, but one that is more or less orthogonal to my concern here.
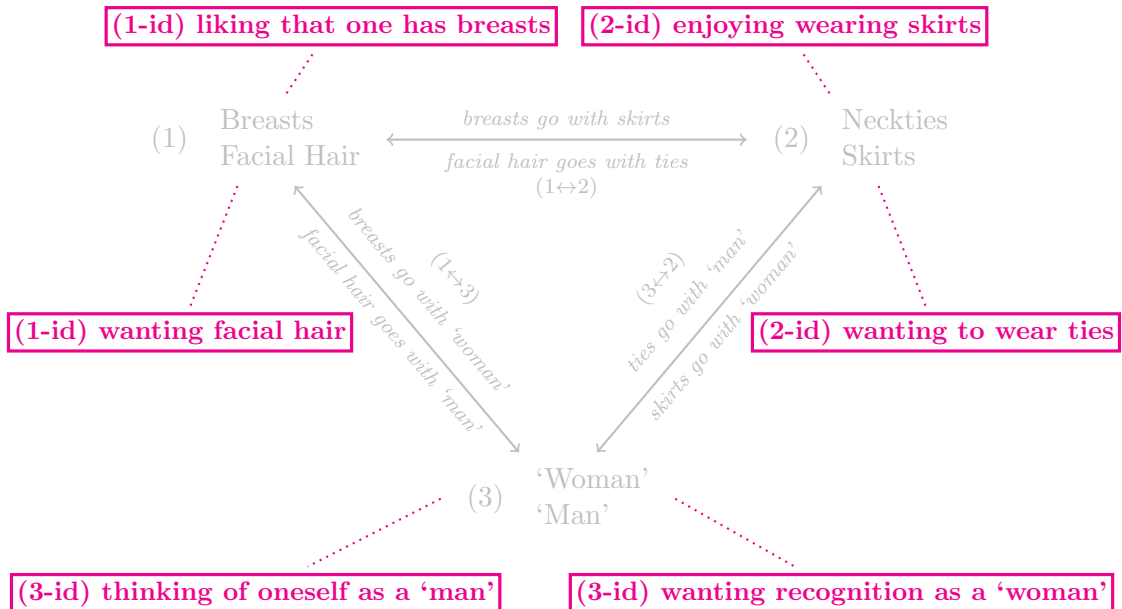
Figure 4: 'Gender' as 'What's Between Your Ears' (aka 'Gender Identity')

Bringing together conversations that employ different notions of 'gender' can, unsurprisingly, lead to confusion.[4] Consider a meeting between one activist using 'between your ears' identity-focused characterization (i.e., 1-id, 3-id, and 2-id), and another using the 'social interpretation of sex' characterization, and especially concerned with 1↔2, 1↔3, and 3↔2. There is, of course, no reason why respecting the former identities should prevent one from condemning the latter norms, but 'gender' talk introduces the appearance of conflict.

Our 'between your ears' activist will insist that 'gender' (meant in the 'gender identity' sense) is to be tolerated, supported, and respected. Our 'social interpretation' activist will hear in this an endorsement of the 'gender' system as a whole, of which they take the norms to be the most salient parts. Since these norms are credibly important forces of sexist oppression, our 'social interpretation' activist will next accuse our 'between your ears' activist of holding an antifeminist position. This will, rightly, strike our 'between your ears' activist as inappropriate, because they were never talking about those norms, or anything else obviously oppressive. Different choices of slogans would provide other examples of this

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[4]When I speak of confusion, error, or misunderstanding, I don't mean to suggest that there is no blame to be allocated. The question of when misunderstanding is and isn't blameworthy is beyond the scope of this paper.
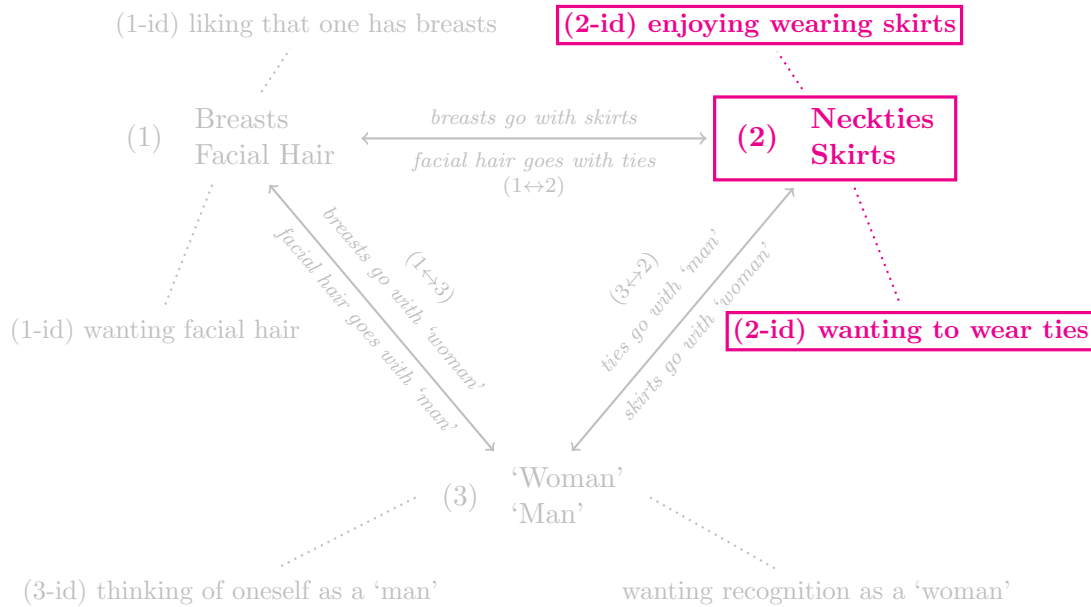
Figure 5: 'Gender' as 'Masculine and Feminine' (one possible interpretation)

sort. This type of mismatch between different uses of 'gender' is arguably a major force behind not only good-faith misunderstanding, but bad-faith efforts to exploit the resulting confusion to support unfounded attacks against (among others) trans communities and activists.

The above has hinted at some desirable components of a finer-grained gender taxonomy: beyond biological sex traits, gendered behaviors, and gender classes like 'woman' and 'man', we must consider norms connecting these, and personal identities associated with them. If we individuate the different building blocks of the gender system in a moderately fine-grained way, and if we give the various pieces a little combinatorial freedom, we turn out to derive a larger-than-standard inventory of 'gender' concepts, helping to clarify some of the confusions suggested above.

1.2 The Gender Dysphoria Diagnosis

As another example of the problems with mainstream conceptions of 'gender', consider the gender dysphoria diagnosis from the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013).[5] The criteria for gender dysphoria in adults and adolescents

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[5]The DSM's inadequacies on this topic have been discussed elsewhere, but it remains a useful example.
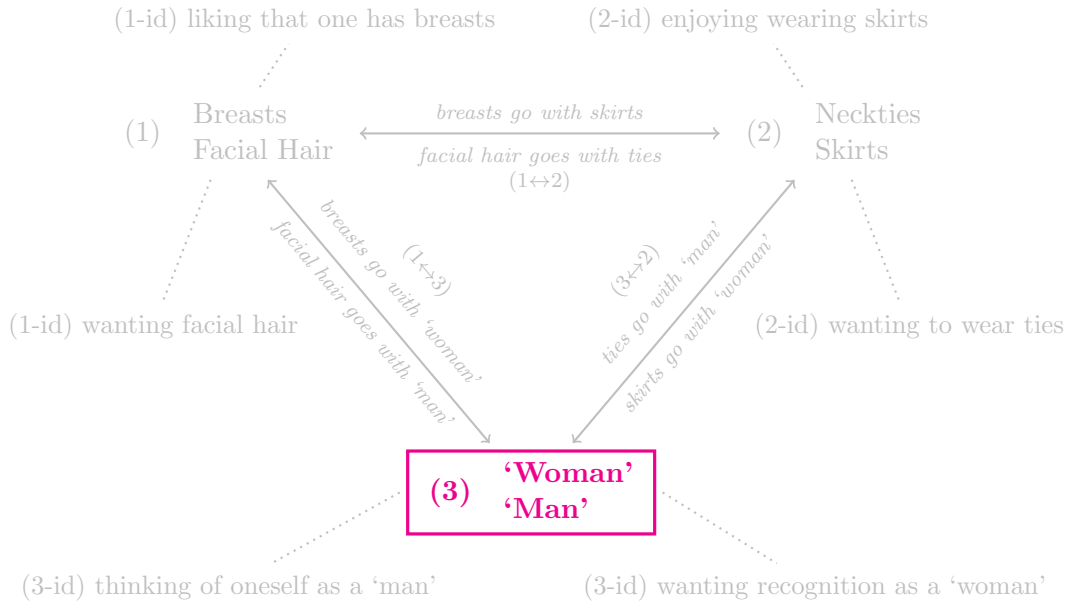
Figure 6: 'Gender' as 'Man and Woman'

are given by (B), and the criteria for children are given by (C).

