



# AN INTRODUCTION TO FEMINISM, GENDER, & SEXUALITY

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## **Content warning!**

This workshop contains sensitive and challenging material. Please take a break if you need to.

# THIS GUY ~~WANTS~~ **is** TO BE PRESIDENT

*in Donald Trump's own words:*



On Hillary Clinton:

**"SHE GOT SCHLONGED"**  
in the 2008 election

On what the media  
says about him:

"It doesn't really  
matter... As long as  
you've got a **YOUNG  
AND BEAUTIFUL  
PIECE OF ASS.**"

On women:

**"dogs" "fat pigs"**  
**"disgusting animals"**

On military sexual assault:

**"WHAT DID THESE  
GENIUSES EXPECT  
when they put men  
& women together?"**

On motherhood:

Called a  
breastfeeding  
employee  
**"DISGUSTING."**

SOURCES: [WEAREULTRAVIOLET.ORG/TRUMP](http://WEAREULTRAVIOLET.ORG/TRUMP)



# Objectives

- Define and use specialist terminology within gender theory.
- Grasp the difference between **structural/systematic** and **accidental/individual** features of the social world.
- Understand the importance of **intersectionality**.
- Recognise and understand the origins of **gender myths**.
- Examine **objectification, violence, and globalization** in the context of gender studies.

# Context

Across the world, 35% of women experience domestic or sexual violence at some point in their lives (WHO, 2014).

Across *all* world regions, women spend twice as long as men on unpaid domestic work (UN, 2010).

The UK gender pay gap is around 20% (Equal Pay Portal, 2013).

Globally, 17% of parliamentary seats are held by women (UN, 2010).

Two-thirds of the world's illiterate people are women (UNDP).

# Preliminary claims

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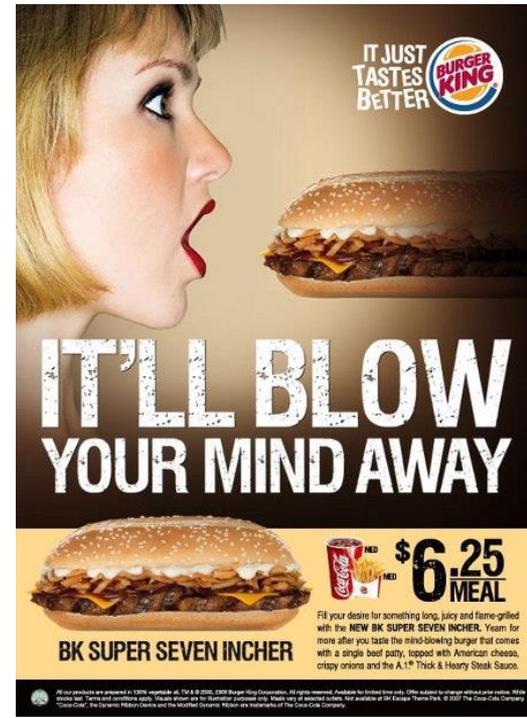
“No society treats its women as well as its men” (Wamala and Kawachi).

I will argue for, and draw upon, two facts:

- ❑ women are primary caregivers in a world in which caregiving is not seen as valuable, but is viewed as dirty, unskilled, and undesirable;
- ❑ women are objectified, embodied, and hyper-sexualised in a world in which sex is seen as bad and dirty.

We are taught that women are these things *by nature*.

WOMEN ARE **HALF**   
THE WORLD'S POPULATION, WORK-  
ING **TWO THIRDS**   
OF THE WORLD'S WORKING HOURS,  
RECEIVING **10%**   
OF THE WORLD'S INCOME, OWNING  
**LESS THAN 1%**   
OF THE WORLD'S PROPERTY.



