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改良性別概念：三重概念模型

On Ameliorating Gender Concepts: The Triple-Concept Model

黃稟宸

Bing-Cheng Huang

指導教授：鄧敦民 博士

陳湘韻 博士

Advisor: Duen-Min Deng, Ph.D.

Hsiang-Yun Chen, Ph.D.

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摘要



我的論文是一個針對性別概念的改良型計畫。這個改良型計畫分為四個部分。在第一部分，我從某個性別概念的目的開始，這個目的和我們對性別壓迫的理解有關。接著我論證，因為有不同類型的性別壓迫，我們需要三種性別概念來理解所有類型的性別壓迫。第一種性別概念將性別理解為和他人如何看待一個人有關。第二種性別概念將性別理解為和一個人如何看待自己或傾向做出什麼行為有關。第三種性別概念將性別理解為和一個人如何受到身體影響有關。在論文接下來的三個部分，我則分別處理這三種類型的性別概念，目的是找出在每個類型的性別概念中我們所應該使用的特定的性別概念。在第二部分中，我將焦點置於第一種性別概念。由於 Haslanger (2000) 和 Ásta (2018) 都提供了這種類型的概念，我將比較這兩者所提供的概念，並主張 Ásta 的概念更好。在第三部分中，我考慮的是第二種概念。在此部分中，我首先分別評估 McKittrick (2015)、Bettcher (2017) 和 Jenkins (2018) 三者所提出的概念，並指出三個概念皆不充足。基於先前的討論，我會提出一個更好的概念。在第四部分，我討論了第三種性別概念。由於沒有人提供過這樣的觀念，我將給出一個新穎的概念，並論證這個概念確實是我們所需要的。

關鍵詞：性別、形上學、女性主義、改良型計畫、壓迫

Abstract



My thesis is an ameliorative project with respect to gender concepts. The project is divided into four parts. In the first part, I begin with the purposes of gender concepts concerning our understanding of gender oppression. Then I argue that because there are different types of gender oppression, we need three types of gender concepts to understand all types of gender oppression. The first type of gender concepts understands having a gender as a matter of how one is perceived by others. The second type understands having a gender as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. The third type understands having a gender as a matter of how one is affected by one's body. The next three parts of my project address the three types of concepts. The task is to determine, with respect to each type, which particular concept we should use. In the second part, I focus on the type of gender concepts that takes having a gender as a matter of how one is perceived by others. Since Haslanger (2000) and Ásta (2018) both offer a concept of this kind, I begin by comparing the two concepts. I will argue that Ásta's concept is better. In the third part, I consider the type of gender concepts that takes having a gender as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. I will first assess three concepts from McKittrick (2015), Bettcher (2017) and Jenkins (2018) respectively. The result is that the three concepts are not good enough. So I will develop an alternative concept. In the fourth part, I discuss the type of gender concepts that takes having a gender as a matter of how one is affected by one's body. Since no one has provided such a concept. I will develop a novel concept and argue that the concept is indeed required for us.

Keywords: Gender, Metaphysics, Feminism, Ameliorative Project, Oppression

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Ameliorating Gender Concepts



Gender concepts such as the concepts of *woman* and *man* are important tools for feminists. Feminists use gender concepts to counter biological determinism, i.e., the view that one's life is largely determined by one's biology, to organize political movements, to understand individuals' life experiences and to explain a variety of social phenomena including gender oppression. In this thesis, I carry out an *ameliorative project* to study gender concepts from a feminist perspective.

An ameliorative project is now an important approach to study concepts of social categories.¹ For example, there are now ameliorative projects with respects to gender concepts,² racial concepts,³ the concepts of gender identities,⁴ the concepts of sexual identities,⁵ and the concept of disability.⁶ An ameliorative project begins by considering what legitimate purposes a concept is to serve and then proceeds by considering what concept serves the purposes best.⁷ What an ameliorative project looks for is the *target*

¹ There are also ameliorative projects with respect to the concept of sex and the concept of sexual orientations, which are concepts of allegedly non-social, but socially significant, categories. See Ayala & Vasilyeva (2005) and Dembroff (2016).

² For ameliorative projects with respect to gender concepts, see Haslanger (2000) and Jenkins (2016). For the methodological discussions on an ameliorative project with respect to gender concepts, see Haslanger (2000), Saul (2006), Mikkola (2009), Jenkins (2016), Bogardus (2020a) and Chen (2021).

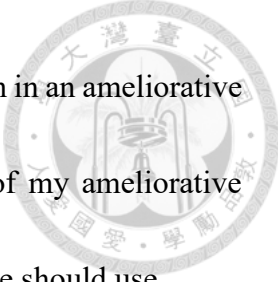
³ See Haslanger (2000).

⁴ See Jenkins (2018).

⁵ See Andler (2021).

⁶ See Barnes (2016).

⁷ For the general discussions on the methodology of ameliorative projects, see Haslanger (2000, 2006, 2020a, 2020b), Jenkins (2016), Barnes (2017, 2020), Novaes (2020), Marques (2020) and Ritchie (2021).



concept,⁸ which is the concept we *should* use. So the ultimate question in an ameliorative project is the question of which concept we should use. The aim of my ameliorative project is therefore to answer the question of which gender concept we should use.

An influential ameliorative project with respect to gender concept is Haslanger's one. In fact, it is Haslanger who makes explicit the idea of an ameliorative project. In her article "Gender and Race", Haslanger carries out an ameliorative project with respect to gender concepts and proposes some target concepts of *woman* and *man*. The ameliorative project has led to many discussions.⁹ One important following discussion is by Jenkins (2016). Jenkins points out some problems for Haslanager's ameliorative project and then, in light of her criticisms, carries out another ameliorative project. Eventually, Jenkins's ameliorative project reaches two target concepts of *woman*, one of which is Haslanger's target concept and the other is developed by Jenkins herself.

Novaes has pointed out that an ameliorative project "is best seen as an open-ended project; proposed reconceptualizations may then be further revised if it turns out that additional improvement can be made." (2020, p.1025) This point well illuminates the relationship between Haslanger's and Jenkins's ameliorative projects. An early ameliorative project serves as the basis for improvement in a later ameliorative project. It should be noted that my ameliorative project is also based on the former two ameliorative

⁸ In Haslanger's words, "the target concept is the object of ameliorative analysis." (2006. p.109)

⁹ See, for example, Saul (2006), Mikkola (2009), Jenkins (2016) and Chen (2021).

projects, and I hope that some further improvement will be actually made.

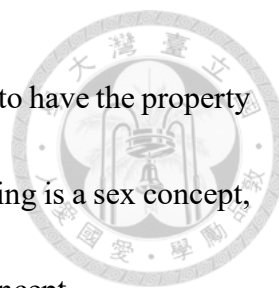


1.1 Some Basic Terminologies

Let me clarify some terminologies that will be used in my thesis. By *concepts*, I mean some kind of *mental representations*. This kind of mental representations are basic components of our thoughts and can be *satisfied* by entities. Those entities that satisfy a concept fall under the extension of the concept. Also, I take a concept to be something that can license certain inferences. For example, if we have a concept of *bachelor* according to which to be a bachelor is to be an unmarried man, the concept can license the inference from the belief that John is a bachelor to the belief that John is an unmarried man. By *properties*, I mean a certain kind of worldly entities. Properties are something that an individual can *have*. For example, the property of being red can be had by a bank.

I take the property of being a female and the property of being a male to be *sex properties*. Also, I take sex properties to be *biological properties*. By contrast, the property of being a woman and the property of being a man are *gender properties*, and gender properties are *social properties*.¹⁰ A *sex concept* is therefore defined as a concept that specifies what it is to have a particular sex property, e.g., what it is to have the property of being a female. By contrast, a *gender concept* is defined as a concept that

¹⁰ I assume the sex/gender distinction that is wildly shared by feminists. But there are some criticisms of the sex/gender distinction. See, for example, Butler (1990), Mikkola (2011) and Bogardus (2020b).



specifies what it is to have a particular gender property, e.g., what it is to have the property of being a woman. Then a *sex term* is defined as a term whose meaning is a sex concept, and a *gender term* is defined as a term whose meaning is a gender concept.

Then consider the relationship between the term ‘woman’, the concept of *woman* and the property of being a woman. I assume that there exists the property of being a woman. A concept of *woman* is a concept that specifies what it is to have the property of being a woman. Different concepts of *woman* then specify what it is to have the property of being a woman in different ways. Also, a concept of *woman* may not correctly specify what it is to have the property of being a woman.¹¹ In that case, an individual who satisfies the concept of *woman* may not actually have the property of being a woman.¹² An analogy is that a concept of *water* may not correctly specify what it is to have the property of being water. For example, we may have a concept of *water* according to which to be water is to be watery stuff. Then some stuff that satisfies the concept may not have the property of being water.

Saul (2006, 2012) have recognized that the term ‘woman’ sometimes functions as a

¹¹ Dembroff have argued that we should not required that a concept of *woman* must correctly specify what it is to have the property of being a woman. The reason is that the property of being a woman may be oppressive, and a concept of *woman* that correctly specify what it is to have the property will enforce the oppression. See Dembroff (2018).

¹² More precisely, the idea is as follows. Suppose a concept of *woman* specifies what it is to have the property of being a woman in the way that according to the concept, to be a woman is to be F. Then a individual satisfies the concept if and only if the individual is F. However, further suppose that the concept does not correctly specify what it is to be a woman. So it may be that some individual who is F does not have the property of being a woman. Then some individual that satisfies the concept does not have the property of being a woman.

sex term. Even if feminists commonly use the term ‘woman’ as a gender term, ordinary people do not.¹³ Some dictionaries also say that ‘woman’ means ‘adult human female’.

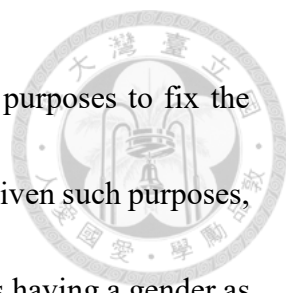
So I take it to be possible that the meaning of the term ‘woman’ may not be the concept of *woman*. But that will not matter because, for the most part, the discussion is simply about the concept of *woman*.

I will usually talk about *oppression* in my thesis. I adopt Frye’s understanding of oppression, according to which oppression is “an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people.” (Frye 1983, p.10-11) In other words, I take oppression to be a structure of forces and barriers that tend to disadvantage the members of a group of individuals. In my thesis, I will also talk about the *group of individuals that is targeted by* a form of oppression. The idea is that a form of oppression must tend to disadvantage members of *some* group. Then I call such a group *the group of individuals that is targeted by the form of oppression*.

1.2 How I Will Carry out the Ameliorative Project

An ameliorative project begins by considering the purpose of a concept. In my ameliorative project, I will focus on the purposes of gender concepts that are relevant to our understanding of gender oppression. I will evaluate gender concepts primary in terms

¹³ Byrne and Bogardus have argued that the term ‘woman’ is not a gender term. See Byrne (2020) and Bogardus (2020b). For a reply to Byrne’s arguments, see Dembroff (2021).

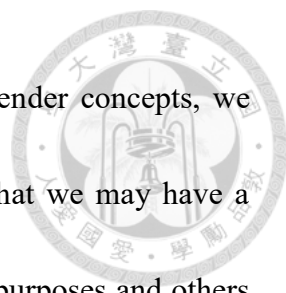


of such purposes of gender concepts. In Chapter 2, I will use such purposes to fix the direction of my ameliorative project. In the chapter, I will argue that given such purposes, we should possess three types of gender concepts. The first type takes having a gender as a matter of how one is perceived by others. The second type takes having a gender as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. The third type takes having a gender as a matter of how one is affected by one's body. From Chapter 3 to Chapter 5, I then discuss, with respect to each type of gender concepts, which particular concept we should use. In Chapter 6, I summarize my proposed target concepts and discuss some ontological and political upshots.