(B)   A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at lest 6 months' duration, as manifested by at least two of the following:

1.   A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary or secondary sex characteristics (or in young adolescents, the anticipated sex characteristics).

2.   A strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one's experienced/expressed gender (or in young adolescents, a desire to prevent development of the anticipated sex characteristics).

3.   A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender.

4.   A strong desire to be of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

5.   A strong desire to be treated as the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

6.   A strong feeling that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other

gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

(C) A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender,of at least 6 months' duration, as manifested by at least six of the following (one of which must be [the first criterion):

1. A strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).
2. In boys (assigned gender), a strong preference for cross-dressing or simulating female attire; or in girls (assigned gender) a strong preference for wearing typical masculine clothing and a strong resistance to the wearing of typical feminine clothing.
3. A strong preference for cross-gender roles in make-believe play or fantasy play.
4. A strong preference for the toys, games, or activities stereotypically used or engaged in by the other gender.
5. A strong preference for playmates of the other gender.
6. In boys (assigned gender), a strong rejection of typically masculine toys, games, and activities and a strong avoidance of rough-and-tumble play; or in girls (assigned gender), a strong rejection of typically feminine toys, games, and activities.
7. A strong dislike of one's sexual anatomy.
8. A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that match one's experienced gender.

It seems fair to say that these criteria are getting at more than one thing.

The notion of 'experienced/expressed' gender is apparently concerned with gender identity or gendered inclinations as features of the individual. The individual experiences dysphoria when they have an identity that is not recognized by others, or when they have inclinations that they are prevented from realizing. 'Experienced/expressed' gender is apparently given the status of a coherent concept underlying a unified diagnosis, but a closer look yields at least three distinct kinds of identification/inclination. First, there's identification/inclination with respect to biological sex characteristics: criteria 1, 2, and 3 for adults and adolescents, and 7 and 8 for children, involve a sense of mismatch between one's current or anticipated biology and one's preferred biology (compare 1-id above). Second, we have inclination towards gendered behaviors and activities: this is is perhaps illustrated most clearly by child criteria 2, 3, 4, and 6, and to some extent adult criterion 6 (compare 2-id above). Finally, most vaguely, we have the desire for recognition of one's membership in a gender class: this is arguably suggested by adult criteria 4 and 5 and child criterion 1 (compare 3-id above). Critically, these are separable: nothing necessitates any connection at all between one's preferred activities, one's preferred label, and one's preferred biology.

To capture all these differences, we'll want to distinguish sex, gender class, and gender expression, and to discuss (as distinct from these three) identities/inclinations with respect to each.

1.3   Refinement Projects

The limitations of a simple sex/gender distinction has motivated many refinements, a few of which I discuss below.
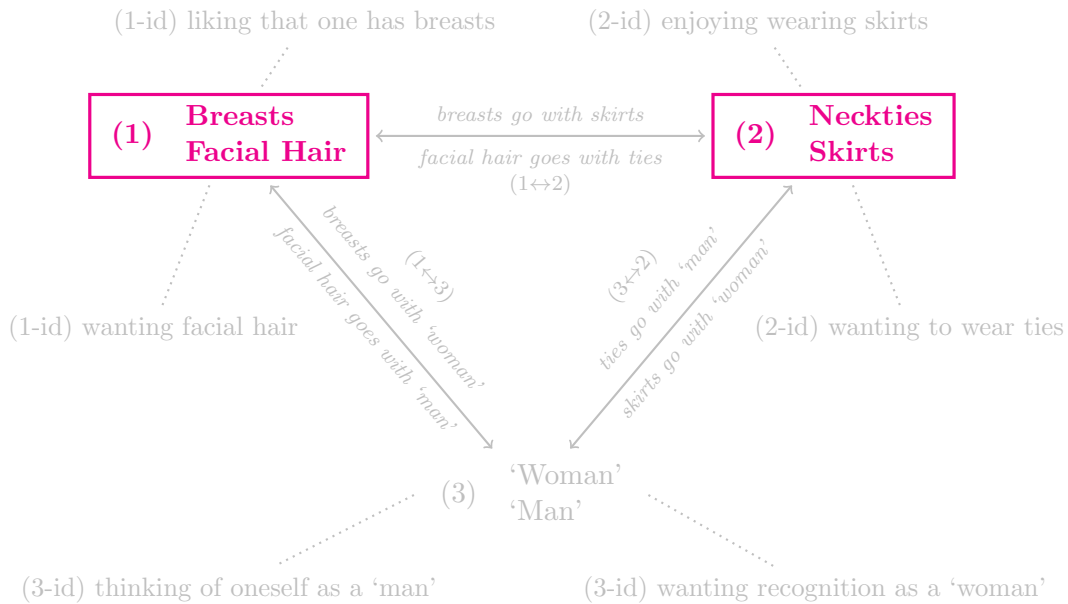
Figure 7: Mikkola's (2010) 'Descriptive Traits'

Available reform proposals are, at best, only modestly more fine-grained than the two-part system. For example, Mikkola (2010) proposes scrapping the 'sex'/'gender' distinction in favor of a distinction between 'descriptive traits' (things like facial hair (1) and skirts (2)) and 'evaluative norms' (mainly things like 1↔2, 1↔3, and 3↔2). In terms of my graphical representations, Mikkola's (2010) distinction seems to be a nodes-vs.-edges distinction. In this sense, it is more conceptually natural than the sex/gender distinction. By collapsing the distinction between biological sex characteristics and gendering of behaviors, it reflects a variety of important criticisms related to the arbitrariness of this division. As such, it represents a useful way of dividing things up, and it is valuable for framing one sort of activist project: the project of freeing various descriptive traits from the constraints of evaluative norms. There are also some drawbacks. Most obviously, it

(1-id) liking that one has breasts   (2-id) enjoying wearing skirts

(1)   Breasts   *breasts go with skirts*   Neckties (2)
Facial Hair   *facial hair goes with ties*   Skirts
(1↔2)

breasts go with 'woman'
facial hair goes with 'man' **(1↔3)**

(3↔2) *ties go with 'man'*
skirts go with 'woman'

(1-id) wanting facial hair   (2-id) wanting to wear ties

'Woman'
(3)   'Man'

