



**Feminist Foundations:  
The Social Construction of  
Sex & Gender**

**Tuesday, September 3, 2019  
Professor Janet Werther**

# What is Gender?



# What is Gender?

For ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is

— Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 191

- male => boy => man => masculine
- female => girl => woman => feminine

**When does gender happen?**

# Gender Reveal Parties



# Gender Reveal Parties



# Gender Reveal Parties



# Gender Reveal Parties



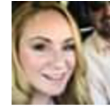


# Gender Reveal Parties



<https://youtu.be/PYgDJSpZmX8>

# Plot Twist ...



## High Gloss And Sauce

A weird thing came up on Twitter, so I figured I'd share here. Someone remembered it was me who "invented" the gender reveal party. I had written about my party on my blog and a parenting forum in July 2008. It was picked up & an interview with me was published in The Bump magazine and the idea kinda spread from there. I've got the article framed!

Anyway, I've felt a lot of mixed feelings about my random contribution to the culture. It just exploded into crazy after that. Literally - guns firing, forest fires, more emphasis on gender than has ever been necessary for a baby.

Who cares what gender the baby is? I did at the time because we didn't live in 2019 and didn't know what we know now - that assigning focus on gender at birth leaves out so much of their potential and talents that have nothing to do with what's between their legs.

PLOT TWIST, the world's first gender-reveal party baby is a girl who wears suits!

—

Edit: if you want to see more of Bee's looks, her Instagram is @bianca\_k\_actor (I run the account, so if anyone tries to slide into a 10-year-olds dms I will end you 😏)

Launa Penza Photography

Timeline Photos · Jul 25 · 🌐

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# What is Sex?



# Is *sex* a social construct, too?



<https://youtu.be/MiCftTLUzCI>

# Key Term:

## Intersex

Defined by the Intersex society of North America as “a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male” (Launius & Hassel, *Threshold Concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies*, 236).

- Chromosomes
  - XX, XY, XXX, XXY, XYY ...
- Genitalia
- Hormones
- Secondary Sex Characteristics
- Case of Maria José Martínez-Patiño
- 1.5 - 1.7% of all births
- 1-2% of people are redheads

# What counts as “normal?”

“Polycystic ovary syndrome [is] a hormonal condition that can include heightened testosterone and that affects up to 20 percent of cisgender women. ‘It has never been considered an intersex condition,’ [Dr.] Grimstad says, but [...] it is not uncommon for those with the condition to have testosterone levels similar to Semenya’s. ‘[...] it is more than likely that we have much greater testosterone variation in cis females than we are prepared to admit’” (Burns).

# **How are Sexual Dimorphism's Boundaries Maintained?**

- **Assignment at (or before) Birth**
- **Corrective/Coercive Surgical Procedures**
- **Hormonal Interventions**


**Who has unfettered access to medical intervention & hormone treatment? Who is denied intervention & treatment? Who is coerced or forced into intervention?**



<https://ispot.tv/a/7wNC>

**SHAMEFUL:**

**SOUTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSES DISCRIMINATORY ANTI-TRANSGENDER BILL**

 HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN | #SDLEG

A graphic with a black background and a red horizontal band at the top. The word "SHAMEFUL:" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on the red band. Below the band, the text "SOUTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSES DISCRIMINATORY ANTI-TRANSGENDER BILL" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a logo for the Human Rights Campaign (a blue square with a white equals sign) followed by the text "HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN" and the hashtag "#SDLEG".



# Key Term:

## Cisgender

A person who experiences congruence between their gender assignment and gender identity (Launius and Hassel, *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies*, 234).

- Is it possible to be cisgender *and* intersex?
  - Yes! See: Maria José Martínez-Patiño
- Differential medical access

# Cissexism & the Regulation of Sexual Dimorphism via Sport



Terry Miller (left) & Andraya Yearwood (right)

**What are the consequences of the binary  
sex/gender/sexuality system?**

**Why should feminists care?**

**What can feminists do?**