Since I focus on the purposes of gender concepts that are relevant to our understanding of gender oppression, I focus more on the *epistemic* purposes of gender concepts. Nonetheless, I also think that gender concepts have purposes that are more *political*. For example, gender concepts also serve to organize feminist movements and validate feminist politics.¹⁴ I think it is impossible to address all those purposes of gender concepts in my thesis. So I can simply focus on some of them. Eventually, I choose to focus on those purposes that are more epistemic.

Of course, it might turn out to be the case that my target concepts cannot serve other purposes of gender concepts well. But that need not be a problem. Brigandt and Rosario

¹⁴ For example, see Alcoff (1988), Young (1994), Zack (2005), Bach (2012) and Jenkins (2016).

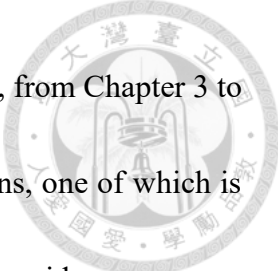


(2020) have suggested that with respect to different purposes of gender concepts, we should ameliorate gender concepts in different ways. The idea is that we may have a variety of gender concepts, some of them are used to address some purposes and others are used to address other purposes. Given that gender concepts have multiple purposes, it may be irrational to insist that all purposes of gender concepts can be served well by the same gender concepts. So even if my target concepts cannot serve other purposes of gender concepts, that shall not be not a problem for my target concepts.

A crucial difference between my ameliorative project and Jenkins's one is relevant here. In Jenkins's ameliorative project, a more political purpose of gender concepts is also taken into account. The purpose is to address the *inclusion problem*. The idea of the inclusion problem is as follows. On the one hand, if we try to offer a concept of *woman*, we may "risk excluding or marginalizing some women." On the other hand, if we offer no concept of *woman* at all, that "calls into question the project of feminism—supposedly a movement to end the oppression of 'women'." (2016, p.394) For Jenkins, a concept of *woman* is required to deal with the situation.¹⁵ The consideration then plays a role in Jenkin's ameliorative project. In my ameliorative project, I do not take into account such a more political purpose of gender concepts.¹⁶

¹⁵ Some have argued that the inclusion problem is not a genuine problem to the extent that a concept of *woman* is not really required to say what feminism is. See Mikkola (2016).

¹⁶ Nonetheless, I contend that if Jenkins's target concepts can be used to address the inclusion problem, so can my target concepts. The reason is that my target concepts may not marginalize more women than Jenkins's target concepts. See Section 4.6.



For the most part, I focus on the concept of *woman*. In particular, from Chapter 3 to Chapter 5, I only discuss the concept of *woman*. There are two reasons, one of which is pragmatic and the other is political. The pragmatic reason is to avoid unnecessary complexity. Many discussions on the concept of *woman* can easily accommodate the concept of *man*. So we do not need to repeat similar points. The political reason is to center women's situations in the ameliorative project. From a feminist perspective, we should indeed focus more on women. Some discussions may not be applied to the concept of *man*. Nonetheless, if the discussions can be applied to the concept of *woman*, the discussions should, given the primacy of women's situations, give us some primary reasons to use some certain concept of *woman and* the corresponding concept of *man*.

But I shall acknowledge another relevant limit of my discussions. The limit is that my discussions cannot cover the concept of non-binary gender. Dembroff (2020) has argued that the concept of *genderqueer* should as well be taken into account when we study gender concepts. I wholly agree with Dembroff. Nonetheless, as Dembroff (2020) has shown, the concept of *genderqueer* may require an analysis that is very different from the analysis of the concepts of *woman* and *man*. Because of that, I can only focus on the concepts of *woman* and *man* and acknowledge this limit of my discussions.

Chapter 2

Gender in Three Places

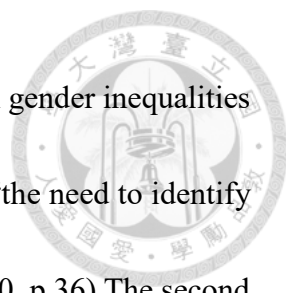


In this chapter, I argue that we should possess three types of gender concepts. The three types of gender concepts correspond to three ways of understanding what it is to have a gender respectively. I will begin with some purposes of gender concepts, which are made explicit by Haslanger (2000). Then I will show that in order for the purposes to be served well, three types of gender concepts are required, which is why we should possess three types of gender concepts.

2.1 The Purpose of Gender Concepts

What is the purpose of gender concepts? In other words, what is the point to have gender concepts? Haslanger (2000) considers the purpose of gender concepts from a feminist perspective. Haslanger asks: “why might [feminists] want or need the [concept] of gender? What work can [it] do for us?” Haslanger’s answer is that gender concepts can be our “effective tools in the fights against injustice.” (2000, p.36) For Haslanger, the general purpose of gender concepts is to fight against injustice.

However, there are many ways in which gender concepts can help to fight against injustice. It seems that for Haslanger, there are two ways in which gender concepts serve



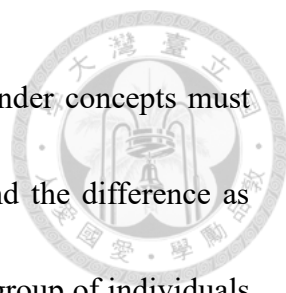
the general purpose.¹⁷ The first way is to help to identify and explain gender inequalities and oppression. In Haslanger's words, gender concepts are to serve "the need to identify and explain persistent inequalities between females and males." (2000, p.36) The second way is to provide an understanding of gender that will motivate us to fight against injustice. The idea can be seen in the following passage.

By offering these analyses of our ordinary terms, I call upon us to reject what seemed to be positive social identities. I'm suggesting that we should work to undermine those forces that make being a man, [or] a woman. ... I'm asking us to understand ourselves and those around us as deeply molded by injustice and to draw the appropriate prescriptive inference. This, I hope, will contribute to empowering critical social agents. (2000, p.48)

The idea is that gender concepts can motivate us to fight against gender injustice by affecting our understandings of who we are and what we ought to do. Hence, we can understand Haslanger as committing to the idea that there are two specific purposes of gender concepts that correspond to the two ways of fighting against injustice.

The first specific purpose, i.e., the purpose of identifying and explaining gender inequalities and oppression, can be further elaborated. We have at least two different

¹⁷ Saul has the same interpretation. According to Saul, "Haslanger mentions two key elements [in the fights against injustice]: identifying and explaining inequalities, and provoking a re-evaluation of our identities." (2006. P.136)



gender concepts, i.e., the concepts of *woman* and *man*. The two gender concepts must serve the specific purpose in different ways. I suggest to understand the difference as follows. The concept of *woman* serves the purpose by referring to a group of individuals that *is targeted by* gender oppression in a way that can help to understand gender oppression; by contrast, the concept of *man* serves the purpose by referring to a group of individuals that *benefits from* gender oppression in a way that can help to understand gender oppression.¹⁸

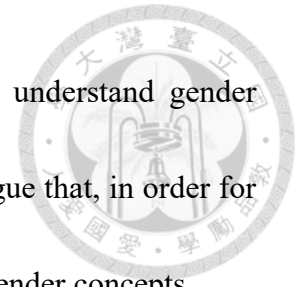
If we understand the concepts of *woman* and *man* in the above way, it can as well be understood how the two gender concepts serve the second specific purpose. For example, if the concept of *woman* indeed refers to a group of individuals in a way that can help to understand gender oppression, the concept of *woman* can motivate us to fight against gender injustice by making explicit our relations to gender oppression.

I contend that Haslanger at least points out some important purposes of gender concepts. So I will *assume* that gender concepts have those purposes.¹⁹ Hence, I will take gender concepts to serve two specific purposes, one of which is to explain and identify gender inequalities and oppression and the other to provide an understanding of gender that can motivate us to fight against injustice. In particular, the most specific purpose of the concept of *woman* is understood as the purpose of referring to a group of individuals

¹⁸ Haslanger's concepts of *woman* and *man* fits the idea here. See Haslanger (2000, p.42).

¹⁹ I think that gender concepts also have other purposes. For the discussion on different purposes of gender concepts, see Brigandt & Rosario (2020).

that is targeted by gender oppression in a way that can help to understand gender oppression. Moreover, I will simply focus on those purposes and argue that, in order for those purposes to be served well, we should possess three types of gender concepts.



2.2 An Argument from Jenkins

In the previous section, some purposes of gender concepts have been made explicit. Later I will show that given the purposes, we should possess three types of gender concepts. Before that, let me briefly discuss an argument from Jenkins (2016), who has argued that we should possess two types of gender concepts.²⁰ The argument is based on the idea that gender concepts are to help to understand gender oppression. I will make use of the idea of the argument to develop my argument in the following sections.

Jenkins argues that we should possess two types of gender concepts. One type of gender concepts takes having a gender as a matter of how one is perceived by others, and the other takes having a gender as a matter of how one perceived oneself.²¹ For Jenkins,

²⁰ In fact, Jenkins (2016) provides two arguments to the effect that we should possess two types of gender concepts. One of them is presented here. The other is that two concepts of *woman* are required to avoid marginalizing some individuals who ought not to be marginalized. The other argument has received much more attention than the one presented here. Interestingly, in a recent paper, Jenkins (2022) develops the argument presented here further and seems to abandon the other argument. See Jenkins (2016, 2022).

²¹ Jenkins does identify the specific concepts that we should possess. For example, Jenkins argues that we should possess the following two concepts of *woman*.

S is classed as a woman within a context C iff S is marked in C as a target for subordination on the basis of actual or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's role in biological reproduction. (2016, p.408)

S has a female gender identity iff S's internal 'map' is formed to guide someone classed as a woman through the social or material realities that are, in that context, characteristic of women as a class.



both types are required because both of them “are relevant to understanding the oppression of women.” (2016, p.414)

To illustrate, Jenkins takes gender oppression relevant to employment as an example. According to Jenkins, this kind of gender oppression has two forms. One form is “outright discrimination, such as not giving a job to a woman candidate, or offering it to her with a lower salary, simply because she is a woman.” Another form is “internalized negative stereotypes of women’s capabilities that might lead a woman to, for instance, choose a lower-paid and stereotypically ‘feminine’ career over a higher-paid and stereotypically ‘masculine’ one, or not to apply for a leadership role within her current career.” (2016, p.414)

For Jenkins, on the one hand, if we lack the type of gender concepts that takes having a gender as a matter of how one is perceived by others, we cannot explain how some individuals are targeted by the first form of gender oppression. On the other hand, if we lack the type of gender concepts that takes having a gender as a matter of how one perceives oneself, we can hardly understand the second form of gender oppression. For “we will not be able to explain how oppression can operate through self-policing behavior even in the absence of external coercion.” (2016, p.415) In sum, in order to understand

(2016, 410)

The first concept, which is from Haslanger (2000), takes being a woman as a matter of how one is perceived by others, and the second takes being a woman as a matter of how one perceives oneself. For the sake of argument, I will not discuss the specific concepts now. But the two concepts will be discussed in the following two chapters respectively.



the two forms of gender oppression, we should possess the two types of gender concepts.

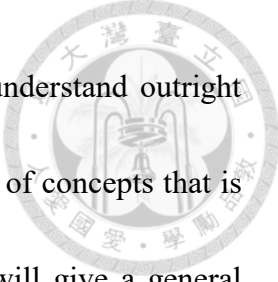
The main idea of the argument can be understood as follows. There are multiple forms of gender oppression. Multiple types of gender concepts are required to understand those forms of gender oppression.²² Hence, we should possess multiple types of gender concepts. I will use the same idea to argue that we should possess three types of gender concepts.