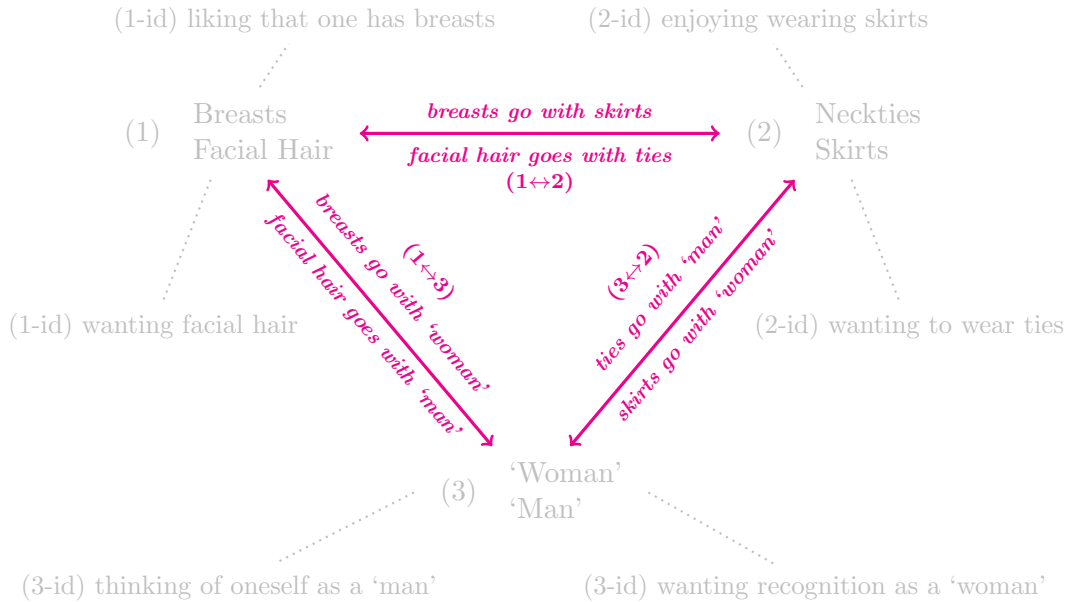(3-id) thinking of oneself as a 'man'   (3-id) wanting recognition as a 'woman'

Figure 8: Mikkola's (2010) 'Evaluative Norms' (one possible interpretation)

doesn't give a clear place to gender identity and gendered inclinations like 1-id, 2-id, and 3-id above. I am not sure whether Mikkola regards these as psychological descriptive traits, or whether they belong outside of her system, but either way they seem under-addressed. Collapsing the distinction between sexed biology and gendered behavior further denies us the tools to analyze and compare current conversations about gender. As a proposal about which way of dividing the system should be prioritized, Mikkola's approach is appealing, but as a basis for a relatively neutral language that can be used to sharpen and compare competing 'gender' concepts, it is suboptimal.

Another type of refinement, associated with transgender theory and activism, introduces many subdivisions of 'gender'. Serano (2007), for example, offers 'subconscious sex', public gender identity, and 'intrinsic inclinations' as distinct components of 'gender'. McKinnon (2016), meanwhile, employs such notions as 'gender roles', 'gender expression', 'gender attribution', and 'gender identity'. In discussion of transgender issues, the gender dysphoria is sometimes divided into 'body dysphoria' and 'social dysphoria', corresponding to Williams's (2013) distinction between 'gender orientation' and 'gender identity'. Meanwhile, Jenkins (2015) explicitly contrasts 'gender as class' with 'gender as identity'. These are insightful incremental improvements, but they are, for the most part, modest revisions introduced in response to specific problems. They have informed the present

project, which presents a more exhaustive and systematic application of the kinds of distinctions and conceptual building blocks involved in these proposals.

2   A New Taxonomy

In this section, I develop a new taxonomy by exploring the combinatorial possibilities of conceptual components suggested by the above.

I begin with three basic components (the main 'nodes' of the sex/gender graph): *sexed biology* (also written $\mathfrak{s}$) exemplified by 1 above, *gendered practice* ($\mathfrak{p}$), exemplified by 2, and *sex/gender classes* ($\mathfrak{c}$), exemplified by 3.

I next suggest two kinds of operation to derive new components from these three. One operation associates basic components x and y with a collection of *x-y associations* ($\mathbb{A}(x, y)$). These associations are exemplified by 1↔2, 1↔3, and 3↔2. The other involves identities/inclinations with respect to each of the basic components. The collection of identities and inclinations with respect to x will be called *x identity* and written $\mathbb{I}_x$ – such identities are exemplified by 1-id, 2-id, and 3-id above. The proposed taxonomy can be visualized as Figure 9.

Below, I discuss each of the combinations made possible by this toolkit.

2.1   Basic Components

2.1.1   Sexed Biology: $\mathfrak{s}$

sexed biology, may be abbreviated as $\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathfrak{s}$ *biology*, or *biology*. $\mathfrak{s}$ biology consists of those biological characteristics which are, in a particular community's sex/gender system, understood to be associated with the classification of humans according to distinct roles in sexual reproduction. $\mathfrak{s}$ biology may include such traits as presence or absence of a uterus, presence or absence of testes, presence or absence of a clitoris of 'normal' size, presence or absence of significant quantities of hair on the upper chest and lower face, significant development of the breasts, presence or absence of a Y chromosome, presence or absence of more than one X chromosome, or blood testosterone levels above or below 240 ng/dL.

$\mathfrak{s}$ biology is intended to focus on traits that we are willing to regard as belonging squarely to biology. The *sexes* or *sex categories*, like 'male' and 'female', are plausibly sufficiently high-level and removed from whatever we choose to count as the 'raw' biological facts that they should probably be excluded.[6]

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[6]I am aware that the distinction I am trying to draw here is, at best, a fuzzy one, but I think it is at least plausible that the choice of criteria that suffice to establish an organism as 'male' or 'female' is more remote from any legitimate biological concern with carving reality at the joints than is, say, the choice of criteria that suffice to establish an organ as an ovary or a testicle.
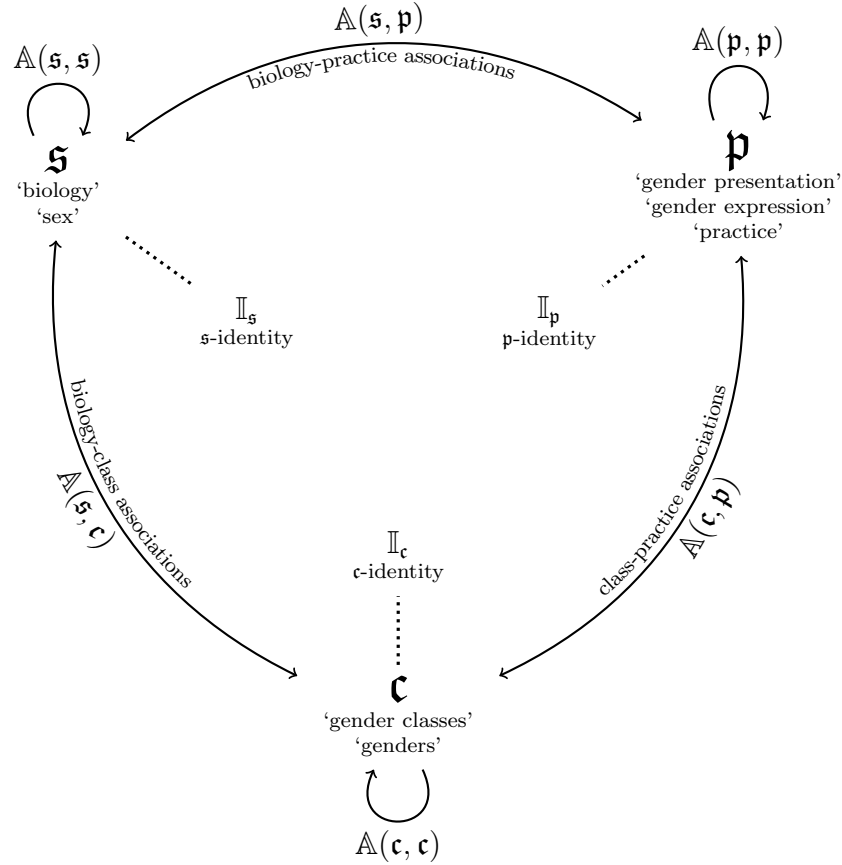
Figure 9: Overall Shape of the Taxonomy

$\mathfrak{s}$ biology captures the traditional notion of biological sex characteristics. In the standard 'sex'/'gender' picture, $\mathfrak{s}$ biology is a major component of 'sex'. For Mikkola (2010) it falls under the heading of 'descriptive traits'.

Although $\mathfrak{s}$ biology seeks to deal in *biological* traits and not the assignment of these to higher-level cultural categories, the matter of which traits belong to $\mathfrak{s}$ biology remains socially contingent (even if we take as fixed a particular notion of what counts as purely biological) precisely because the choice of which biological traits are used to determine the membership of these higher-level categories is a culture-specific choice. Further, the boundary between $\mathfrak{s}$ biology and $\mathfrak{p}$ practice is both fuzzy and culture-dependent. I will return to this shortly.