IT JUST TASTES BETTER 

**IT'LL BLOW YOUR MIND AWAY**

**BK SUPER SEVEN INCHER**

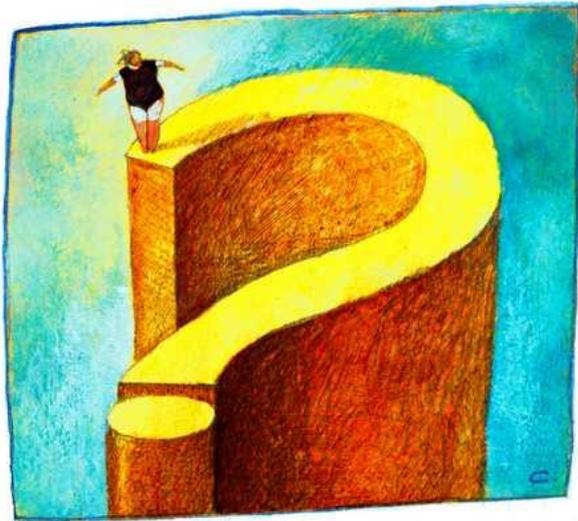
  **\$6.25 MEAL**

Fill your desire for something long, juicy and flame-grilled with the **NEW BK SUPER SEVEN INCHER**. Yeasn for more after you taste the mind-blowing burger that comes with a single beef patty, topped with American cheese, crispy onions and the A.1.<sup>®</sup> Thick & Hearty Steak Sauce.

All our products are prepared in 100% vegetable oil. TM & © 2010, 2009 Burger King Corporation. All rights reserved. Available for limited time only. Offer subject to change without prior notice. \*While stocks last. Taxes and optional items. †Quality Burger King™. Superior customer care. Ready for all special occasions. Not available at BK Village™. © 2010 The Coca-Cola Company. "Coca-Cola", the Dynamic Ribbon Device and the Refreshment Refreshment are trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company.

# Terminology

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Feminism

Privilege

Oppression

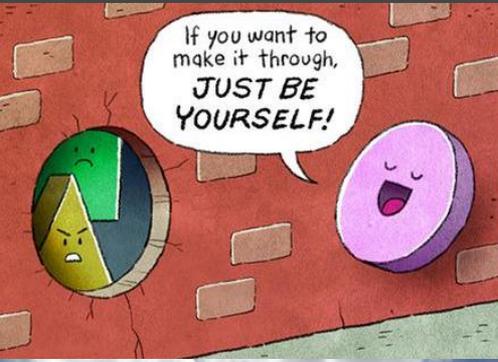
Gender

Sex

Sexuality

Intersectionality

Social construction



# Oppression and Privilege

# Oppression



# Oppression



[Oppression is] the experience of being caged in.... Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire ... it is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere; and then you will see it in a moment. (Frye, 1983,5-6)

# Oppression

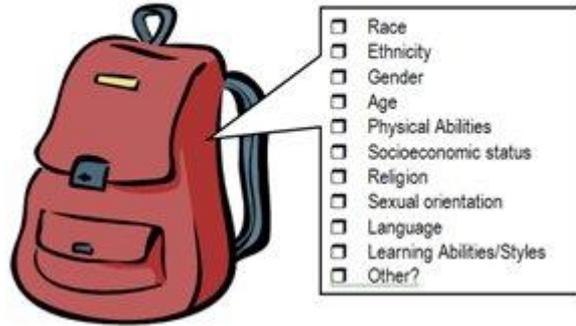
“One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the **double bind**—situations in which options are reduced to a **very few** and all of them expose one to **penalty, censure or deprivation**. For example, it is often a requirement upon oppressed people that we smile and be cheerful. If we comply, we signal our docility and our acquiescence in our situation. We need not, then, be taken note of. We acquiesce in being made invisible, in our occupying no space. We participate in our own erasure. On the other hand, anything but the sunniest countenance exposes us to being perceived as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous. This means, at the least, that we may be found “difficult” or unpleasant to work with, which is enough to cost one one’s livelihood; at worst, being seen as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous has been known to result in rape, arrest, beating and murder. One can only choose to risk one’s preferred form and rate of annihilation” (*ibid.*)



# Definitions: privilege

What's in YOUR invisible knapsack\*?

McIntosh, P. (1989). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. *Peace and Freedom* (July/August), pp. 10-12.



# Definitions: privilege



“...unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious... like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.”