My argument will differ from Jenkins's one in two respects. First, my argument will involve a more comprehensive discussion on gender oppression. Jenkins only considers outright discrimination and internalized negative stereotypes. So Jenkins's discussion is limited. To my view, that is the reason why Jenkins only considers two types of gender concepts. I will consider other forms of gender oppression and provide a taxonomy of gender oppression.

Second, my argument will involve a general *account* of which gender concept is required to understand a given form of gender oppression. Jenkins tells us that without some type of gender concepts, we cannot understand some form of gender oppression.

For example, Jenkins says that without the type of gender concepts that takes having a

²² One might reply that instead of multiple types of gender concepts, we only need a type of gender concepts that incorporate *multiple elements*. An example of such a type of gender concepts may be Stoljar's concepts. See Stoljar (1995). I cannot address the reply here. For my present concern is to extend and improve Jenkins's argument. Nonetheless, I also think that it may be equally useful to have a type of gender concepts that incorporate multiple elements. If so, it may not matter whether we have multiple types of gender concepts or one type of gender concepts that incorporate multiple elements. The point is simply that at some level, multiplicity is required.



gender as a matter of how one is perceived by others, we cannot understand outright discrimination. But Jenkins does not tell us clearly *why* it is the type of concepts that is required. Here Jenkins lacks a general account. Unlike Jenkins, I will give a general account of which gender concept is required in order to understand a given form of gender oppression. Given the two differences, my argument can be seen as an improved version of Jenkins's argument.

2.3 A Taxonomy of Gender Oppression

In this section, I provide a taxonomy of gender oppression. So let me first provide a list of forms of gender oppression.

- Systematic sexual and domestic violence
- Sexual harassment
- Sexist speech
- Sexual objectification
- Misogyny
- Gender discrimination
- Testimonial injustice
- Hermeneutic injustice
- Stereotype threat



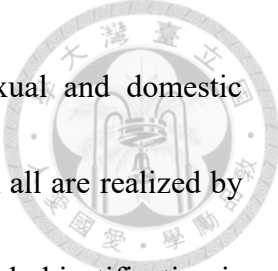
- False consciousness
- Deformed desires
- Gender exploitation
- Oppressive gendered division of labor

The list might *not* cover all forms of gender oppression. But I think that the list does include a variety of significant forms of gender oppression.

Forms of gender oppression are phenomena in the macro-level or the group-level. So forms of gender oppression must be realized by some patterns in the micro-level, i.e., the level of individuals' thoughts, actions and interactions.²³ To illustrate the idea, recall that oppression is a structure of *forces* and *barriers* that tend to disadvantage the members of a group of individuals. The relevant *forces* must be mediated by some elements in the micro-level, and the relevant *barriers* must be constituted by some elements in the micro-level. It is in this sense that gender oppression must be realized by some patterns in the micro-level. Then we can consider the question of what kind of patterns in the micro-level *realizes* a given form of gender oppression. In terms of the question, those forms of gender oppression can be divided into three groups.

One group includes the former seven forms of gender oppression. Those forms of gender oppression are realized by patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors toward women

²³ By claiming that a form of gender oppression is realized by some kind of patterns, I do not commit to the claim that the form of gender oppression is simply the kind of patterns. I simply claim that there is some kind of dependence relation between the form of gender oppression and the kind of patterns.



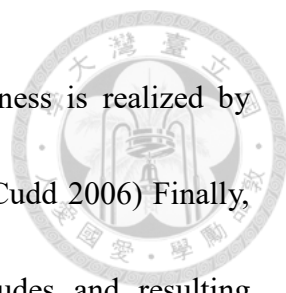
that disadvantage women. It shall be obvious that systematic sexual and domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexist speech and gender discrimination all are realized by patterns of behaviors toward women that disadvantage women. Sexual objectification is realized by patterns of attitudes toward women that take women merely as objects. (MacKinnon 1987; Haslanger 1993; Langton 2009) Misogyny is realized by patterns of behaviors toward women that serve to policy and enforce women's subordinate roles. (Manne 2017) Testimonial injustice is realized by patterns of attitudes and behaviors toward women that take women as less trust-worthy. (Fricker 2007) I call those in the first group *third-personal gender oppression*.

The second group includes hermeneutic injustice, stereotype threat, false consciousness and deformed desires. These forms of gender oppression instead are realized by patterns of women's own attitudes and/or behaviors that disadvantage women.

Hermeneutic injustice is realized by patterns of women's beliefs that are unable to represent some significant aspects of their social experiences.²⁴ (Fricker 2007)

Stereotype threat is realized by patterns of women's fears and anxieties of conforming

²⁴ According to Fricker, an example of hermeneutic injustice is that "you suffer sexual harassment in a culture that still lacks that critical concept." (2007, p.1) In such a case, the culture is the primary element that disadvantages women. However, a culture is something in the macro-level. If we consider which element in the micro-level, in this case *qua a case of hermeneutic injustice*, is the primary element that disadvantages women, I think the primary element is women's beliefs which are unable to represent themselves as being sexually harassed. That is why I take hermeneutic injustice as a form of first-personal gender oppression. But one may want to say that the primary element is instead men's beliefs which are unable to represent their behaviors as sexual harassment. If so, hermeneutic injustice should be understood as a form of third-personal gender oppression. I think both interpretations are plausible. Or maybe hermeneutic injustice should be understood as a hybrid form of gender oppression. However, for simplicity, I will still take hermeneutic injustice as simply a form of first-personal gender oppression.



negative stereotypes about women. (Steele 1997) False consciousness is realized by patterns of women's false beliefs that support gender oppression. (Cudd 2006) Finally, deformed desires are realized by patterns of women's pro-attitudes and resulting behaviors that contribute to women's subordination. (Bartky 1990; Nussbaum 1999; Superson 2005) I call those in the second group *first-personal gender oppression*.

The third group includes oppressive gendered division of labor and gender exploitation. The two forms of gender oppression belong to the third group because they are realized by patterns of the transfer of resources that disadvantage women.²⁵ By oppressive gendered division of labor, I mean the division of labor in which low-status or low-paying tasks are primarily assigned to women while high-status or high-paying tasks are primarily assigned to men.²⁶ (Hartman 1981) When there is oppressive gendered division of labor, an amount of a woman's labor, on average, enables a woman to acquire much less pay and lower status than the same amount of a man's labor, on average, enables a man to acquire. So this form of gender oppression is realized by patterns of the transfer of resources that disadvantage women.

According to Young, “[g]ender exploitation has two aspects, transfer of the fruits of

²⁵ I adopt Haslanger's analysis of resources. According to Haslanger, “[r]esources are things of all sorts—human, nonhuman, animate, or not—that are taken to have some (including negative) value (practical, moral, aesthetic, religious, etc.).” (2016, p.126) Most material objects in the society are resources, such as money and houses. But resources may be not so material, e.g., knowledge, reputation and physical strength. See Haslanger (2016).

²⁶ It is possible that a gendered division of labor is not oppressive. In such a case, some tasks are primarily assigned to men, and others are primarily assigned to women, but those tasks that are coded differently are equal in pay and status.

material labor to men and transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to men.” (1990, p.50)

Gender exploitation mainly occur within a family. An example is that “women provide men and children with emotional care and provide men with sexual satisfaction, and as a group receive relatively little of either from men.” (Young 1990, p.50) In this example, women provide some resources without getting proportionate resources back.

Gender exploitation is not realized by patterns of behaviors toward women or women’s behaviors that disadvantage women. On the one hand, when gender exploitation occurs, no specific behaviors toward women are required. On the other hand, even if gender exploitation involves women’s behaviors, those behaviors like providing emotional care and sexual satisfaction do not themselves disadvantage women. In this case, what disadvantages women is neither behaviors toward women nor women’s behaviors. Instead, what disadvantages women is the way the results of women’s and men’s labor are transferred. Hence, gender exploitation as well belongs to the third group.

I call those in the third group *impersonal gender oppression* simply to emphasize that such forms of gender oppression are neither third-personal nor first-personal.

In sum, there are three types of gender oppression, i.e., third-personal gender oppression, first-personal gender oppression and impersonal gender oppression. The three types of gender oppression differ in that they are realized by different kinds of patterns.

2.4 Which Gender Concept Is Required to Understand a Given Form of Gender Oppression



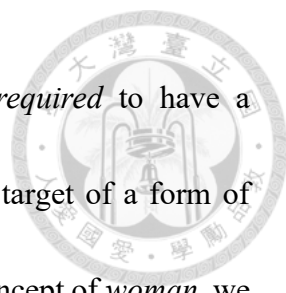
For simplicity, I will focus on the concept of *woman* in this and the following sections. In this section, I provide my account of which concept of *woman* is required to understand a given form of gender oppression. According to my account, a concept of *woman* C is required to understand a given form of gender oppression F if and only if C is required for us to have satisfying answers to the following two questions:

- (I) Which group of individuals is targeted by the form of gender oppression F?
- (II) Why is the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group of individuals) the target of the form of gender oppression F?^{27,28}

By ‘a satisfying answer’, I mean an answer that is both correct and able to contribute to our understanding. It shall be clear that some concept of *woman* can be used to answer the first question. For the purpose of the concept of *woman* is to refer to the group of individuals that is targeted by gender oppression in a way that can help to understand

²⁷ The phrase in the parentheses is crucial. Suppose one simply ask “Why is the targeted group of individuals the target of the form of gender oppression?” It is possible that one is asking the question (II). But there is another possibility. One may be asking “Why is the targeted group of individuals the target of the form of gender oppression (as opposed to the target of another form of gender oppression)?” The phrase in the parentheses is used to avoid such an ambiguity. Furthermore, even if the concept of *woman* can be used to answer the question (II), it is much less clear that the concept of *woman* can be used to answer the other question. It seems that in order to answer the other question, what is required is some concept of gender oppression.


²⁸ Some philosophers have understood explanations as answers to why-questions. For example, see Garfinkel (1981) and Haslanger (2016). In this sense, gender concepts indeed can be used to *explain* gender oppression.



gender oppression. Moreover, some concept of *woman* is even *required* to have a satisfying answer to the first question. We can simply say that the target of a form of gender oppression is the group of women. However, without some concept of *woman*, we cannot know exactly which group of individuals is the group of women. Hence, some concept of *woman* is required to have a satisfying answer to the first question.

Some concept of *woman* is also required to have a satisfying answer to the second question. To illustrate the idea, consider the relationship between being a woman and a form of gender oppression. Plausibly, being a woman is what makes a group of individuals the target of a form of gender oppression. That is, a group of individuals is the target of a form of gender oppression because those individuals are women. As Frye has pointed out, “[i]f a woman has little or no economic or political power, or achieves little of what she wants to achieve, a major causal factor in this is that she is a woman.” (1983, p.16) Hence, when we know that a group of individuals G is the target of a form of gender oppression F, it is always correct to say that G (as opposed to another group G’) is the target of F because those individuals of G are women.

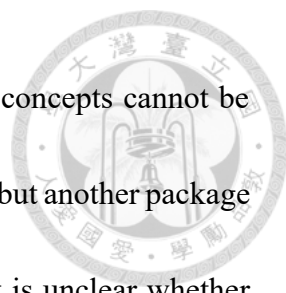
However, even if it is correct to say that G (as opposed to G’) is the target of F because those individuals of G are women, it may still be unsatisfying to say that. For if we have no idea about what it is to be a woman, saying that does not help to understand F. That is why we need a concept of *woman*. A concept of *woman* tells us what it is to be



a woman. If we have an understanding of what it is to be a woman, we can therefore have a satisfying answer to the question of why G is the target of F. For example, we may have a concept of *woman* that takes being a woman as a matter of how one is perceived by others. Then we can say that G is the target of F because those individuals of G are perceived by others in some certain way. Such an answer, if correct, can really contribute to our understanding of F. For example, the answer suggests that F can be resisted by changing how those individuals of G are perceived. It is such an answer that can be satisfying. Hence, some concept of *woman* is also required to have a satisfying answer to the question (II).