2.1.2 Gendered Practice: ꝓ

Now consider the various behaviors and experiences that a particular sex/gender system assigns gendered meaning (excluding associations and category-concepts, both discussed below). The intended range of phenomena is exemplified by the following: design of garments to cover or reveal various parts of the body (e.g., swimwear covering or not covering certain regions of the chest, everyday attire fully obscuring or not fully obscuring scalp hair), practices of grooming (e.g., long or short scalp hair, specific fragrances used in personal hygiene products), forms of labor (e.g., raising children, attending to day-to-day cleaning and food preparation tasks, being a primary breadwinner, being the default perpetrator of socially acceptable forms of violence), communication styles (e.g., being more assertive or more demure, speaking in a manner perceived as more hedged or more direct), and differences in expression of sexuality (e.g., being more open or more reserved in one's discussion of one's own sexual experience and sexual desires), along with external experiences like being treated more deferentially or more condescendingly in conversation, or being exposed to more delicate or rougher childhood play, and the artifacts associated with any of these (e.g., the various articles of clothing mentioned above).

Call the collection of social traits exemplified by the above *gendered practice*, abbreviated as ꝓ *practice*, ꝓ, or *practice*. In the sex/gender taxonomy, ꝓ practice belongs squarely to 'gender', and includes most (perhaps all) of 'gender expression', 'gender presentation', and 'performance of gender'. For Mikkola (2010), ꝓ practice, like ꟊ biology, falls under the heading of 'descriptive traits'.

The assignment of specific behaviors, experiences, and artifacts to the gender system, and so to ꝓ practice, is culture-specific. There is also reason to doubt that any sharp distinction between ꝓ practice and ꟊ biology is defensible. Nevertheless, keeping the two distinct is indispensable for the purpose of providing a sufficiently fine-grained vocabulary to discuss existing disputes in gender theory and gender activism.

ꝓ practice, as described here, is already a quite diverse and unwieldy category, and for many purposes we ought to subdivide it further. I briefly discuss this issue in Section 4.2.

2.1.3 Sex/Gender Classes: ꞔ

Next, let's turn to the system of gender categories to which people may be assigned. Human societies recognize such categories as 'man' and 'woman', and in various ways assign people to these categories. I'll treat these categories as social objects which can be associated with with ꟊ biology and ꝓ practice by norms of association, but which are not presumed to be reducible to any combination of these. Call such categories *sex/gender classes*, ꞔ *class(es)*, *class(es)*, or ꞔ. Various of the ꞔ classes are sometimes said to be 'the sexes' or 'the genders'. Examples of ꞔ classes include 'man', 'woman', 'kathoei',[7]

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[7]A transfeminine gender category associated with Thai culture.

'burrnesha',[8] 'eunuch', 'intersex', 'cisgender', 'transgender', 'genderqueer', 'genderfluid', 'nonbinary', and (in communities where they are distinguished from the preceding) 'male' and 'female'.

By making $\mathfrak{c}$ classes a basic component of the taxonomy, I don't mean to deny the possibility that some or all of them might be reducible to other components of the gender system, but only to suggest that this not anything like a logical necessity.[9] Available proposals for such reductions are, at best, controversial, and the present goal is to develop a taxonomy that can frame debates between proposed reductions.

To better understand my reasons for treating genders as distinct social objects, the reader is invited to consider distinctions of rank, caste, clan, or order that have persisted over extended periods of time in many societies. Such groups do not seem to be readily reducible to anything in particular. There are conventions by which group membership is adjudicated and new members are admitted to a group, but a group may persist in the wake of reforms that drastically change its criteria for membership. Such groups may likewise come with behavioral norms, obligations, or stereotypes, but they need not be reducible to these, and, again, these may change over the history of a group. I wish to leave open the possibility that the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes are entities of roughly this sort.[10] This possibility is part of what motivates the treatment of $\mathfrak{c}$ classes as a distinct component in a framework for making 'gender' talk more precise.

Relative to traditional sex/gender talk, the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes may include both 'sex' and 'gender' categories. For those authors who distinguish the 'sex' categories 'male' and 'female' from the 'gender' categories 'man' and 'woman', all four of these categories will be, in my terms, $\mathfrak{c}$ classes.[11]

2.1.4   Note on the Membership and Individuation of these Components

What exactly belongs to each of $\mathfrak{s}$ biology, $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, and $\mathfrak{c}$ class depends on the particular community under investigation. For $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, there are abundant historical and cross-cultural differences in which behaviors, experiences, and so on are gendered, which are gender-neutral, and which are entirely absent from the society. For $\mathfrak{c}$ class, the existence of culture- or community-specific gender categories raises similar issues. The potential cultural contingency of $\mathfrak{s}$ biology may be less obvious, so let's explore it in a bit more detail.

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[8]A transmasculine gender category associated with Albanian culture.

[9]I am, as it happens, suspicious of this type of reduction project, in part for reasons like Reed's (2013).

[10]What, then, makes a class a sex/gender class, rather than a rank, caste, clan, order, or the like? This is question deserves attention, but here I can only note it, and leave it as a problem for future work.

[11]By recognizing that some communities maintain a system of categories that differentiates 'sex' categories like 'female' from 'gender' categories like 'woman', I do not wish to deny the possibility that it might be unjustified or pernicious, as suggested by, e.g., Rachel Williams (2015), but, when theorizing about communities that make such distinctions, it will be useful to treat them as distinct $\mathfrak{c}$ classes.

To begin with a trivial example, the status of chromosomes and hormones within any culture's conception of ẓ biology is a recent innovation, as humans have only relatively recently become aware that chromosomes and hormones exist. In many contemporary human communities, certain aspects of karyotype or hormonal balance are widely regarded core biological 'sex' characteristics, to the point where they often figure prominently in attempted regulatory definitions of 'sex', but in past or present societies where chromosomes and hormones are not objects of human thought at all, they would not be recognized as sex characteristics, and so it would, at least arguably, be inappropriate to assign them to ẓ biology for purposes of analyzing the sex/gender systems of those societies.[12] But we would not want to say on this basis that societies that lack awareness of chromosomes and hormones are in principle incapable of having a concept of biological sex. The more general lesson here is that biological traits that *might* be assigned to ẓ biology may go unobserved by an entire society, or may be observed without anybody thinking to associate them with sex/gender differentiation.

Another concern, one that speaks to the fuzziness of the boundary between ᵽ practice and ẓ biology, is that physiological traits may be shaped by behavior and experience. For example, women might be expected to employ various hair removal or obfuscation technologies (naturally assigned to ᵽ practice) to reinforce the stereotyped difference between male and female facial and body hair, which in turn might reinforce the treatment of body hair differences as part of ẓ biology. Similarly, men and women might be assigned different types of physical labor, which might increase or diminish sexed differences in muscle development. The practice of subjecting infants with ambiguous or incongruous genitals to surgical 'normalization' is another example. Diverse, often horrific, examples along these lines are imaginable and, in many cases, historically attested. Such practices vary between communities, leading to variation in what traits are differentiated in ways that make them candidates for inclusion in ẓ biology.

We find, then, both that the inclusion of traits in ẓ biology is likely to be society-specific, and that the boundary between ᵽ practice and ẓ biology is not an especially sharp one. In spite of this difficulty, the provisional adoption of some such distinction is necessary to make sense of many interesting conversations about the social effects of gender.

A further issue is that arbitrary decisions about the grouping of particulars of biology and practice into categories are already present within ẓ biology and ᵽ practice, suggesting that there is not a clear, non-arbitrary level of abstraction that distinguishes these from ꞓ class. As with the fuzziness of the boundary between ẓ biology and ᵽ practice, this is worth noting, and merits further exploration, but I don't think it should deter us from drawing the distinction.

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[12]They would, of course, still very much be part of the biological makeup of the human members of those societies.