-- *Peggy McIntosh*

# Structural and accidental

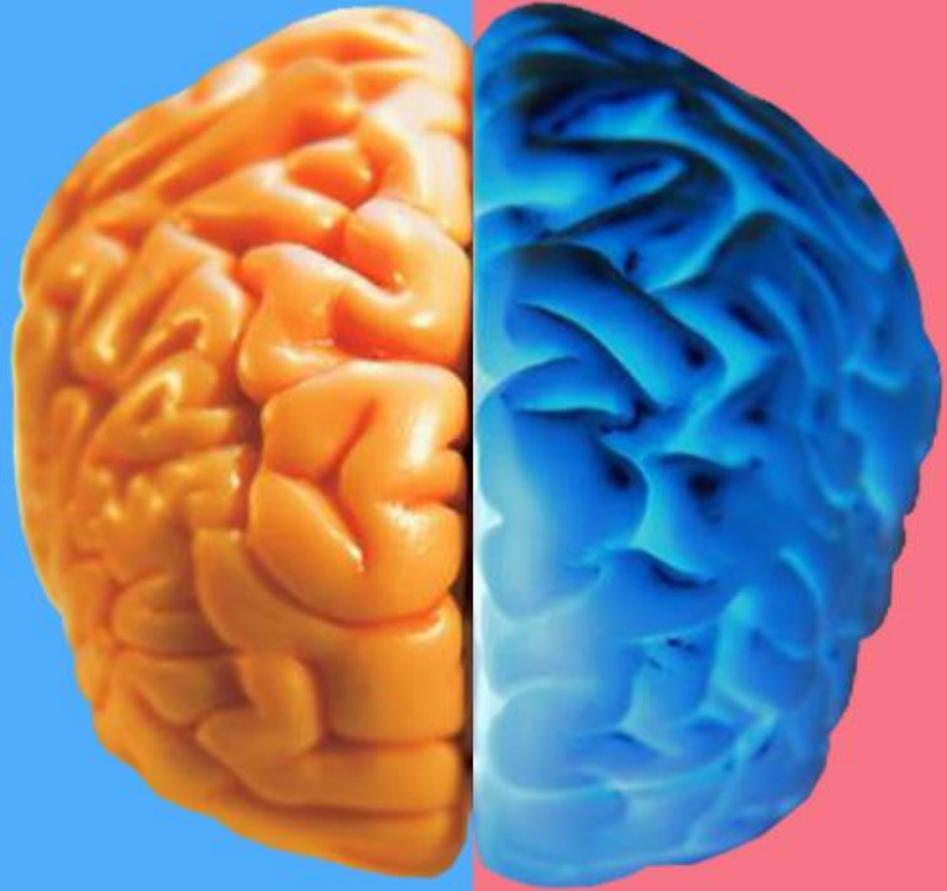
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There is an important distinction between structural social realities, and accidental ones.

This is why “reverse-sexism” and “reverse-racism” are not meaningful concepts.

Group	Privilege	Oppression
Individual	Advantage	Hurt

What  
about  
the  
science  
?



Biological determinism and social construction

# Biological determinism

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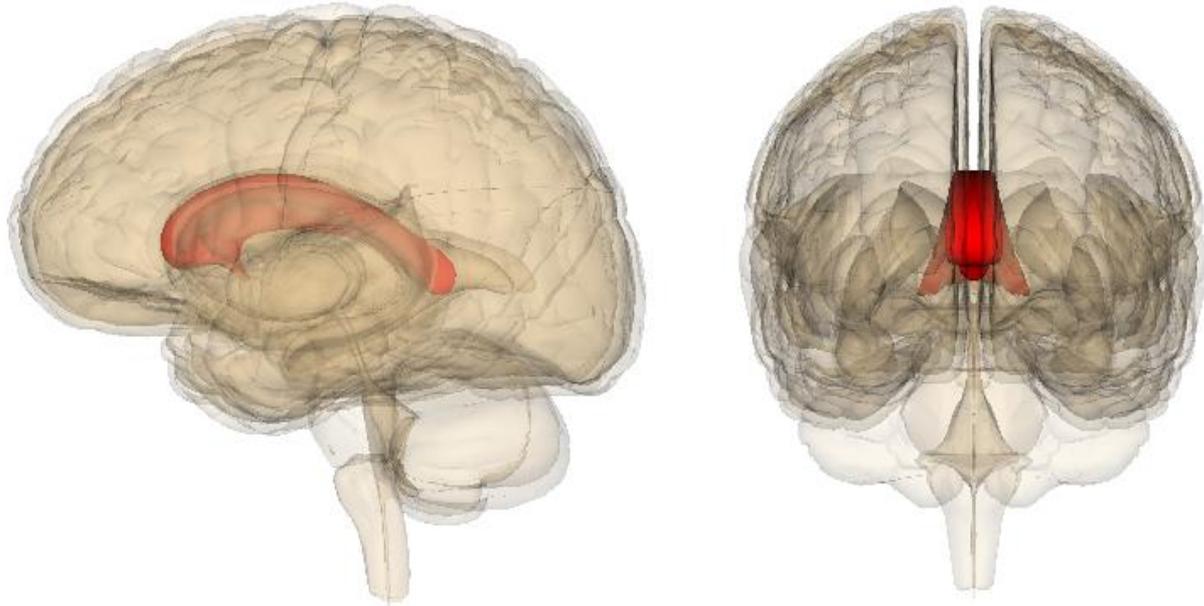
In 1889, Thomas claimed that sex-variant metabolic states brought about differences in social, psychological, and behavioural traits. That is: women conserve energy, which renders them stable, inert, passive, and uninterested in political life. Men, on the other hand, expend their excess energy, and are therefore fit for violence, war, sport, and politics.

