and spatially bound fields of power and the multiple forms of flesh the contexts produce. What the aforementioned invocations and theorizations of the flesh reveal is that flesh only gains meaning relationally and contextually.

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Gender

Jules Gill-Peterson

How often do introductory courses in gender and sexuality studies begin by rehearsing a variation of the following model: "Sex ≠ Gender ≠ Sexuality"? And how pervasive has this relation of embodiment, identity, and desire become given the global export of Anglophone, US epistemologies and taxonomies of gender and sexuality? Part of what is at stake in confrontations over gender is the desire for a proper model, an accurate definition, and the right politics. How many genders are there? Is the twenty-first century defined by the most accurate and inclusive categories of gender to date? Or has the openness of gender "gone too far" in some way, diluting its meaning or undermining social order? What does the success and diffusion of gender mean for non-Anglophone, nonsecular, and nonwestern ways of being and knowing? And where did this very terminology and its distinctions that now anchor academic study come from? Was it not feminists who first introduced the concept and brought it into the mainstream? If what gender *is* and how it can be defined and distinguished from sex and sexuality are never-ending points of debate and discussion, then gender and sexuality studies might ask instead, Where did the contemporary concept of gender actually come from?

The answer may prove surprising. Most accounts of *gender* define it as a social or cultural matter, distinct from the biological domain of sex. Yet gender, as the word is used today, as well as its distinction from sex, was the invention not of feminism but rather of US behavioral psychology and medicine. Gender is thus

an incredibly recent invention, dating from the mid-twentieth century. Prior to that era, the category "sex" encompassed a wide variety of phenomena at once somatic, psychic, and social. Phrases like *sex difference*, *the sexes*, or *sexual differentiation* carried much more than biological significance. What's more, today's concept of a gender *binary* has a much weaker predecessor. For the first several decades of the twentieth century, the western life sciences understood sex to be normally what they termed *bisexual*, which meant that every individual was naturally a mix of male and female. More precisely, these sciences contended that all human life started out in utero with the biological potential to become any sex and that the course of human development led to one sex becoming predominant, though humans never lost the potential to change sex.

A series of medical and psychological experiments on intersex infants, children, and young adults in the United States formed the data set out of which gender was invented, overturning this bisexual paradigm. By 1950, clinicians in urology and endocrinology at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, had become somewhat able to coercively alter intersex children's development with new synthetic hormones as well as painful and nontherapeutic plastic surgeries. At the time, doctors routinely made surgical decisions on sex assignment without consulting children or their families, often deciding on their "true sex" based on what kind of plastic surgery was easier to perform. In developing a protocol for assigning a binary sex to these children, clinicians also created the base procedures for the new field of transsexual medicine, which was also emerging at this time in response to transgender people's demands for medical transition. John Money, a psychologist, was hired at Hopkins in the early 1950s to take over the clinic that saw intersex children. His clinical research team published several articles in 1955 in which they outlined the new concept of "gender role." The first of these, published in the *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital*, constitutes the inaugural appearance of the word *gender* in English: "The term gender role is used to signify all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman, respectively. It includes, but is not restricted to sexuality in the sense of eroticism" (Money, Hampson, and Hampson 1955b, 254). For Money and the Hampsons, gender delimited the social and psychological components of what used to all be called "sex."

The introduction of this new term *gender* also allowed for the introduction of a much stricter binary, though not for reasons of biological determinism. Money suppressed the concept of intersex people as a "mix" of two sexes. Still, *gender* referred to a psychosocial dimension *of* sex rather than a separate entity. Gender role was introduced as one of many components of sex that Money and his team (Money, Hampson, and Hampson 1955a) suggested clinicians could look to in intersex children to determine sex assignment. Money was very careful to insist that there was no way to know what caused the formation of gender roles. Rather, for a general theory, he analogized gender to a first language: once acquired, it became nearly impossible to lose, and any languages learned after childhood would never reach the same level of natural fluency. This theory reinforced the binary as a matter of social input, not biology. The concern was not whether human sex was naturally binary or whether any individual patient was truly male or female but rather how "normal" patients felt, which actually meant how well they adapted to the normative expectations of others. With that twist, a gender identity that did not conform to a binary-looking body could be identified as pathological because it might lead to distress from not being perceived as normal. This use

of the language of "feeling normal" also narrowed the gender binary's parameters, doubling down on man and woman as rigid social roles. Medicine's new self-appointed task became to normalize the development of people whose gender identities did not "match" their bodies so that they would grow up to be *either* a woman or a man. Armed with the new concept of gender, the reach of medicine and psychiatry into the lives of intersex, trans, and gender nonconforming queer people greatly expanded in the second half of the twentieth century.