Beyond these issues of the membership of $\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathfrak{p}$, and $\mathfrak{c}$, the division of the domain that they collectively cover into these three components (and the decision to exclude from the basic components of the system anything that can not be assigned to one of these) is not the only way to approach these matters: different projects may motivate different choices. For now, let's see what we can do with these three.

2.2 Gendered Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$

The work of the gender system is not done by the $\mathfrak{s}$ biology, $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, or $\mathfrak{c}$ classes alone. The mere fact that some people have ovaries and others do not, or that some people wear trousers more often than others, or that some people are described as 'women' and others are not, does not capture the totality of the gender system or account for the full force of gendered oppression. Instead, much of the power of the system is to be found in the *gendered associations* that draw connections involving the $\mathfrak{s}$ biology, $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, and $\mathfrak{c}$ classes. These associations may take the form of informal norms, formal rules, stereotypes, folk-theories, or any of a number of other sorts of association.

To take one example, a society might associate lacking ovaries ($\mathfrak{s}$ biology) with wearing trousers ($\mathfrak{p}$ practice). This association might be an informal standard of proper behavior, a legal prohibition, or an inferential heuristic. Similarly, there might be an association dictating that having ovaries ($\mathfrak{s}$ biology) goes with being a woman ($\mathfrak{c}$ class), or that being a woman goes with not being a man, or that being a man goes with not wearing nail polish. Such associations correspond roughly to Mikkola's (2010) 'evaluative norms'.

Where x and y are any of $\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathfrak{p}$, and $\mathfrak{c}$, write $\mathbb{A}(x, y)$ (pronounced *x-y associations*) for the bundle of all of these sorts of associations between x and y. If we don't think of associations as directed (i.e., if we treat $\mathbb{A}(x, y)$ and $\mathbb{A}(y, x)$ as equivalent), we have six combinations to consider. Let's take these one at a time.

2.2.1 Biology-Practice Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$

The *biology-practice associations* $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$ might include a law dictating that lacking a Y chromosome ($\mathfrak{s}$ biology) is sufficient to exempt one from obligatory draft registration ($\mathfrak{p}$ practice), or a stereotype that people with conspicuous breast development ($\mathfrak{s}$) will typically wear their hair long ($\mathfrak{p}$). Theorists sometimes implicitly or explicitly treat the biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$ as mediated by the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes. As a descriptive claim about social systems, this is a possibility worth considering, but it's not obvious that it's necessitated by the concepts involved. In any case, it will be useful to to treat the biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$ that occur in a particular sex/gender system as a distinct component of that system. A major injustice of sexism is the way that an individual gets assigned to particular treatment or expected behavior (i.e. $\mathfrak{p}$ practice) on the basis of their unchosen $\mathfrak{s}$ biology, and, accordingly, many feminist projects are naturally analyzed in

terms of opposition to various biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$.

2.2.2 Class-Practice Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$

Much of the gender-theoretic interest of the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes comes from the ways they are associated with $\mathfrak{p}$ practice or $\mathfrak{s}$ biology.

The *class-practice associations* $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$ could include laws banning members of the 'woman' class ($\mathfrak{c}$ class) from certain political and economic activities ($\mathfrak{p}$ practice), or norms that members of the 'man' class ($\mathfrak{c}$) ought to wear trousers ($\mathfrak{p}$) and members of the 'woman' class ($\mathfrak{c}$) bear primary responsibility for child care ($\mathfrak{p}$). As a matter of logical possibility, such associations might persist even if the the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes were fully uncoupled from the biological characteristics $\mathfrak{s}$ biology.[13]

2.2.3 Class-Biology Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$

Next, consider the *class-biology associations* $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$. These are at the heart of cissexism, and include various conventions for defining 'sex' classes or identifying certain biologies as normal for certain $\mathfrak{c}$ classes. Consider a stereotype that men ($\mathfrak{c}$ class) have penises ($\mathfrak{s}$ biology), or that women ($\mathfrak{c}$) have ovaries ($\mathfrak{s}$), or a law that defines 'man' and 'woman' ($\mathfrak{c}$) in terms of specific karyotypes ($\mathfrak{s}$). As with the previous case, we ought to be willing to consider the logical possibility of a community with strong class-biology associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$, but in which the class-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$ associations have been effectively abolished.[14]

2.2.4 Practice-Practice Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{p})$

Associations *between* distinct basic components (that is, associations of the form $\mathbb{A}(x, y)$, where $x \neq y$) are the most obvious kinds of associations, but there are also associations of the form $\mathbb{A}(x, x)$ - that is, of associations *within* the system of biological $\mathfrak{s}$ traits, or of $\mathfrak{p}$ practices, or $\mathfrak{c}$ classes.

To begin, then, consider the *practice-practice associations* $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{p})$. These will be norms and stereotypes associating $\mathfrak{p}$ practices with each other. These might include, e.g., the expectation that people doing stereotypically masculine work not do so while wearing mascara. These associations between independent-in-principle $\mathfrak{p}$ practices plausibly help to reinforce the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes and the class-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$, by suggesting that

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[13]That is, very roughly, we can imagine a society that is very tolerant of gender transition, but imposes many kinds of arbitrary discrimination in what kinds of activities it allows to people of different genders.

[14]That is, very roughly, we can imagine a society that is extremely cissexist in its practices of assigning/recognizing gender class membership, but that nevertheless subjects people of all genders to the same treatment, and affords all of them the same opportunities.

'masculine' and 'feminine' (and perhaps other) $\mathfrak{p}$ practices form natural clusters that reflect distinct categories of people.

2.2.5 Class-Class Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{c})$

The *class-class associations* $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{c})$ connect the various $\mathfrak{c}$ classes. Two kinds of these are especially salient. First, there are partitioning associations, such as an assumption that everybody is a woman or a man, and nobody is both. Second, within a system that recognizes distinct 'sex' and 'gender' $\mathfrak{c}$ classes, there may be associations between these. So, for example, there may be a norm or stereotype that those gendered as 'women' are primarily or exclusively of the 'female' sex class, or that such women are more normal or authentic than other women. In societies where the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes are so organized that certain more specialized $\mathfrak{c}$ classes are understood as special cases of the more general 'woman' and 'man' classes, these implicational/subclass relationships would also belong to $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{c})$.

2.2.6 Biology-Biology Associations: $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{s})$

Finally, *biology-biology associations* $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{s})$ might include norms and stereotypes saying that people without Y chromosomes do not possess penises or experience significant beard growth, that a person with testes and significant breast development is to be regarded as unnatural or medically defective, or that the same person should not experience both significant breast development and significant beard growth. Just as the practice-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{p})$ might serve to cluster $\mathfrak{p}$ practices in a way that reinforces $\mathfrak{c}$ classes and class-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$ associations, so biology-biology associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{s})$ might serve to reinforce $\mathfrak{c}$ classes and class-biology associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$.

2.3 Identities and Inclinations: $\mathbb{I}$

Another major component of the gender system involves *gender identity* and *gendered inclinations*. Gender identity is often spoken of as a unified property of an individual, but in various activist and transgender community settings it has long been recognized that it combines a number of distinct kinds of targets for identification.[15] For now, let's consider just our three basic components as possible targets of identification. That is, one may have some personal identification relationship with various aspects of one's $\mathfrak{s}$ biology, one's membership or non-membership in certain $\mathfrak{c}$ classes, or one's involvement or non-involvement with certain $\mathfrak{p}$ practices.

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[15]For example Cristan Williams (2015) lists 'subjective experience of one's own sexed attributes' and 'culturally influenced sexed identification within the context of a social grouping' as distinct things that can be meant by 'gender identity', and, e.g., Reed (2012) suggests a diversity of different kinds of physiological and social gender dysphoria, which may be present or absent in any given individual, suggesting a corresponding diversity of distinct identity components.

The issue of the nature of the relevant sort of 'identity' is more generally vexed, and is beyond the scope of this paper.[16] For now, let $\mathbb{I}_x$, pronounced x-*identity*, contain all the ways in which a person may may identify with, form their identity in terms of, be inclined towards shaping their life and conduct in terms of x.