So according to my account, in order to understand a form of gender oppression, the gender concepts that we should possess are the gender concepts that are required to have satisfying answers to the corresponding questions (I) and (II).

Of course, there are two other important questions concerning a given form of gender oppression. Why did the form of gender oppression emerge? Why does the form of gender oppression persist? Since gender is definitely not enough to explain the emergence and persistence of a form of gender oppression. The answers to the two questions must involve much more concepts, e.g., the concepts of ideology, social practices, social institutions, implicit bias, and so on. That is, to answer the two questions, we need a package of concepts. So it is much more difficult to decide which gender concept is required to




answer the two questions. It may be the case that some package of concepts cannot be used to answer the two questions without a certain concept of *woman*, but another package of concepts can do without the concept of *woman*. In such a case, it is unclear whether we should say that the concept of *woman* in question is required to answer the two questions. Therefore, when I consider which concept of *woman* is required to understand a given form of gender oppression, I do not take into account the questions about the emergence and persistence of the form of gender oppression.

2.5 Why We Should Possess Three Types of Gender Concepts

I have offered a taxonomy of gender oppression and an account of which gender concept is required to understand a given form gender oppression. In this section, I give the main argument to the effect that we should possess three types of gender concepts. Again, for simplicity, I focus on the concepts of *woman*.

First let me make clear what the three types of concepts of *woman* are. The first type takes being a woman as a matter of how one is perceived by others. According to such concepts, whether an individual is a woman is primarily determined by factors external to the individual such as others' perception, treatment and expectations. I call this type of concepts *external concepts (of woman)*.

The second type takes being a woman as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is



disposed to behave. According to such concepts, it is instead an individual's internal features that determines whether the individual is a woman. The relevant internal features may be one's mental states or behavioral dispositions. I call this type of concepts *internal concepts (of woman)*.

Besides external concepts and internal concepts,²⁹ a third type is also required. The type of concepts takes being a woman as a matter of how one is affected by one's body. According to such concepts, whether one is a woman is partly, but not fully, determined by whether one has a female body. I call this type of concepts *bodily concepts (of woman)*.

In order to understand the three types of gender oppression, we should possess the three types of concepts. More precisely, we should possess the three types of concepts in order to have satisfying answers to the following questions:

(I_t) Which group of individuals is the target of third-personal gender oppression?

(II_t) Why is the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) the target of third-personal gender oppression?

(I_f) Which group of individuals is the target of first-personal gender oppression?

²⁹ External and internal concepts of *woman* correspond to the two main trends in the metaphysics of gender respectively. One trend has been called "social position accounts" and "the external approach" by Barnes (2020) and Dembroff (2020) respectively. This trend commits to the idea that an individual's gender is determined by factors external to the individuals. So following this trend easily leads one to external concepts of *woman*. The other trend has been called "identity-based accounts" and "the internal approach" by Barnes (2020) and Dembroff (2020) respectively. This trend instead commits to the idea that an individual's gender is determined by one's internal features. If one follows this trend, one would instead easily acquire an internal concept of *woman*. For comprehensive discussions of the two main trends, see Stoljar (2017), Barnes (2020) and Dembroff (2020).



(II_f) Why is the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) the target of first-personal gender oppression?

(I_i) Which group of individuals is the target of impersonal gender oppression?

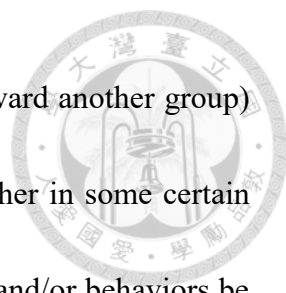
(II_i) Why is the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) the target of impersonal gender oppression?

To answer the questions (I_t) and (II_t), external concepts of *woman* are required. To answer the question (I_f) and (II_f), internal concepts of *woman* are required. To answer the question (I_i) and (II_i), external and internal concepts of *woman* are required, but bodily concepts of *woman* are required too.

First consider the question (II_t). Recall that third-personal gender oppression is realized by patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors toward women that disadvantage women. It follows that third-personal gender oppression that targets a group of individuals G is realized by patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors toward G that disadvantage G. So the question (II_t) is roughly the following question.

(II_t') Why are such patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors directed toward the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to toward another group)?

Then consider what a satisfying answer to the question (II_t') would be. A satisfying answer would be like the following: Such patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors are




directed toward the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to toward another group) because those individuals of the targeted group are perceived by other in some certain way. For the crucial factor that can make some patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors be directed toward a group of individuals is how those individuals of the group are perceived by others.

So a satisfying answer to the question (II_t) would be like the following: The targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of third-personal gender oppression because those individuals of the targeted group are perceived by others in some certain way. In order to get such an answer, we require the type of concepts of *woman* that takes being a woman as a matter of how one is perceived by others, which is external concepts of *woman*. If external concepts of *woman* can be used to answer the question (II_t), plausibly it can also be used to answer the question (I_t).

Then consider the question (II_f). First-personal gender oppression that targets a group of individuals G is realized by patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors of individuals of G that disadvantage G. So to answer the question (II_i) is roughly to answer the following question.

(II_f') Why do the individuals of the targeted group (as opposed to the individuals of another group) have such patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors?


Then consider what a satisfying answer to the question (II_f') would be. A satisfying



answer would be like the following: The individuals of the targeted group (as opposed to the individuals of another group) have such patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors because those individuals perceive themselves in some certain way or are disposed to behave in some certain way. The idea is that it is such internal features of individuals that explain individuals' attitudes and/or behaviors.

So a satisfying answer to the question (II_f) would be like the following: The targeted group of individuals (as opposed to the individuals of another group) is the target of first-personal gender oppression because those individuals perceive themselves in some certain way or are disposed to behave in some certain way. In order to get such an answer, we required the type of concepts of *woman* that takes being a woman as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave, which is internal concepts of *woman*. Hence, internal concepts of *woman* are required to answer the question (II_f). If internal concepts of *woman* can be used to answer the question (II_f), plausibly it can also be used to answer the question (I_f).

Finally, consider the question (II_i). Impersonal gender oppression that targets a group of individuals G is realized by patterns of the transfer of resources that disadvantage G. That is, when there is impersonal gender oppression that targets G, the individuals of G occupy a disadvantaged position in some patterns of the transfer of resources. So the question (II_i) is roughly the following question.

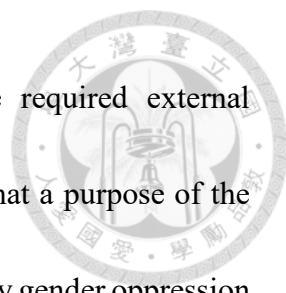


(II_i') Why do the individuals of the targeted group (as opposed to the individuals of another group) occupy a disadvantaged position in such patterns of the transfer of resources?

Again, consider what a satisfying answer would be. In this case, a satisfying answer would be more complex. How those individuals are perceived by others would be part of the answer. For the way an individual is perceived by others can cause the individual to occupy a disadvantaged position in such patterns. Also, how those individuals perceived themselves or are disposed to behave would also be part of the answer. Such internal features as well can cause individuals to do that. However, how those individuals are affected by their bodies would be part of the answer too. The idea is that an individual's body can constrain an individual's position in some patterns of the transfer of resources. For example, consider the position of the disabled in some patterns of the transfer of resources. A complete argument for this claim will be given in the chapter 5.

Thus, a satisfying answer to the question (II_i) would involve facts about how those individuals are perceived by others, how those individuals perceive themselves or are disposed to behave and how those individuals are affected by their bodies. In order to get such an answer, external concepts and internal concepts of *woman* are required. But bodily concepts of *woman* are as well required.

I have shown that in order to understand third-personal gender oppression, first-



personal gender oppression and impersonal gender oppression, we required external concepts, internal concepts and bodily concepts of *woman*. Recall that a purpose of the concept of *woman* is to refer to a group of individuals that is targeted by gender oppression in a way that can help to understand gender oppression. For the purpose to be served well, we should possess all concepts of *woman* that are required to understand gender oppression. Therefore, we should possess the three types of concepts of *woman*, which implies that we should possess three types of gender concepts.

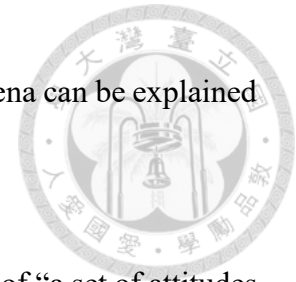
2.6 On the Possibility of a Focal Analysis

My understanding of the purpose of gender concepts is similar to Haslanger's one. Nonetheless, for Haslanger, only one type of gender concepts is required. So, in this section, I explain why Haslanger is wrong.

Haslanger does not actually discuss a variety of forms of gender oppression. But one might, on behalf of Haslanger, suggest that a single concept of *woman* is enough to understand a variety of forms of gender oppression because the concept is embedded in *a focal analysis of gender*.³⁰ "A focal analysis undertakes to explain a variety of connected phenomena in terms of their relations to one that is theorized as the central or core phenomenon." (Haslanger 2000, p.37) The idea is that by giving a single concept

³⁰ Jenkins has argued that Haslanger's account leads to some problem about marginalization in virtue of being a focal analysis. See Jenkins (2016).

that capture the core phenomena about gender, other related phenomena can be explained in terms of the concept.

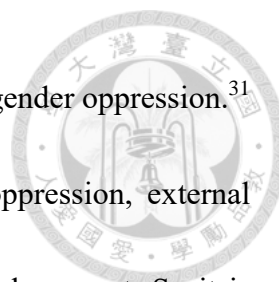


Haslanger's concept of *woman* defines being a woman in terms of "a set of attitudes and patterns of treatment towards bodies as they are perceived (or imagined) through frameworks of salience implicit in the attitudes." (2012, p.7) So Haslanger's concept takes being a woman as a matter of how one is perceived and treated by others. It means that for Haslanger, only one type of concepts of *woman*, i.e., external concepts of *woman*, is required.

Haslanger's view is that the way in which women are perceived and treated by others constitutes the core phenomena about gender. Haslanger's concept can be used to explain other phenomena about gender because the core phenomena generates "divisions of labor, roles, norms, identities, and so on that are specific to the location." (2012, p.8)

Since Haslanger's concept can be used to explain a variety of phenomena about gender, it might be expected that the concept is enough to understand different types of gender oppression. I will not contest whether Haslanger's concept can really be used to explain a variety of phenomena about gender. I simply argue that even if we accept the focal analysis, Haslanger's concept alone is not enough to understand all types of gender oppression.

For the sake of argument, a presupposition here is that a concept of *woman* like



Haslanger's concept is indeed required to understand third-personal gender oppression.³¹

As I have argued, in order to understand third-personal gender oppression, external concepts of *woman* are required. Haslanger's concept is an external concept. So it is reasonable to presuppose that with respect to third-personal gender oppression, Haslanger's concept is enough.

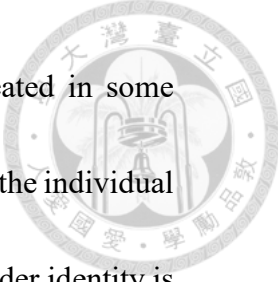
However, to understand first-personal gender oppression, Haslanger's concept of *woman* is not enough. In order to establish this claim, I will show that if we only have Haslanger's concept, we cannot have satisfying answers to both the questions (I_f) and (II_f).