In the 1970s, it was claimed that women should not be employed as aeroplane pilots lest their menses interfere with their ability to reliably carry out their jobs.



# Biological determinism

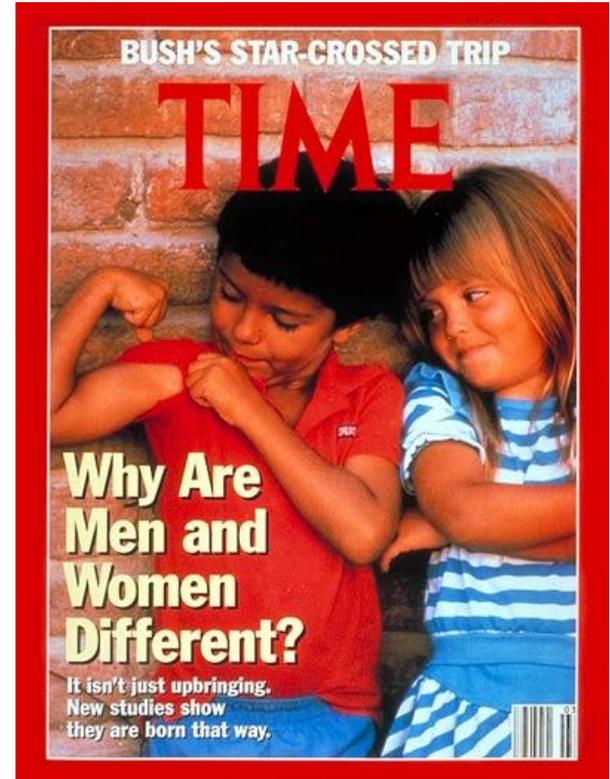
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# Biological determinism

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In 1992, *Time* magazine published an article which posited a sex-based difference in cognitive ability based on the thickness of the **corpus callosum**, which bridges the hemispheres of the brain. It was claimed that the bridge is wider in women than in men, allowing for more connections between areas of the brain, which ostensibly accounted for women's “intuition” and ability to multi-task, whilst impairing our ability to perform focussed visual-spatial tasks, like parking a vehicle or complex mathematics.



# Biological determinism

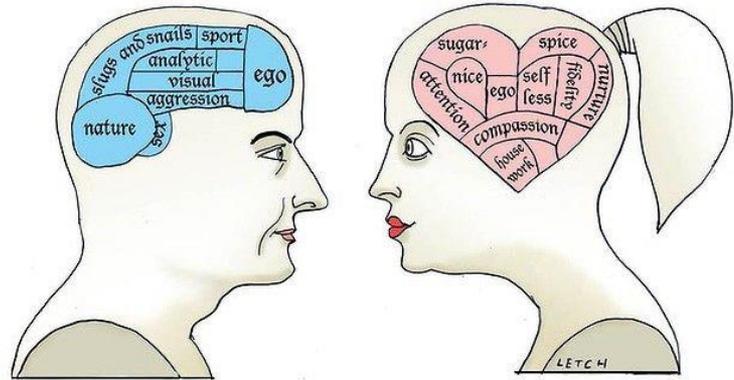
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Fausto-Sterling (2000):

- (a) the corpus callosum exhibits considerable natural variation;
- (b) purported sex-differences not observed in infants, therefore differential treatment is a better hypothesis;
- (c) visual-spatial skills and multi-tasking skills are hugely improved with practice.