2.3.1   Biology-Identity: $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$

Biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$ involves personal identification with, or inclination/desire to manifest/possess, a particular $\mathfrak{s}$ biology. This includes both various kinds of psychological attachment to, or construction of one's identity in terms of, the $\mathfrak{s}$ traits of one's body as it exists, and various feelings of incompatibility with the $\mathfrak{s}$ traits of one's body, or desire to change these traits. This seems to be the core component of Serano's (2007) 'subconscious sex'. In the transgender context, this is the kind of identity or inclination relevant to body dysphoria.

2.3.2   Practice-Identity: $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$

Practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$ is, analogously, identification with or inclination towards $\mathfrak{p}$ practices. This might be a weak personal preference for certain hobbies or attire, or for a particular career, or it might involve regarding some particular gendered behaviors or traits as essential to one's sense of personal identity and to one's ability to achieve a fulfilling life.

2.3.3   Class-Identity: $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$

Class-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$ involves self-identification with respect to the system of $\mathfrak{c}$ classes. This is one's sense of oneself as a member of a category like 'man' or 'woman', or one's desire to be recognized as such by others. This is the notion of identity implicated in some social dysphoria, and is the identity that is disrespected when someone is misgendered.

3   Some Applications

3.1   Heterogeneity of 'Gender'

What in the above taxonomy corresponds to 'gender'? All twelve of the items discussed above plausibly involve either sex or its social interpretation, so, at the very least, everything not part of the traditional category 'sex' is plausibly part of 'gender'. In light of this, let's begin with 'sex'.

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[16]For some discussion of identity and of what it is to have an identity or to self-identify, see Diaz-Leon (2016), Jenkins (2015), Haslanger (2012a), and the works cited therein. For a discussion of some relevant concerns about how the notion of identity has sometimes been deployed in the trans setting, see Reed (2013).
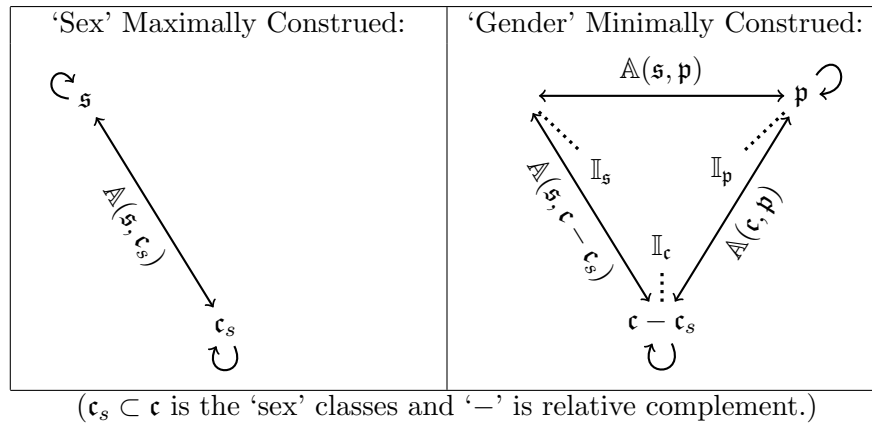
'Sex' Maximally Construed:	'Gender' Minimally Construed:

($\mathfrak{c}_s \subset \mathfrak{c}$ is the 'sex' classes and '$-$' is relative complement.)

Figure 10: A Division of 'Sex' and 'Gender'

Insofar as the traditional 'sex' concept is at all coherent, $\mathfrak{s}$ biology belongs squarely to 'sex'. If we take the social construction of sex seriously, $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{s})$ should be recognized as a key component of this construction, as are any $\mathfrak{c}$ classes that purport to function as pure 'sex' categories, as distinct from social 'gender',[17] and those class-biology associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$ that give these $\mathfrak{c}$ classes biological meaning. If things like the the binary assumption of the disjointness of the 'male' and 'female' sexes belong to 'sex', then, as these are class-class associations, $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{c})$ will also include part of the sex subsystem of the overall sex/gender system. This enumeration of the components of 'sex' is (a bit imprecisely) visualized in Figure 10, where $\mathfrak{c}_s$ contains exactly those $\mathfrak{c}$ classes that are considered 'sex' classes, and $\mathfrak{c} - \mathfrak{c}_s$ contains all the other $\mathfrak{c}$ classes.

The remaining five items will belong entirely to 'gender'. Five of them involve only $\mathfrak{c}$ class, $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, and related associations and identities, and so seem unquestionably social, and squarely part of gender on the 'social interpretation of sex' definition. These are $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, class-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$, practice-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{p})$, practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$, and class-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$. The remaining two items are the biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$, and biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$. The former of these is all about the association of sex biology with specific behaviors and social conditions, and is solidly part of gender on this understanding. The latter is social if identities are social, and is a core part of the notion of gender (identity) in the transgender context.

Turning to the five items that belong in part to 'sex', at least three have components

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[17]A relatively good candidate for the status of pure sex class would be 'intersex', and a relatively good candidate for the status of pure gender class would be 'genderfluid'. Turning to the more widely discussed binary case, some systems, or at least some theoretical traditions, also distinguish 'female' and 'male' (the 'sexes') from 'woman' and 'man' (the 'genders').

frequently talked about under the heading of 'gender': $\mathfrak{c}$ class includes genders like 'man' and 'woman', the class-biology associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$ include such things as the identification of the status of manhood or womanhood with a particular biology (the gendering of the body), and the class-class associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{c})$ include things like the traditional binary gender assumption that the gender classes 'man' and 'woman' partition the human population.

Thus, at least ten conceptually distinct components of the taxonomy[18] overlap with the traditional category 'gender', as visualized in Figure 10. These ten components do not have much in common. Some are plausibly personal psychological traits, others are society-wide systems of norms and stereotypes. Some are relatively abstract social classes, others are relatively concrete physical behaviors. If gender is understood as including all of these, then sweeping declarations about the nature or value of gender must be regarded with suspicion. If, for example, we wish to debate whether gender is innate, or whether it is worthy of abolition or respect, the heterogeneity that we find here will complicate the conversation.

As was discussed in the introduction, it is not hard to find declarations to the effect that gender simply is or isn't a particular one of these components or combination of them. That is, 'gender' is different things to different people. This is sometimes framed as a dispute between competing theories of what 'gender' really is, but the present approach regards these less as substantive disagreements than as cases of mismatched terminology, and tries to provide tools to help clarify what we are talking about on any given occasion.

One thing that this approach does not do provide is a system of concepts that is neatly split by the old sex/gender distinction – we saw above that, at least when theorizing about communities that distinguish 'sex' and 'gender' classes, this distinction plausibly cuts down the middle of $\mathfrak{c}$ class and of the class-biology associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{s})$. This is broadly in keeping with the often-made point that 'sex' is socially constructed just as 'gender' is, and with concerns that privileging 'sex' classes as distinct from 'gender' classes is conceptually unjustified or socially pernicious (cf. Rachel Williams (2015)).

3.2 Gender Identity and Dysphoria Revisited

Let's return to the DSM criteria for gender dysphoria. Some criteria diagnose biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$, some class-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$, and some practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$, but they are treated together as indicators of 'experienced/expressed gender', and associated with a single diagnosis. We could equally well imagine a system in which mismatch between one's biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$ and one's $\mathfrak{s}$ biology was a distinct diagnosis from the corresponding diagnoses for $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}/\mathfrak{c}$ and $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}/\mathfrak{p}$ mismatch, but this is not what the DSM provides. Insofar as this single diagnosis suggests something like a coherent phenomenon, a reader of the DSM

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[18]That is, everything except possibly $\mathfrak{s}$ and $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{s})$.

will naturally infer a unified gender identity of which biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{s}}$, class-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$, and practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ are components or manifestations.

This unification of $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{s}}$, $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$, and $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ into a single notion of identity, or the across-the-board attribution of all three to some common source, is a nontrivial hypothesis. I am not prepared to conclusively refute it here, but we ought to at least recognize it *as a hypothesis*, rather than smuggling it in as a presupposition.[19] Failing to do so puts us at risk of equating these three notions of identity without conceptual or empirical justification.