So let me begin with the question (II_f). As I have pointed out, a satisfying answer to the question would like: The targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of first-personal gender oppression because those individuals perceive themselves in some certain way or are disposed to behave in some certain ways. Consider how we can get such an answer in terms of Haslanger's concept.

Haslanger's concept can be used to explain female gender identity, which is a matter of internalized norms and ideals.³² In this way, it might be suggested that we can use Haslanger's concept to get an answer to the question (II_f) in terms of the following reasoning.

³¹ In the next chapter, I will argue against this presupposition. I will argue that Haslanger's concept cannot really help to understand third-personal gender oppression.

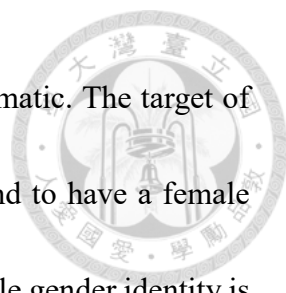
³² Haslanger has sketched such an explanation. See Haslanger (2012, p.9-10).



Those who satisfy Haslanger's concept are perceived and treated in some certain way. If an individual is perceived and treated in this way, the individual will tend to have a female gender identity. To have a female gender identity is to perceive oneself in some certain way or to be disposed to behave in some certain way. Now we accept the claim that the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of first-personal gender oppression because those individuals are women. In terms of Haslanger's concept, we can infer from this claim that the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of first-personal gender oppression because those individuals tend to perceive themselves in some certain way or be disposed to behave in some certain way.

Thus, in terms of Haslanger's concept, we can get an answer to the question (II_f) that is very similar to the satisfying answer that I propose. I think this answer is satisfying enough. So I concede that Haslanger's concept can be used to get a satisfying answer the question (II_f).

However, if Haslanger's concept is used to get a satisfying answer to the question (II_f), it cannot be used to get a satisfying answer to the question (I_f). In terms of Haslanger's concept, our answer to the question (I_f) would be that the group of individuals that is targeted by first-personal gender oppression is the group of individuals who are

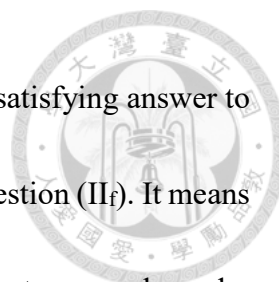


perceived and treated in some certain way W. This answer is problematic. The target of first-personal gender oppression is the group of individuals who tend to have a female gender identity. But the group of individuals who tend to have a female gender identity is *not* the group of individuals who are perceived and treated by others in the way W. For it is possible that one who is not perceived and treated in the way W still tend to have a female gender identity. It is also possible that one who is perceived and treated in the way W does not tend to have a female gender identity.³³ Therefore, the answer to the question (I_f) we get from Haslanger's concept is problematic.

One might reply that Haslanger can simply claim that the target of first-personal gender oppression is the group of individuals who tend to have a female gender identity. In this way, Haslanger has to reject the idea that the concept of *woman* can be used to answer the question (I_f). It implies that Haslanger also has to reject the idea that part of the purpose of the concept of *woman* is to refer to a group of individuals that is targeted by gender oppression. Nonetheless, since I have assumed the purpose, I will not consider the reply further.³⁴

³³ Jenkins has provided some scenarios to demonstrate this claim. See Jenkins (2016, p.399-401).

³⁴ But I do have something to say about the rejection of the purpose of the concept of *woman*. The rejection implies that with respect to some form of gender oppression, being a woman is not what makes a group of individuals the target, which is objectionable. Gender oppression occurs when individuals are oppressed *as women*. If so, being a woman must be what makes a group of individuals the target of any form of gender oppression. Moreover, if we abandon the idea that being a woman is what makes a group of individuals the target of any form of gender oppression, we lose a straightforward understanding of the relation between gender and gender oppression. The understanding is that an individual's gender determines the individual's relation to gender oppression. If we want to adopt the understanding, we must insist that being a woman is what makes a group of individuals the target of any form of gender oppression. Hence, the rejection of the purpose of the concept of *woman* has some problem.




In sum, if we only have Haslanger's concept, we cannot have a satisfying answer to the question (I_f) even if we can still have a satisfying answer to the question (II_f). It means that if we only have Haslanger's concept, we cannot understand first-personal gender oppression well. That is why we should also possess internal concepts of *woman*.

Furthermore, if I am correct that bodily concepts of *woman* are required to understand impersonal gender oppression, Haslanger's concept alone cannot enable us to understand impersonal gender oppression. Bodily concepts of *woman* are to capture the factor of how one is affected by one's body. Since Haslanger's focal analysis does not commit to the idea that how one is perceived and treated by others can explain how one is affected by one's body. Haslanger's concept can hardly do the job we want bodily concepts of *woman* to do even if we accept Haslanger's focal analysis of gender. Moreover, how one is perceived and treated by others indeed cannot fully explain how one is affected by one's body.³⁵ Therefore, we should also possess bodily concepts of *woman*.

In sum, even if we accept Haslanger's focal analysis, we should still possess three types of gender concepts. For if we only have one type of gender concepts, we cannot understand all types of gender oppression.

³⁵ The point will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

2.7 Conclusion



In this chapter, I argue that we should possess three types of gender concepts. In particular, I argue that we should possess three types of concepts of *woman*, i.e., external concepts, internal concepts and bodily concepts of *woman*. In the following three chapters, I will address the following three questions respectively. Which external concept of *woman* should we use? Which internal concept of *woman* should we use? Which bodily concept of *woman* should we use? It is reasonable to expect that with respect to each type of concepts of *woman*, we can find a particular concept that we should use to understand gender oppression. Such a concept must be the concept that can help to understand gender oppression in the best way. The aim of the following chapters is therefore to find out, with respect to each type of concepts of *woman*, the particular concept we should use.

Chapter 3

Gender in Others' Eyes



In this chapter, I focus on the *external concepts of woman*, i.e., the type of concepts of *woman* that takes being a woman as a matter of how one is perceived by others. The aim is to find out the particular external concept of *woman* that we should use. The strategy is to consider two existing external concepts that are offered by Haslanger (2000) and Ásta (2018) respectively. I will evaluate the two concepts mainly in terms whether they can help to understand third-personal gender oppression, i.e., those forms of gender oppression that are realized by patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors toward women that disadvantage women. In this end, I will argue that the external concept we should use is Ásta's concept.

3.1 Subordinate Social Classes and Conferred Statuses

There are at least two existing external concepts of *woman*.³⁶ One of them, which is from Haslanger (2000), identifies being a woman as occupying a subordinate social class. The other, which is from Ásta (2018), identifies being a woman as having a conferred status. In this section, I introduce the two concepts.

³⁶ Witt's concept of *woman* is as well an external concept of *woman*. However, I do not discuss Witt's concept because it carries to many ontological commitments. I doubt that those ontological commitments are necessary for our understanding of gender oppression. See Witt (2011). For criticisms of ontological commitments of Witt's account, see Stoljar (2018).

Let me begin with Haslanger's concept, which is as follows.

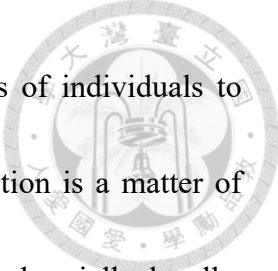


S is a *woman* iff

- (1) S is regularly and for the most part observed or imagined to have certain bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction;
 - (2) that S has these features marks S within the dominant ideology of S's society as someone who ought to occupy certain kinds of social position that are in fact subordinate (and so motivates and justifies S's occupying such a position); and
 - (3) the fact that S satisfies (1) and (2) plays a role in S's systematic subordination, i.e., *along some dimension*, S's social position is oppressive, and S's satisfying (1) and (2) plays a role in that dimension of subordination.
- (2000, p.42)

According to this concept, there are three features of being a woman. The first feature is that to be a woman, one has to be perceived as having some kind of properties, which is revealed by the first clause. It should be noted that to be perceived as having some kind of properties, one may be *observed* or *imagined* as having the kind of properties. It means that one need not actually have the relevant properties.

The second feature, which is revealed by the second clause, is that the existence of



women depends on a dominant *ideology* that justifies certain kinds of individuals to occupy a subordinate social position. Here, occupying a social position is a matter of “how one is viewed, how one is treated, and how one’s life is structured socially, legally, and economically.” (Haslanger 2000, p.38) Also, the dominant ideology can justify an individual who satisfy the first clause to occupy a social position because “societies are guided by representations that link being female with other facts that have implications for how one should be viewed and treated.” (2000, p.40)

The third clause reveals the final feature that to be a woman, one must actually occupy a subordinate social position along some dimension, i.e., that one must be actually viewed and treated in a way that subordinates one along some dimension. The way one is viewed and treated may subordinate one along the economic dimension, political dimension or legal dimension. (Haslanger 2000, p.39) For example, if the way one is viewed and treated subordinates one along the economic dimension, the way one is viewed and treated makes one unable to have a good economic condition. Below when I talk about ‘occupy a subordinate social position’, I mean ‘occupy a subordinate social position along some dimension’. It is the three features that make being a woman as a matter of occupying a subordinate social class.³⁷

³⁷ Haslanger as well takes oppressed racial groups as subordinate social classes. So to be a member of an oppressed racial group, (1) one must be perceived as having some kind of properties, (2) there must be a dominant ideology that justifies those who have the kind of properties to occupy a subordinate social position, and (3) one must actually occupy a subordinate social position. The difference between the group of women and oppressed racial groups lies in the kind of properties that one must be perceived as having. For Haslanger’s concept of racial groups, see Haslanger (2000, p.44).



Now let me turn to Ásta's concept, according to which, to be a woman is to have a conferred status. Ásta proposes to understand being a woman in terms of the following schema:³⁸

Conferred property: what property is conferred

Who: who the subjects are

What: what attitude, state, or action of the subjects matter

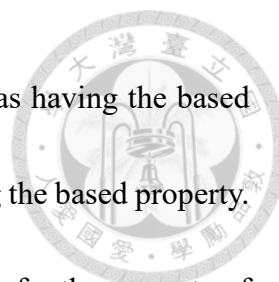
When: what conditions the conferral takes place

Based property: what the subjects are attempting to track (consciously or not),
if anything (2018, p.8)

For Ásta, being a woman itself is a conferred property. A conferred property is “a [conferred] status consisting in constraints on and enablements to the individual’s behavior in a context.” (2018, p.2) A status is conferred by some individuals’ attitude, state, or action, which is specified by the **Who** and **What** question. Also, the conferral occurs in a specific context, which is specified by the **When** question.

Finally, when some individuals confer a status on someone, they must be attempting to track some property, which is specified by the **Based Property** question. It should be noted that one who gets the conferred status need not actually have the based property.

³⁸ In fact, Ásta proposes to use the schema to understand *all* social categories. The proposal is called *conferralism*. See Ásta (2018). For criticisms of conferralism, see, for example, Burman (2019), Barnes & Andler (2019) and Alcoff (2021). Some of the criticisms are mentioned in Chapter 5.



Instead, what is required is simply that the conferrers perceive one as having the based property. So a status can be conferred on someone without her having the based property.

Ásta then proposes the following way to fill in the above schema for the property of having a gender.