For Money, the distinction between sex and gender was a matter of descriptive convenience rather than an ontological claim. However, it was of central interest to the psychiatrist Robert Stoller ([1968] 1994), whose research with queer and especially trans patients in the 1960s popularized the difference between the two. It was this original *sexological* distinction between sex and gender that US feminists borrowed in the 1970s. As Jennifer Germon (2009, 86) and Jemima Repo (2015, 2) point out, this distinction has often been misattributed to 1970s feminists or even to earlier feminist texts like Simone de Beauvoir's declaration in *The Second Sex* that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" ([1949] 1989, 267). In reality, 1970s feminism was one of many places that Money's and Stoller's work popularized the distinction. Still, the adaptation from sexology did not occur without alteration. In her now classic article "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," the historian Joan Scott (1986, 1054) observes that "in its most recent usage, 'gender' seems to have first appeared among American feminists who wanted to insist on the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex." That is, gender introduced a cultural concept to critique sex stereotypes, sexed hierarchies, and power imbalances between women and men. Kate Millett's (1970) *Sexual Politics*, which concerns the political domination of women by men, was one of the first books to contend on this basis that sex hierarchies had to be socialized under patriarchy rather than being based in anatomical or biological difference. As Repo explains in a history of the term *gender*, Millett explicitly cited both Money and Stoller to make this point, writing that "sex is biological, gender psychological, *and therefore cultural*" (2015, 80). This early adoption was joined by so many other landmark 1970s Anglophone feminist texts—including those by Germaine Greer, Ann Oakley, and Nancy Chodorow—that subsequently, the reference to Money and Stoller was dropped as the sex/gender distinction became the consensus point of view (27).

For white 1970s feminists, gender had done relatively little to disturb the category "women." (Black feminists, on the other hand, drew on a long lineage critical of exclusions built into "women.") However, the publication of anthropologist Gayle Rubin's ([1975] 1997) essay "The Traffic in Women," which critically analyzed what Rubin called "the sex/gender system," began to adapt gender for new ends that radically questioned the coherence of "women" as a reference point. Rubin's ([1984] 2011) later essay "Thinking Sex," along with Donna Haraway's ([1985] 1991) "A Cyborg Manifesto," served as a bridge to thinking about gender beyond the study of women. Gender became increasingly important because it was distinct from not just sex but *sexuality*, a concern central to the new field of queer theory. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* explored this shift by declaring as axiomatic that "*the study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender. . . . But we can't know in advance how they will be different*" (1990, 27). Of course, Judith Butler's ([1990] 1999) *Gender Trouble* has most often been read as the signature text of this queer shift. Butler's theory of gender's performativity was widely interpreted as indexing a shift from "women" as the subject of feminism to a queer analysis

of how gender is produced, is regulated, and might be subverted. The original feminist borrowing of the sex/gender distinction from sexology does not appear in *Gender Trouble*. Butler's account of their relation (16–25) comes instead in an argument that "sex" is actually a conceptual back-formation *of* gender, produced retrospectively to lend the appearance of physical substance.

Butler's theories of performativity and the demotion of sex to a discursive aftereffect of gender were both widely read—and hotly debated. Some feminist critics charged, in particular, that the performative theory of gender relegated the material body—its actual flesh and blood—to an unthinkable place, rendering the matter gender is made of more opaque. Feminist materialist theories like Elizabeth Grosz's (1994) *Volatile Bodies* argued on this basis for a feminist theory of sexual difference over a theory of gender. Butler (1993a) published *Bodies That Matter* in part as a clarification of her thinking on the sex/gender relation. However, the critique of that book's reading of race and especially Blackness as the "limit" of gender's performativity is perhaps more instructive in taking stock of this moment in the history of gender. Butler (1990) was critiqued, in particular from the growing field of transgender studies, for her overly allegorical reading of the death of Venus Xtravaganza in the film *Paris Is Burning*. As trans studies scholar Jay Prosser (1998) put it in *Second Skins*, Butler's interpretation of Xtravaganza's transsexuality and desire for the security and safety of a "white picket fence" version of the good life was a self-fulfilling prophecy: Butler read Xtravaganza's gender as unstable while fixing the Black and transsexual body as tragic failures to subvert norms. This debate over sex, gender, and the materiality of the body points to one important way that "gender" as a singular concept obscures its racialization.