The assumption of a unified identity underlying all three of these has real implications for people seeking diagnosis in order to gain access to treatments (e.g., hormone therapy) or recognition (e.g., appropriate pronouns). For example, gender dysphoria in children is to be diagnosed based on the presence of at least six out of eight manifestations. At least one of these is concerned with class-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$, at least three are concerned with practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$, and two are concerned with biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{s}}$. (The other two are plausibly ambiguous between $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ and $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$.) Further, the most unambiguously $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$-associated manifestation, 'A strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).', is required for a diagnosis.

Applying a little arithmetic to the above reveals that, in children, diagnosis-worthiness always hinges on more than one of our three distinct identity concepts. A class-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$ at odds with one's assigned $\mathfrak{c}$ class is only diagnosis-worthy if it is accompanied by some manifestations of practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ at odds with one's expected $\mathfrak{p}$ practices. An $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ at odds with expected $\mathfrak{p}$ practice must similarly be supported by a contrary-to-assignment $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$. Finally, for biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{s}}$ at odds with one's $\mathfrak{s}$ biology, both $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$ and $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ must also be to some extent stereotypically transgender to allow a diagnosis.

This all means that, for example, a child who was designated male at birth, but who professes consistent interest in being recognized as a girl and talked about with 'she' pronouns ($\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$) and in having stereotypically female biology ($\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{s}}$), will be ineligible for diagnosis unless she also has at least one of a 'strong preference for cross-dressing or simulating female attire', a 'strong preference for toys, games, or activities stereotypically engaged in by [girls]', or a 'a strong rejection of typically masculine toys, games, and activities and a strong avoidance of rough-and-tumble play' (all plausibly manifestations of $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$). That is, if she is not stereotypically feminine (if, e.g., she is butch, tomboyish, or gravitates towards gender-neutral clothing and activities), she will not have access to the diagnosis that would legitimize her preferred pronouns and support the development of a plan for appropriate hormone therapies. The conflation of independent identity concepts is credibly a real social harm, and the separation of $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{s}}$, $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}$, and $\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{p}}$ provides a valuable tool for clearly articulating the flawed reasoning that creates the problem.

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[19]My anecdotal experiences as a transfeminine person, and my discussions with other gender-variant people, incline me towards extreme skepticism about the prospects of such a unification, but I am aware that my sample is small, and that such introspection is not always reliable.

The distinction between $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$, and $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$ identities is also important for debates about the (non-)innateness of gender identity. Innateness claims for $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$, and $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$ put pressure on very different aspects of one's notion of innateness. For example, innateness claims for biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$ could be framed in terms of an innate brain-to-body map, perhaps without too much engagement with thorny issues of social construction. On the other hand, arguing that class-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$ is innate involves fleshing out what it would mean to have an innate identity or inclination that makes reference to a culture-bound category. It is, at first glance, perfectly consistent to hold any combination of beliefs about which of these identities are innate and which are not, and a compelling argument for or against the innateness of one will, by itself, tell us nothing about the other two.

3.3 Tensions in Activism

This taxonomy also helps to address some tensions in activist rhetoric. To pick one example, transfeminists often argue for the independence of gender identity and gender expression: masculine (cis or trans) women are still women, and may be invested in thinking of themselves as women, and, similarly, feminine men are still men. This separation is important for refuting transphobic arguments that assertions of self-identified manhood or womanhood on the part of trans people are simply misguided responses of sex-discrimination with regard to allowable gender expression.[20] But transfeminists are also invested in freedom of gender expression as a trans rights issue, and frequently argue that being unable to engage in one's favored gendered expressions is a frustration of something like a personal gender identity. This is important for calling out the policing of gender expression as a form of cissexist oppression. These two positions are in superficial tension: gender expression has nothing to do with gender identity but freedom of gender expression is especially important as a trans issue precisely *because* of its connection with gender identity.

The subdivision of 'gender identity' eliminates the tension. In the first claim, 'gender identity' means some combination of class-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$ and biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$, while in the second, it means roughly practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$. There is no contradiction or tension in saying that one's $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$ and $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$ have nothing to do with one's actual ($\mathfrak{p}$ practice) or desired (practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$) gender expression, while at the same time insisting that freedom of gender expression ($\mathfrak{p}$ practice) is important for respecting practice-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$.

This illustrates how imprecise 'gender' talk can make activism both more confusing and more rhetorically vulnerable than it needs to be. A finer-grained taxonomy can clarify activist positions, sparing newcomers to the activist conversation from a sense of playing conceptual whack-a-mole with a 'gender' concept that is first one thing, then another. The 'gender identity'/'gender expression' distinction is useful to activists for just this reason, and the finer-grained approach allows further clarification.

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[20]See, e.g., Serano (2016) for a representative activist use of this distinction.

3.4 Abolition Proposals

Calls for an 'end of gender' have a complex and troubled history. I leave a detailed exploration of the subject within the present taxonomy as a problem for future work, but I'd like to briefly illustrate how this type of more granular approach might be useful in this setting. As we've already seen, the maximal extent of 'gender' covers many different components. Since different people have different of these components in mind, different people will mean different things when they advocate for an 'end of gender', and different members of their audience will understand different things. And such maneuvers leave open the possibility of misunderstanding and deception.

To illustrate the problem, consider two types of 'gender' abolitionists: a Naïve Anti-Sexist, and a certain type of Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist.
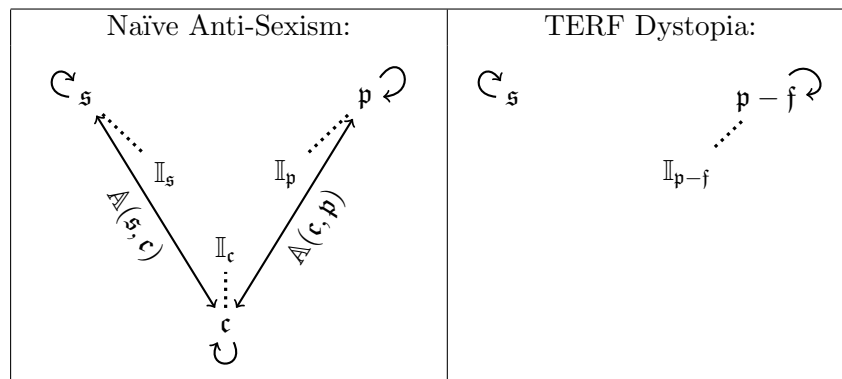

Figure 11: Two 'End of Gender' Scenarios

There is something obviously unjust about having, say, one's choice of careers or range of acceptable behavior and attire drastically curtailed on the basis of one's unchosen sex characteristics. This type of sexist injustice is a typical feature of biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$. The Naïve Anti-Sexist takes this as reason to do away with all such associations, as visualized in Figure 11. We might well argue that the Naïve Anti-Sexist does not go far enough, but their proposal, or something reasonably approximated by it, is an important part of the long-term/utopian goal of many feminist projects. By abolishing these associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{s})$ the Naïve Anti-Sexist hopes to deprive 'sex' (understood here as $\mathfrak{s}$ biology) of a major form of social significance, so, working from the 'social meaning of sex' definition of 'gender', they might reasonably describe their agenda as one of 'gender abolition'.