Conferred property: being of gender G, for example, a woman, man, trans*

Who: the subjects with standing in the particular context

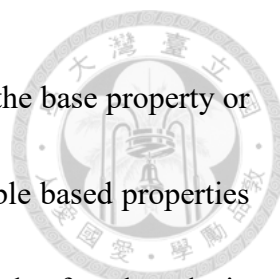
What: the perception of the subject S that the person has the base property P

When: in some particular context

Base property: the base property P, for example, the role in biological reproduction; in others it is the person's role in societal organization of various kinds, sexual engagement, bodily presentation, preparation of food at family gatherings, self-identification, and so on (2018, p.74-75)

Here is a more specific understanding of being a woman. According to this understanding, being a woman is conferred upon someone by some individuals with *standing*. Individuals with standing are those who have power over the individual who gets the conferred status. (Ásta 2018, p.19)

Also, being a woman is conferred upon someone by such individuals' *perception* that she has the based property. For Ásta, there is a variety of possible based properties. Which one is the relevant based property depends on the context. In Ásta's words, "how



gender is conferred makes gender be highly context dependent, and the base property or properties vary with context.” (2018, p.74) Below, I call those possible based properties the *feminine properties*, which include, but are not restricted to, the female role in reproduction, the feminine-coded roles in societal organization, feminine heterosexual engagement, feminine body presentation and female gender identity.

Ásta does not explicitly offer a concept of *woman* that specified the necessary and sufficient condition for being a woman in a context.³⁹ However, the above discussion suggests the following concept of *woman*.

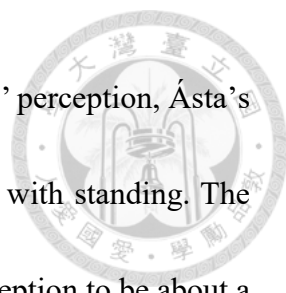
S is a woman in context C if and only if in context C, some individuals with standing confer a status on S by their perception that S has the relevant feminine property in C.

The concept of *woman* must be implicitly committed by Ásta because it captures Ásta’s idea about being a woman. The concept makes explicit that being a woman is a status conferred by some individuals with standing and that the based properties of being a woman are the feminine properties.

Obviously, there are many differences between the two external concepts of *woman*.

But in later discussions, I will set aside three differences between the two concepts. The

³⁹ Relatedly, Ritchie has observed that “in the conferralist profiles, conferred properties, e.g. ‘being a woman’, are not analyzed.” (2020, p.597).



first difference is that while both concepts make a reference to others' perception, Ásta's concept, unlike Haslanger's concept, considers only the individuals with standing. The second difference is that while Ásta's concept takes the relevant perception to be about a variety of properties, Haslanger's concept only considers the perception that is about the female role in reproduction. The final difference is that context-sensitivity is built into Ásta's concept but not into Haslanger's concept.

The three differences will be set aside because they can be eliminated without substantively changing either of the two concepts. With respect to the first difference, we can revise Haslanger's concept to the effect that only the perception of the individuals with standing matters. With respect to the second difference, we can revise Haslanger's concept to the effect that the perception about other feminine properties is relevant too. Finally, the context-sensitivity can be easily built into Haslanger's concept.⁴⁰ Of course, we can do it the other way around.⁴¹ We can eliminate the differences by revising Ásta's concept. No matter how we do it, Haslanger concept still identifies being a woman as occupying a subordinate social class, and Ásta's concept still identifies being a woman

⁴⁰ In fact, Haslanger herself offers a concept of *woman* that involves context-sensitivity. See Haslanger (2000, p.42-43).

⁴¹ Recently, Jenkins (2022) argues that both Haslanger's and Ásta's concepts are required. The reason is that Haslanger's concept is required to explain phenomena in the macro-level while Ásta's concept is required to explain individuals' interactions in the micro-level. However, I do not think that we need both of the two concepts. On the one hand, the context-sensitive version of Haslanger's concept can be used to explain individuals' interactions in the micro-level. On the other hand, we can use the context-insensitive version of Ásta's concept to explain phenomena in the macro-level. Either way, we do not need both Haslanger's and Ásta's concepts.

as having a conferred status. Therefore, the three differences do not matter.

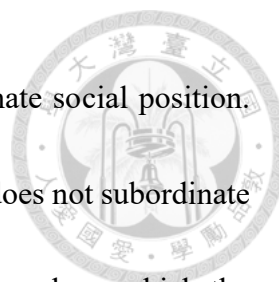


3.2 Two Problems for Haslanger's Concept

In this section, I point out two problems for Haslanger's concept. One problem concerns whether Haslanger's concept correctly identifies the group of individuals that is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. The other problem concerns whether Haslanger's concept can play the explanatory role we want an external concept of *woman* to play. Both problems are due to the feature of Haslanger's concept that Haslanger's concept is only satisfied by individuals who actually occupy a subordinate social position. So Ásta's concept does not face similar problems.

3.2.1 *Feminine Individuals Who Are Not Subordinated*

Haslanger's concept requires that to be a woman, one must actually occupy a subordinate social position. I argue that the feature of Haslanger's concept makes it unable to correctly identify the group of individuals that is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. First consider an alleged counterexample to Haslanger's concept, i.e., the Queen of England. (Mikkola 2009, p.565) The Queen of England is claimed to be a counterexample to Haslanger's concept because she seems to be a woman that does not satisfy Haslanger's concept. The reason why the Queen of England does not satisfy



Haslanger's concept is that she does not actually occupy a subordinate social position.

The idea is that the way the Queen of England is viewed and treated does not subordinate

her along any dimension. It is indeed hard to identify the dimension along which the

Queen of England occupies a subordinate social position. For the sake of argument, I will

now assume that the Queen of England does *not* occupy a subordinate social position.

Later I will consider the possibility that the Queen of England in fact occupies a

subordinate social position.

If we use Haslanger's concept to identify the group of individuals that is targeted by

third-personal gender oppression, it follows that the Queen of England does not belong

to the targeted group of individuals. The reason is that according to Haslanger's concept,

the Queen of England is not a woman.⁴² Below I argue that it is incorrect to say that the

Queen of England is not targeted by third-personal gender oppression.

Before I offer my argument, let me first make some clarification about what I am to

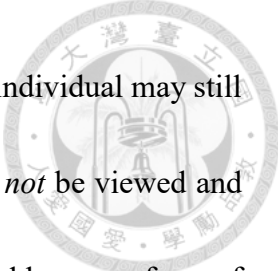
argue. I am to argue that although the Queen of England does not occupy a subordinate

social position, she is still targeted by third-personal gender oppression. One might think

that if an individual does not occupy a subordinate social position, the individual is not

targeted by any form of oppression. Below I will also argue against this view. My view is

⁴² As I have argued in the previous chapter, we begin with the claim that the group of women is targeted by third-personal gender oppression and then use a concept of *woman* to find out exactly which group of individuals is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. So if we use a concept of *woman* to identify the targeted group of individuals, the targeted group of individuals is simply the group of individuals to which the concept refers.



that even if an individual is targeted by some form of oppression, the individual may still *not* occupy a subordinate social position. That is, the individual may *not* be viewed and treated in a way that subordinates her even if the individual is targeted by some form of oppression.

Now let me bring my argument. The Queen of England is regularly perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction. Also, the Queen of England lives in a society where the dominant ideology justifies those who are perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction to occupy a subordinate social position. In this way, it is not clear why that is not enough for us to say that the Queen of England is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. The dominant ideology in fact justifies the Queen of England to occupy a subordinate social position, and because of that, the Queen of England should count as being targeted by third-personal gender oppression.

One might claim that the Queen of England is *not* targeted by third-personal gender oppression because she does not actually occupy a subordinate social position. The idea is that if one is targeted by third-personal gender oppression, one must actually occupy a subordinate social position. However, the idea can be rejected. We can plausibly say that the Queen of England is targeted by third-personal gender oppression, but third-personal gender oppression *fails to cause* the Queen of England to occupy a subordinate social position because the Queen of England is a queen. That is, third-personal gender




oppression does not cause the Queen of England to be viewed and treated in a way that subordinates her because she is a queen.

In most cases, if an individual is targeted by third-personal gender oppression, third-personal gender oppression would cause the individual to occupy a subordinate social position. That is, third-personal gender oppression tends to cause a targeted individual to be viewed and treated in a way that subordinates her. But plausibly, if an individual who is targeted by third-personal gender oppression is a queen, the individual's being a queen can indeed make third-personal gender oppression fail to cause the individual to occupy a subordinate social position.

The general point is that the effects of a form of oppression on a targeted individual can be affected by other social factors. In the case of the Queen of England, the effects of third-personal gender oppression on a targeted individual are affected by the social property of being a queen. The idea of *intersectionality* as well demonstrates the general point.⁴³ Crenshaw (1989) first introduced the idea of *intersectionality* as a metaphor to draw our attention to the distinctive way Black women are oppressed that cannot be understood in terms of gender oppression and racial oppression taken separately.⁴⁴ In the

⁴³ Relatedly, some philosophers have pointed out that Haslanger's concept cannot easily accommodate the idea of intersectionality. For example, see Jones (2014).

⁴⁴ The idea of intersectionality is not simply about gender oppression and racial oppression. Instead, it is an idea about the general relationship between oppressions along different axes. The idea is that "forms of oppression stemming from membership in multiple social categories such as 'black' and 'woman' intersect and thereby create new forms of oppression that are causally, modally, and relationally different from the constituent forms of oppression merely added together." (Bernstein 2020, p.322) For recent discussions on intersectionality, see, for example, Carastathis (2014), Garry (2011) and Bernstein (2020).



case of Black women, gender oppression and racial oppression *intersect* and produce distinctive effects. It follows that the effects of gender oppression on Black women are different from the effects of gender oppression on White women in some way. In such cases, the effects of gender oppression are affected by racial properties.

Hence, the reason why the Queen of England, who is targeted by third-personal gender oppression, does not actually occupy a subordinate social position is that the property of being a queen affects how third-personal gender oppression causally influences the Queen of England. One might question whether the effects of third-personal gender oppression on a targeted individual can be affected to the effect that the individual is not caused to actually occupy a subordinate social position. In reply, I can only say that it is not clear why it cannot be the case. In sum, although the Queen of England does not actually occupy a subordinate social position, we can still say that the Queen of England is targeted by third-personal gender oppression.

There is another reason for accepting the claim that the Queen of England is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. Consider the following counterfactual: If the Queen of England were *not* recognized as a member of the royal family, she would occupy a subordinate social position. It seems that the best explanation of why the counterfactual is true is that the Queen of England is actually targeted by third-personal gender

oppression.⁴⁵ So it must be the case that the Queen of England is targeted by third-personal gender oppression.

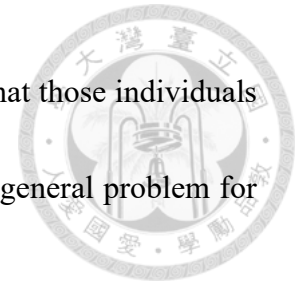


One might suggest an alternative explanation that if the Queen of England were not recognized as a member of the royal family, she would be targeted by third-personal gender oppression. However, the alternative explanation implies that whether one is recognized as a member of the royal family can affect whether one is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. It is unclear how the implication can be sustained. So the alternative explanation should be rejected.

In sum, the Queen of England is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. But according to Haslanger's concept, the Queen of England is *not* targeted by third-personal gender oppression. Therefore, Haslanger's concept cannot correctly identify the group of individuals that is targeted by third-personal gender oppression. There may be more individuals like the Queen of England, that is, more individuals who (1) are perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction, and (2) live in a society where the dominant ideology justifies those who are perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction to occupy a subordinate social position, but (3) do not actually occupy a subordinate social position. Call such individuals *unsubordinated feminine individuals*. For the same reason, other unsubordinated feminine individuals must as well be targeted by third-personal

⁴⁵ Another plausible explanation is that the Queen of England is actually a woman. But it should be noted that Haslanger's concept cannot be used to provide the answer. Either way, Haslanger's concept cannot be used to give a plausible explanation of why the counterfactual is true.

gender oppression. But Haslanger's concept cannot be used to say that those individuals are targeted by third-personal gender oppression either. So that is a general problem for Haslanger's concept.