In fact, a meta analysis of 49 studies on the corpus callosum since 1980 found no difference between the sexes.

The mainstream media ignored this study.



# Biological determinism

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football opinion culture economy lifestyle fashion environment tech money t

## Scientists find secret ingredient for making (and losing) lots of money - testosterone

- Study links male hormone with earning power
- But too much can lead to irrational risk-taking

ce



In the film *Wall Street*, which symbolised the excess of the 1980s, the most successful traders were odious alpha-males with aggression seeping from every pore.

But stereotypes often have a kernel of truth, and researchers from Cambridge University have concluded what everyone outside the City has always suspected.

Men do seem to be the world's natural testosterone. The more testosterone they have, the more they are likely to be successful in business. This is because testosterone is linked to risk-taking and aggression, which are traits that are often associated with success in the financial world.

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## High Testosterone Means High Profits

By Adam Smith/London | Monday, Apr. 14, 2008

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You can almost hear Gordon Gekko cheer. Financial traders are widely seen as filthy rich, brash, and, well, ballsy. Now it turns out that there's cash in those *cojones*. According to new research from the University of Cambridge, a male trader's daily testosterone level is higher on days when he makes more than he would in an average day. What's more, the higher a trader's morning testosterone level, the more money he'll likely have netted before the close of business that day. Testosterone, in other words, can be good for business.



# Biological determinism

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**“Conclusive” study (2008)**  
sample of 17  
testosterone  
hormones in saliva  
University of Cambridge  
Widespread media coverage

**Inconclusive study (2009)**  
sample of 200  
testosterone and oestrogen  
hormones in blood  
two universities in Sweden  
Resounding silence

# Biological determinism

A major scientific idea which feminists aim to complicate is that of **biological determinism**. This is the idea that the most important causes of certain human phenomena are genetically determined within individuals, rather than culturally determined across societies.

This is fine as a source of explanations for particular facts, but most human behaviour and relationships are so heavily determined by society and culture that weighing in favour of biological/genetic explanations is not justifiable or helpful, and is often false.

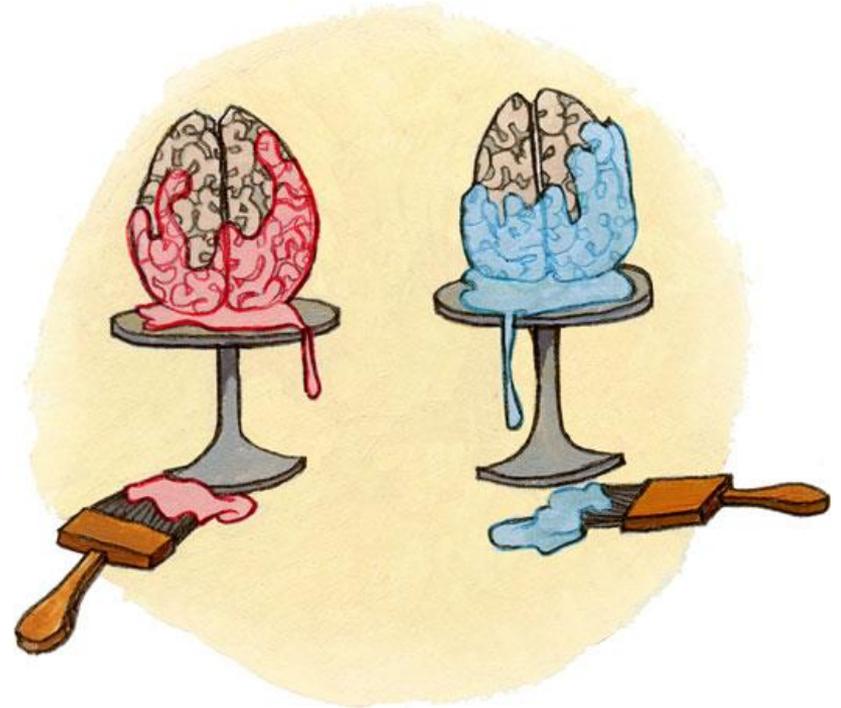
Q: Innocent over-simplification, or pernicious normalisation and apologism?