Next, consider one sort of Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist (TERF) – very roughly the sort exemplified by Ivey (2015) and Jeffreys (1997), and criticized by, among others Serano (2014). The particular (simplified) hypothetical figure I'd like to consider agrees

with the Naïve Anti-Sexist that the biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$ have to go, but they take on three other (in principle independent) positions. First, our TERF wishes to do away with the $\mathfrak{c}$ classes, a move which is to be accompanied by the disappearance of class identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{c}$ and of the various $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{c})$, $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{c})$, and $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$ associations, regarding these as having no legitimate purpose, and as reinforcing various biology-practice associations $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{p})$. Second, they reject the idea that biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$ can be non-pathological. They hold that a well-adjusted person ought to be ready (in principle) to accept any sexed body that they're issued by 'natural' circumstances, and that biology-identity $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{s}$ is at odds with this and thus a pathology – at best a psychological adaptation temporarily justified by the current horrors, and at worst a motive for 'self-mutilation'. Third, our TERF holds that a large class of $\mathfrak{p}$ practices (call them the $\mathfrak{f}$ practices) are inherently oppressive and so ought to be abolished. The $\mathfrak{f}$ practices are understood as including virtually all behaviors and artifacts stereotyped as 'feminine', and are held to be universally costly or dangerous forms of ritualized female submission. Our TERF envisions a world where the $\mathfrak{f}$ practices have been so thoroughly purged that any practice-oriented identities and inclinations $\mathbb{I}_\mathfrak{p}$ that concern them are likewise extinguished. Our TERF collectively characterizes all these different components as one grand program of 'gender abolition'.[21]

A detailed critique of these positions is beyond the scope of this paper, but let's note that our Naïve Anti-Sexist and our TERF have very different agendas, which both of them *understandably* call 'gender abolition', and that any number of other more or less drastic, or possibly entirely independent, projects could also reasonably bear this label. These projects have have very different commitments, and are vulnerable to very different criticisms, but because phrases like 'end of gender' and 'gender abolition' do not disambiguate between them, and because available theories of gender do not provide the needed granularity to easily clarify what is and isn't included under the heading of 'gender', confusion can easily arise. The Naïve Anti-Sexist, may sincerely call for an 'end of gender', and be met with accusations, informed by the TERF's usage, that such abolition attacks the legitimate desire of many trans people for medical transition, or that it needlessly harms all people with 'feminine' interests or inclinations. The Naïve Anti-Sexist will find these accusations quite baffling, and it will seem to them that the critics have inexplicably changed the subject.

Worse than such misunderstandings is the way that the TERF can abuse the vagueness of gender talk to equivocate between different notions of 'gender abolition'. They can use this as a recruitment tool, enlisting the support of less thoughtful Naïve Anti-Sexists. They may, for example, point to the negative reaction they receive from transfeminists 'just for advocating an end of gender' (in their sense of 'end of gender'), and so present themself as an embattled champion of what the Naïve Anti-Sexist may be induced to conflate with

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[21]The present taxonomy can help us to see how these various projects don't really have all that much to do with each other, and target very different parts of the overall system.

their own position. With an especially careless mark, the TERF can simply trade on the vagueness of 'gender' talk to suggest that anybody who is *really* a gender abolitionist (i.e., who subscribes to Naïve Anti-Sexist reasoning) ought to be in favor of the TERF's whole agenda, which simply calls for a systematic abolition of 'gender'.

No taxonomy will resolve the substantive debates regarding the merits and drawbacks of these positions, but the proposed taxonomy allows us to clearly characterize the difference between these positions, making it possible to conduct the debate in a more precise manner, and empowers us to clarify misunderstandings and call out equivocations.

4 Further Directions

The taxonomy presented above is not intended as the final word on the matter, but only as a proof-of-concept for the sort of taxonomic project that identifies some collection of elements as the ones that participate in relations and are the objects of identities, and then allows for some kind of combinatorial exhaustion of associations and identities derived from these. It is not intended as the last word on the matter. Indeed, it is unlikely that a single canonical taxonomy is possible or desirable. Below, I sketch some possible extensions and refinements..

4.1 Lack of a Rigorously-Defined Semantics

I have not committed to a specific treatment of the semantics of the $\mathbb{I}$ and $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$ operations, but have relied on the reader's intuitive notions of 'identity' and 'association'. This suffices for some purposes, but is inadequate for others.

If one looks for a more explicit semantics for the $\mathbb{I}$ operation, difficult questions begin to occur almost immediately. To what extent are identities a more or less individual, internal, 'between your ears' matter, and to what extent is it dependent on one's position in a society and one's connections with others? To what extent does having an x identity $\mathbb{I}_x$ require having attitudes explicitly about x, and to what extent is it sufficient that x merely have the right sort of causal influence on the formation of the identity?[22] Should we try to distinguish between identities and inclinations, and, if we do, what theory of inclinations should we use? It has been convenient to abstract away from the exact choice of a theory of identity, but for some purposes we will need to be more explicit about this.

My treatment of $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$ likewise leaves the intended meaning of 'association' quite open-ended. I have not said anything to distinguish between inferential, causal, normative, and other associations. Which of these should be included, and how should each be formalized? As with $\mathbb{I}$, it may, for many purposes, be for the best if we avoid these issue, but for certain purposes it may be necessary to commit to a particular intended semantics.

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[22]This issue is explicitly taken up by Haslanger (2012a), Jenkins (2015), and Diaz-Leon (2016).

4.2 Adjusting Granularity

Nothing necessitates the choice of $\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathfrak{p}$, and $\mathfrak{c}$ as basic components. The decision to individuate basic components in a particular way depends on the project at hand, and subdividing any of them would provide a richer taxonomy. $\mathfrak{p}$ practice, for example, does not distinguish between a person's behaviors, and their externally imposed experiences, and the artifacts associated with these. We might also try to collapse some distinctions: the boundary between $\mathfrak{s}$ and $\mathfrak{p}$ is, as already noted, fuzzy, and there may be purposes for which, following Mikkola (2010), it is better to replace both with a single 'descriptive traits' component. Given any choice of basic components, we can proceed to apply the $\mathbb{I}$ and $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$ operations as we did above. The special case of a the three-way division of $\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathfrak{p}$, and $\mathfrak{c}$ was chosen with certain conversations about the sex/gender system in mind, but other projects may require other choices.

We could, similarly, recognize two or more identity operations (splitting $\mathbb{I}$ into distinct operations $\mathbb{I}'$, $\mathbb{I}''$, etc.), or do the same for $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$. One response to the problem of choosing an interpretation of 'identity' is to decide that more than one candidate interpretation is of interest, and to use a distinct operation for each. a subdivision of $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$ may be useful for analogous reasons.

4.3 Non-Binary Associations

We need not limit ourselves to two-place associations: there may be three-place associations that are not adequately captured by any combination of two-place ones. One example of a norm that might require this treatment is 'women with large breasts should wear a bra', which interrelates $\mathfrak{c}$ class (women), $\mathfrak{s}$ biology (large breasts), and $\mathfrak{p}$ practice (wearing a bra). In the absence of a more developed semantics for $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$, it is hard to say whether this move is strictly required, but the above at least makes something like $\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{s}, \mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})$ intuitively appealing.

4.4 Recursion and Related Matters

Another obvious direction for refinement would be the recursive application of the identity and association operations. Suppose, for example, that it is a matter of great personal importance for somebody that their wearing a skirt serves as a signal of non-man status. We might try to place this within the taxonomy above, or we might argue that this is beyond the scope of the this sort of theory, but we might also say that this is an instance of my identity with respect to class-practice associations – my $\mathbb{I}_{\mathbb{A}(\mathfrak{c}, \mathfrak{p})}$. It might also be that identities can participate in associations. Consider a norm like 'it is proper to call somebody a man iff they identify as a man': this might plausibly be treated as an instance of $\mathbb{A}(\mathbb{I}_{\mathfrak{c}}, \mathfrak{p})$. These types of recursion raise the possibility of an infinite sex/gender taxonomy. To explore this, we'll probably need a more developed semantics of $\mathbb{I}$ and $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$. For now,

the non-recursive version provides a more manageable starting point, while illustrating the benefits of the general approach.

Above, I've tried to show the benefits of developing a taxonomy of gender concepts by systematic application of $\mathbb{A}(\cdot, \cdot)$ association and $\mathbb{I}$ identity operations to a chosen class of basic components (here $\mathfrak{s}$, $\mathfrak{c}$, and $\mathfrak{p}$). The resulting taxonomy has subdivided the sex/gender system more finely than available competitors, and has served both as a proof-of-concept for this type of taxonomy, and as a useful tool for investigating certain theoretical and political problems. I am hopeful that further exploration will identify additional exploration and suggest further refinements.

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