Along with Prosser, other trans theories of gender critiqued the queer theory of performativity. Sandy Stone's (1992) foundational essay "The *Empire* Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto" treated the trans body as a potentially subversive and semiotic text with the potential to disrupt not just the medical models that force trans people to feign adherence to gender norms but the very stability of gender that rests upon a legibly sexed body. Leslie Feinberg's pamphlet *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come* likewise begins by asserting that "all our lives we've been [incorrectly] taught that sex and gender are synonyms" (2013, 5). Feinberg defines gender, instead, as "self-expression, not anatomy" (5). The nascent field of transgender studies also levied an important critique of queer theory's fixation on trans people as mere figures for theorizing the instability and subversion of the gender binary rather than paying attention to the material oppression faced by trans people or their own experiences and theories of gender (Prosser 1998; Namaste 2000; Stryker 2004). As trans of color theory (J. Chen 2019) and decolonial theories of gender (Lugones 2010) further specified, the binary sex and gender system was substantially built through colonialism and racialized bodies of knowledge about cultures deemed nonnormative by white Euro-American structures of political domination.

As gender traveled from sexology to Anglophone feminists and on to women's and gender studies, as well as queer studies and trans studies, it also became integral to theories of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) initial two essays outlining the concept specifically referred to sex and racial discrimination under US law but also broadly conceived of gender as one of multiple axes (or lanes of traffic in an intersection, per one of its central metaphors) through which Black women experienced oppression. Still, as Jennifer Nash (2019a) observes, a great deal of skepticism could be turned on this entire periodization. Black feminists have articulated complex models for thinking about

oppression involving sex and gender since at least the 1970s, when the Combahee River Collective released "A Black Feminist Statement" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981, 210–18). Landmark woman of color feminist writing in the 1980s, such as the collection *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981), also significantly challenged the whiteness and coloniality of Anglophone feminism's singular interest in gender. As Gloria Anzaldúa puts it evocatively in *Borderlands / La Frontera*, "I know things . . . older than gender" (1987, 26).

Theories of gender that center race and colonialism, it should be emphasized, most consistently have *not* borrowed the sex/gender distinction from sexology. Indeed, they often recontextualize sexology as integral to racist projects that make use of gender. C. Riley Snorton's (2017) investigation of how the malleability of gender relies on the concept of pliable and exchangeable Black flesh under transatlantic slavery, for instance, offers an entirely different frame for thinking about gender's emergence in the twentieth century. Likewise, Qwo-Li Driskill's (2016) investigation of the violent imposition of binary sex and gender roles on the Cherokee Nation over nearly five centuries recontextualizes the invention of gender in 1950s as but a small chapter in a still-unfolding Indigenous temporality of survival. Scholarship in Indigenous studies (P. Allen 1986; Deer 2009; L. Simpson 2017), decolonial studies, and Black studies not only breaks from the unacknowledged reiteration of the sexological model of sex/gender by predominately white Anglophone scholars but further recontextualizes gender within a racial and colonial system of violence and governance established over centuries in the Americas (Spillers [1987] 2003; Lugones 2007). One important narrative to disrupt is that this kind of thinking about race, anti-Blackness, and colonialism as central to sex and gender did not come "after" the Anglophone feminist adoption of gender. A global critique of gender, however, might move in a different direction, pointing out that the category is ultimately a narrow western one and cannot be presumed to exist, or have existed, elsewhere in the world, except as an outcome of colonial and neocolonial processes.

If today's category of gender is borne of a racial, colonial, and sexological forge, what does this mean for its ostensibly progressive contemporary shifts that continue to privilege western, Anglophone, academic, and white forms of subjectivity? The emergence and popularity of "gender spectrum" models in recent years could be read, for instance, as a capitulation to sexology: a belief that the value of gender lies in producing taxonomies, expecting everyone to name and express a "true" identity, and strengthening forms of state surveillance (Beauchamp 2019) and everyday violence premised on gendered visibility (Tourmaline, Stanley, and Burton 2017). The rapid emergence and diffusion of the category "cis" may serve to both reinforce the normality of the normative category of gender and minimize its oppressive impacts by converting it into a self-identification (Enke 2012). The misattribution of cisness to nontrans people who do not enjoy the privileges of gender normativity, like Black or Indigenous women, is one of the risks of the unmarked whiteness of the term. Likewise, while *nonbinary* introduces conceptual trouble into the gender binary, its potential to reify hierarchies within trans communities (a new binary, dizzyingly, between nonbinary and binary) and the whiteness and masculine-of-center androgyny with which it is predominately associated have served as points of concern and critique (Rajunov and Duane 2019).

Still, the critique of gender's invention and uptake is not the only story to be told. If gender is, among other things, a system for classifying and governing human beings (Spade 2011)—one employed by the law and the state as well as violent institutions of captivity like