One might claim that at the present moment, there are *no* unsubordinated feminine individuals. To support this claim, one might argue as follows. First, one would argue that even the Queen of England actually occupies a subordinate social position and therefore, is not an unsubordinated feminine individual. At the present moment, the Queen of England is the only individual that could be an unsubordinated feminine individual. Since the Queen of England is not an unsubordinated feminine individual, neither is anyone else at the present moment. If so, Haslanger's concept can correctly identify the targeted group of individuals at the present moment.

Nonetheless, even if there are no unsubordinated feminine individuals at the present moment, there *will be* such individuals in the *near* future. When our society becomes closer to the ideal of gender equality, there will be some unsubordinated feminine individuals. That will be a moment in which third-personal gender oppression still exists but is less significant. Since third-personal gender oppression is less significant, third-personal gender oppression will more easily fail to cause its targeted individuals to occupy a subordinate social position. At that moment, there will be unsubordinated feminine individuals, and Haslanger's concept will have the problem. So it might be the case that

at the present moment, Haslanger's concept can still correctly identify the targeted group of individuals. But even so, there is still a *potential* problem for Haslanger's concept.



3.2.2 Explanatory Direction

Haslanger's concept has another problem that as well results from the feature that Haslanger's concept is only satisfied by individuals who actually occupy a subordinate social position. The problem concerns whether Haslanger's concept can be used to answer the question of why the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of third-personal gender oppression.

If we use Haslanger's concept to answer the question, we would commit to the following claim: The targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of third-personal gender oppression partly because those individuals actually occupy a subordinate social position.⁴⁶ However, it seems that the claim gets the explanatory direction wrong. It is more plausible to say that those individuals actually occupy a subordinate social position because they are targeted by third-personal gender oppression. A woman's occupying a subordinate social position should be the *effect* of her being targeted by third-personal gender oppression. So if we use Haslanger's concept,

⁴⁶ The reason is that if we use Haslanger's concept to answer the question, our answer would be the following claim: The targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) because those individuals (1) are perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction, (2) are justified to occupy a subordinate social position by the dominant ideology, and (3) actually occupy a subordinate social position in virtue of (1) and (2).



we cannot correctly answer the question of why the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of third-personal gender oppression. Here is another problem for Haslanger's concept.

3.2.3 *A Revised Concept*

I have argued that Haslanger's concept has two problems due to its feature that it is only satisfied by individuals who actually occupy a subordinate social position. The two problems demonstrate that Haslanger's concept cannot really help to understand third-personal gender oppression. But we can have a concept that is similar to Haslanger's concept but does not have the problematic feature. Such a concept may be able to help to understand third-personal gender oppression. So let me revise Haslanger's concept to get the following concept:

S is a *woman* iff

- (1) S is regularly and for the most part observed or imagined to have certain bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction;
- (2) that S has these features marks S within the dominant ideology of S's society as someone who ought to occupy certain kinds of social position that are in fact subordinate (and so motivates and justifies S's occupying

such a position).



The only difference between the concept and Haslanger's concept is that the concept does not require that to be a woman, one must actually occupy a subordinate social position.

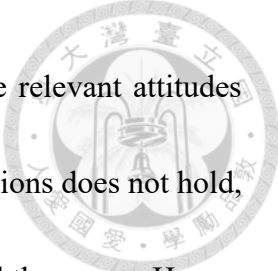
Call the concept the *ideology concept (of woman)*. Below let me compare the ideology concept of *woman* and Ásta's concept.

3.3 Understanding Third-Personal Gender Oppression

In this section, I argue that Ásta's concept and the ideology concept of *woman* are equally good at helping to understand third-personal gender oppression. I will focus on how the two concepts can be used to answer the question of why the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of third-personal gender oppression.

Third-personal gender oppression that targets a group of individuals G is realized by patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors toward G that disadvantage G. So if we want to answer the question of why the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is targeted by third-personal gender oppression, we must be able to answer the question of why such patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors are directed toward the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to toward another group).

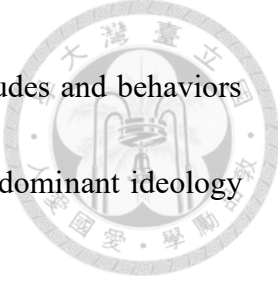
Plausibly, if some patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors are directed toward a group of individuals, two conditions must hold. The first condition is that the members of the



group can be effectively identified. The second condition is that the relevant attitudes and/or behaviors are, in some sense, justified. If any of the two conditions does not hold, some patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors cannot be directed toward the group. Hence, a way to answer the question of why such patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors are directed toward the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to toward another group) is to address the two related questions. The first related question is why the individuals of the targeted group can be effectively identified. Another related question is why those relevant attitudes and/or behaviors toward the targeted group are, in some sense, justified.

Both the ideology concept and Ásta's concept can be used to answer the first related question. Both concepts require that to be a woman, one must be perceived as having some certain property. So both concepts can be used to say that the targeted group of individuals is associated with some certain perceived property, which means that there must be an effective way to identify the individuals of the targeted group. In this way, both concepts can be used to answer the question of why the individuals of the targeted group in question can be effectively identified.

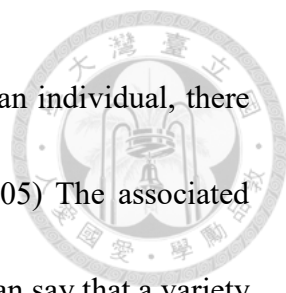
The ideology concept and Ásta's concept can as well be used to answer the second related question. But the answers in terms of the two concepts respectively are different. So let me first consider the ideology concept. According to the ideology concept, to be woman, an individual must live in a society where the dominant ideology justifies the



individual to occupy a subordinate social position. A variety of attitudes and behaviors toward the individuals of the targeted group can be justified by the dominant ideology that justifies those individual to occupy a subordinate social position.

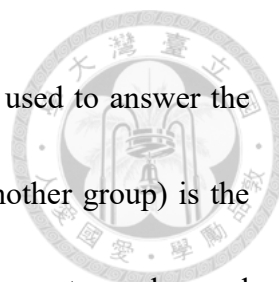
For example, violent behaviors toward the targeted group of individuals are justified by the dominant ideology if the dominant ideology justifies those individuals to occupy a subordinate social position. For violence is a primary mean to subordinate someone. Some attitudes toward the targeted group of individuals that disrespect those individuals or view those individuals as inferior can as well be justified by such a dominant ideology. Other attitudes and behaviors toward the targeted group of individuals that realized third-personal gender oppression are all attitudes and behaviors that disadvantage the group. Hence, such attitudes and behaviors must as well be justified by the dominant ideology that justifies those individuals to occupy a subordinate social position. Thus, the ideology concept can be used to answer the question of why those attitudes and/or behaviors toward the targeted group of individuals are, in some sense, justified.

Then consider Ásta's concept, according to which, if one is a woman, a status must be conferred upon one. Recall that a status consists in behavioral constraints and enablements. Behavioral constraints and enablements can as well justify certain attitudes and behaviors toward a group. For example, when some constraints are conferred upon an individual, the constraints justify attitudes and behaviors that enforce the constraints.



Also, when a set of constraints and enablements is conferred upon an individual, there will be associated expectations about the individual. (Bicchieri 2005) The associated expectations can also justify certain attitudes and behaviors. So we can say that a variety of attitudes and behaviors toward the targeted group that realize third-personal gender oppression are justified in the above way. If so, Ásta's concept can be used to say why those attitudes and behaviors are, in some sense, justified.

However, it seems that some attitudes toward the targeted group of individuals that realize third-personal gender oppression cannot be justified by behavioral constraints and enablements. For example, the beliefs that those individuals are inferior or that those individuals are epistemically incompetent. It is unclear how behavioral constraints and enablements can justify such beliefs. Even so, such beliefs are in some way justified by the perceptions that those individuals have some certain feminine property. Such beliefs are always possessed by people who also believe that if an individual has some certain feminine property, the individual must be inferior or epistemically incompetent. So for such people, the perception that a certain individual has some certain feminine property can justify the belief that the individual is inferior or epistemically incompetent. Recall that according to Ásta's concept, to be a woman, one must be perceived as having the relevant feminine property. So Ásta's concept can also be used to say why such beliefs are, in some sense, justified.



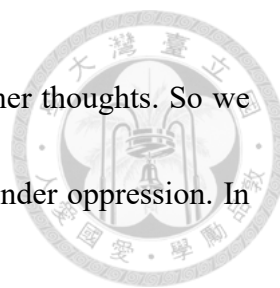
In sum, both the ideology concept and Ásta's concepts can be used to answer the question of why the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of third-personal gender oppression. The reason is that both concepts can be used to say (1) why the individuals of the targeted group can be effectively identified and (2) why the relevant attitudes and/or behaviors toward the group are, in some sense, justified. Also, both concepts do not have the problems that Haslanger's concept has. Hence, both concepts help to understand third-personal gender oppression.

The two concepts emphasize different factors. The ideology emphasizes the dominant ideology, and Ásta's concept emphasizes behavioral constraints and enablements and the perceptions about feminine properties. But it is unclear how the difference makes one of the two concepts better than the other.⁴⁷ If so, the two concepts are equally good at helping to understand third-personal gender oppression.

3.4 The Possibility of Gender Equality

I have argued that the ideology concept and Ásta's concept are equally good at helping to understand third-personal gender oppression. In order to decide which concept is the concept we should use, let me consider another role that a concept of *woman* plays in our thoughts about gender oppression. We use concepts to conceive different

⁴⁷ We may say that the difference is simply the level we focus on. If we focus on the micro-level, we see behavioral constraints and enablements. But if we focus on the macro-level, we see ideology.



possibilities. By conceiving different possibilities, we can form further thoughts. So we can use a concept of *woman* to conceive some possibilities about gender oppression. In so doing, we may have different thoughts about gender oppression.

A feature of the ideology concept is that we cannot use the concept to conceive a possible society in which there are women but no gender oppression. If gender oppression does not exist, the dominant ideology does not justify women to occupy a subordinate social position. Nonetheless, according to the ideology concept, if the dominant ideology does not justify women to occupy a subordinate social position, no one is a woman.⁴⁸ So the ideology concept cannot enable us to conceive a possible society in which there are women but no gender oppression.

If we cannot conceive a possible society in which there are women but no gender oppression, we may lack a vision of how our societies can be transformed into societies in which gender equality is realized. At the beginning, we recognize that women are subject to gender oppression. So our goal is to eliminate gender oppression. To deliberate how the goal can be achieved, we will need to consider what a society in which gender oppression does not exist will be like. A natural thought is that the possible society that we should conceive is a society in which there are women but no gender oppression. But if we use the ideology concept, we cannot conceive such a society. We may therefore face a

⁴⁸ Haslanger's concept also has the implication. Some criticisms of Haslanger's concept is based on the implication. See Saul (2006) and Mikkola (2011).

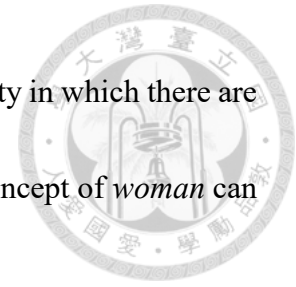


problem in deliberating how our goal can be achieved.

One might say that we can still conceive a possible society in which gender oppression does not exist but there are individuals such that they are perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction and the dominant ideology justify them to occupy a social position that is *not* subordinate. One might say we can conceive such a possible society to deliberate how our societies can be transformed. I agree that such a possible society should play a role in our deliberation about how to transform our societies. However, in this case, we cannot easily answer the question of why such a possible society should be relevant to our deliberation about how to transform our societies. Of course, the possible society is a society in which gender oppression does not exist. But there are many possible societies in which gender oppression does not exist, e.g., a society in which there are no females or a society in which there are no labels of groups of individuals. Clearly, it is not the case that any possible society in which gender oppression does not exist should be relevant to our deliberation about how to transform our societies. Here we need an explanation of why some of them are relevant but the others are not. I think there can be some explanation. But that explanation cannot be straightforward.