# Getting our facts straight ...

What does it mean to be female/male?

What does it mean to be a woman/man?

What are the connections between them?



# Making gender

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“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine” (SdB, SS).



# Getting clear on sex and gender

“One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body. ... [T]hose who **fail to do their gender right are regularly punished.** ... [T]he various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. ... The tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of its own production. **The authors of gender become entranced by their own fictions whereby the construction compels one's belief in its necessity and naturalness**” (Butler, p. 99).





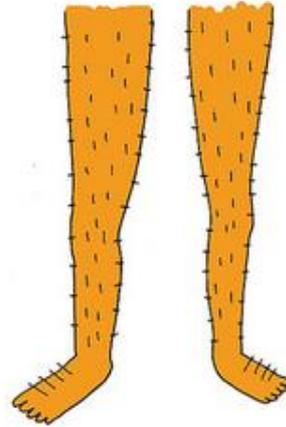
# Making sex ?

Whilst biology is often considered to influence cultural norms, the inverse effect is often ignored.

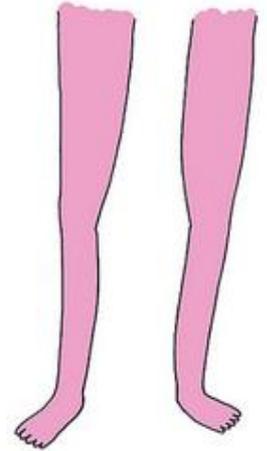
Social forces can and do influence sexed bodies.

In many societies, women are fed less or fed less well, accentuating the difference in physical size and strength; women are discouraged from playing vigorous sports and building muscles; women are encouraged and rewarded for removing body hair and undergoing surgery; covering up skin means that women are at higher risk of having weak bones, but may have fairer complexions.

WHICH IS THE  
MAN?



WHY?



# Making heterosexuality?

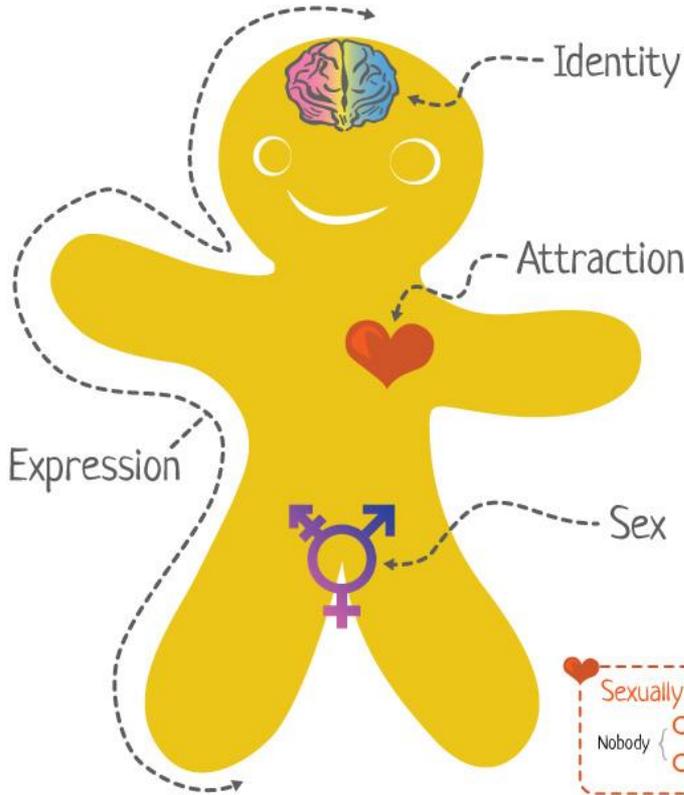
Institutional, cultural, economic, and legal systems encourage, reward, and advertise heterosexuality, promoting the assumption that it is the norm, and thereby reinforcing its power.



# The Genderbread Person v3.3

by its pronounced **METROsexual**.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.



Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

**Gender Identity**

Indicates a lack of what's on the right.

Woman-ness

Man-ness

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.

4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos

**Gender Expression**

Feminine

Masculine

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

**Biological Sex**

Female-ness

Male-ness

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

**Sexually Attracted to**

Nobody

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

**Romantically Attracted to**

Nobody

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)