If our concept of *woman* can enable us to conceive a possible society in which there are women but no gender oppression, we can have a straightforward explanation of why the possible society is relevant to our deliberation about how to transform our society.

The explanation is simply that the relevant possible society is a society in which there are women but no gender oppression. That is why it is good to have a concept of *woman* can enable us to conceive such a possible society.



Ásta's concept can enable us to conceive a possible society in which there are women but no gender oppression. In this respect, we have some reason to use Ásta's concept rather than the ideology concept.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that the external concept of *woman* that we should use is Ásta's concept, which is as follows:

S is a woman in context C if and only if in context C, some individuals with standing confer a status on S by their perception that S has the relevant feminine property in C.

It is a concept that can help to understand third-personal gender oppression. Moreover, that concept can enable us to conceive some important possibilities about gender oppression. So we should use the concept.

Chapter 4

Gender in One's Mind



The chapter focuses on *internal concept of woman*, i.e., the type of concepts of *woman* that takes being a woman as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. The aim of this chapter is to find out the particular internal concept of *woman* that we should use. To achieve the aim, I will consider which internal concept of *woman* can help, in the best way, to understand *first-personal gender oppression*, i.e., those forms of gender oppression that are realized by patterns of women's attitudes and/or behaviors that disadvantage women.

In this chapter, I will begin with three existing internal concepts of *woman* that are offered by McKittrick (2015), Bettcher (2017) and Jenkins (2016, 2018) respectively. Then I will show that all of the three concepts cannot help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression. In light of those discussions, I will develop another internal concept of *woman* that can help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression.

4.1 Three Existing Internal Concepts of *Woman*

Internal concepts of *woman* are concepts that take being a woman as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. According to such concepts, whether one is a woman is determined by whether one has certain internal features. Recently, when it



comes to internal concepts of *woman*, three concepts are usually mentioned. They are concepts offered by McKitrick (2015), Bettcher (2017) and Jenkins (2016, 2018) respectively. In this section, I introduce the three concepts.

First consider the concept offered by McKitrick (2015). According to the concept, the internal feature that determines whether one is a woman is a complex behavioral disposition or a cluster of behavior dispositions. Call the concept the *dispositional concept (of woman)*. The formulation of the concept is as follow:

S is a woman if and only if

(1) S has (sufficiently many, sufficiently strong) dispositions $D_1 \dots D_n$ to behave in ways $B_1 \dots B_n$ in situations $S_1 \dots S_n$, and (2) the relevant social group considers behaving in ways $B_1 \dots B_n$ in situations $S_1 \dots S_n$ to be feminine.

The idea of the concept is that one is a woman just in cases one has many dispositions whose manifestations are behaviors in the contexts where the behaviors are regarded as feminine behaviors. Such behaviors may be “modes of dress, posture and mannerisms, productive and leisure time activities, styles of communication and social interaction.” (McKitrick 2015, p.2581)

The second concept is from Bettcher (2017). The concept takes the determining internal feature as the disposition to sincerely self-identify as a woman. I call the concept



the *sincerity concept (of woman)*. Bettcher does not offer a formulation of the concept.

But Jenkins (2018) has provided a formulation to capture Bettcher's concept:

S is a woman if and only if S is disposed to sincerely claim, 'I am a woman',
in response to the question, 'What is your gender?'.

Later I will use the formulation to discuss the sincerity concept of *woman*.

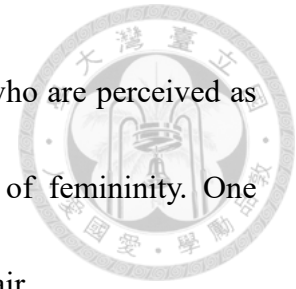
The final concept is offered by Jenkins (2016, 2018). Call the concept the *norm-relevancy concept (of woman)*. According to the concept, the internal features one must have to be a woman are the experiences of certain norms as relevant to oneself. The concept is as follows.

S is a woman if and only if S experiences the norms of femininity in her social
context as relevant to herself.⁴⁹

To elaborate the concept, first consider the norms of femininity. For Jenkins, there are norms that govern how individuals navigate social spaces. They include "norms about personality, occupation, hobbies, modes of interaction, ... modes of self-presentation,"

⁴⁹ Jenkins has formulated her concepts in two different ways. One formulation is (N), which emphasizes the experienced norm-relevancy. The other formulation emphasizes the internal 'map'. The other formulation is as follows: S is a woman of X iff "S's internal 'map' is formed to guide someone classed as a woman through the social or material realities that are, in that context, characteristic of women as a class." (2016, p.410) This formulation as well involves the notion of a social class, which has been discussed in chapter 3. According to Jenkins, the two formulations are equivalent. But it is more difficult to elaborate the formulation involving the notion of a social class. So, for simplicity, I discuss Jenkins's concept in terms of (N).

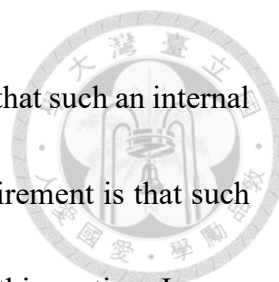
and bodies. (2018, p.730) Some of them function to govern those who are perceived as occupying the female role in reproduction. They are the norms of femininity. One example is the norm saying that women ought to remove their leg-hair.



An individual may experience the norms of femininity as relevant to her. When an individual experience a norm as relevant to her, she would experience her behaviors as norm-compliant or norm-violating. According to Jenkins, an individual may not be consciously aware of her experience that some behavior is norm-compliant or norm-violating. For example, an experience that some behavior is norm-violating may simply lead to “feelings of bodily awkwardness, tension, and even the physiological responses associated with fear.” (Jenkins 2018, p.729) Because of that, an individual may be unaware of her experience that the norms of femininity are relevant to her. Jenkins also notes that an individual can experience a norm as relevant to her but at the same time disapprove the norm. The above is the understanding of experiencing a norm as relevant to oneself that is involved in the norm-relevancy concept of *woman*.

4.2 Two Requirements for the Internal Concept of *Woman*

I am going to examine whether the three internal concepts of *woman* I have introduced can help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression. But before that, let me first articulate two requirements for an internal concept that can help to fully



understand first-personal gender oppression. The first requirement is that such an internal concept can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes. The second requirement is that such an internal concept can be used to explain one's self-beliefs.⁵⁰⁵¹ In this section, I argue that if an internal concept can help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression, it must satisfy the two requirements.

I have identified four forms of first-personal gender oppression, i.e., deformed desires, hermeneutic injustice, stereotype threat and false consciousness. To justify the two requirements, let me discuss each form of first-personal gender oppression. First consider deformed desires. This form of first-personal gender oppression is realized by individuals' pro-attitudes and resulting behaviors that contribute to their subordination. Examples of deformed desires include cases "when women lose themselves in caring for others (Hampton 1993), or when they desire to conform to the fashion-beauty complex that leaves them with an inferior image of their bodies, unnecessarily demands their time and money, pits them against other women, and keeps them out of jobs they rightly deserve (Bartky 1990; Wolf 1992)." (Superson 2005, p.110) So the essential elements of deformed desires are some pernicious pro-attitudes of the individuals of the targeted

⁵⁰ By pro-attitudes, I mean attitudes such as desires, preferences and wanting. By self-beliefs, I mean beliefs about oneself, e.g., my belief that I am a man.

⁵¹ To require that a concept can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes and self-beliefs, I simply require that the concept can be used to *causally* explain one's pro-attitudes and self-beliefs. A further possible requirement is that a concept can be used to explain the rationality of one's pro-attitudes and self-beliefs. I do not accept this requirement. For many pro-attitudes and self-beliefs that we want to use an internal concept to explain may not be rational. For example, there is a debate concerning whether deformed desires are rational. For the discussion on the debate, see Superson (2005).

group. If no individuals have those pernicious pro-attitudes, this form of first-personal gender oppression does not target any group of individuals.



The other three forms of first-personal gender oppression are different. The essential elements of those forms of first-personal gender oppression are instead some pernicious self-beliefs of the individuals of the targeted group. Hermeneutic injustice is realized by patterns of individuals' self-beliefs that cannot represent some significant aspects of those individuals' experiences. (Fricker 2007) False consciousness is realized by patterns of individuals' self-beliefs that, for example, represent themselves as inferior or less worthy. (Cudd 2006) So it can be easily seen that some pernicious self-beliefs of the individuals of the targeted group are essential to the two forms of first-personal gender oppression.

Stereotype threat is realized by patterns of individuals' fears and anxieties of conforming negative stereotypes about themselves. (Steele 1997) But some pernicious self-beliefs of the individuals of the targeted group are as well essential to this form of first-personal gender oppression. For an individual to have fears and anxieties of conforming some negative stereotype, she must first believe that she might be as the negative stereotype describes or that she is who the negative stereotype is about. It is such a self-belief that gives rise to the fears and anxieties. In this way, the self-belief is also pernicious. Hence, some pernicious self-beliefs of the individuals of the targeted group are essential to stereotype threat.



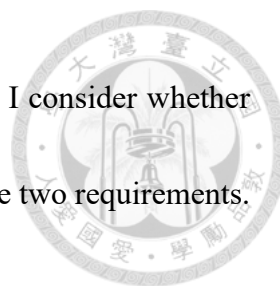
As I have discussed in Chapter 2, if a concept can help to understand first-personal gender oppression, it must be the case that the concept can be used to answer the following question:

(II_f) Why is the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) the target of first-personal gender oppression?

I have argued that some pernicious pro-attitudes of the individuals of the targeted group are essential to one form of first-personal gender oppression and that some pernicious self-beliefs of the individuals of the targeted group are essential to the other forms of first-personal gender oppression. So if we want to answer the question (II_f), we must be able to answer the question of why the individuals of the targeted group have those pernicious pro-attitudes and self-beliefs. It follows that an internal concept of *woman* that can be used to answer the question (II_f) must be able to explain individuals' pro-attitudes and self-beliefs. Therefore, if an internal concept can help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression, it must satisfy the two requirements: the requirement that it can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes and the requirement that it can be used to explain one's self-beliefs.

4.3 Assessing the Three Internal Concepts of *Woman*

I have pointed out two requirements for the internal concept of *woman* that can help




to fully understand first-personal gender oppression. In this section, I consider whether the three internal concepts of *woman* that I have introduced satisfy the two requirements.

I will show that none of them can satisfy both requirements.

First, consider the sincerity concept of *woman*. Clearly, the sincerity concept of *woman* can explain neither one's pro-attitudes nor one's self-beliefs. According to the sincerity concept, it is simply a disposition to make a certain claim in certain circumstances that makes someone a woman. Plausibly, such a disposition cannot lead to one's pro-attitudes or self-beliefs. Instead, it is one's pro-attitudes or self-beliefs that lead to such a disposition. Hence, the sincerity concept can satisfy neither of the two requirements. Some philosophers have proposed a dispositional account of belief.⁵² Because of that, one might reply that such a disposition constitute an individual's self-belief that she is a woman, and such a belief can explain one's pro-attitudes and other self-beliefs. However, according to a dispositional account of belief, it is *a variety of* dispositions that constitute a belief. A disposition to make the claim "I am a woman" is not enough to constitute an individual's self-belief that she is a woman. Therefore, even if we presuppose a dispositional account of belief, the sincerity concept still cannot satisfy any of the two requirements.

Then consider the dispositional concept of *woman*. The dispositional concept

⁵² For example, see Schwitzgebel (2002).

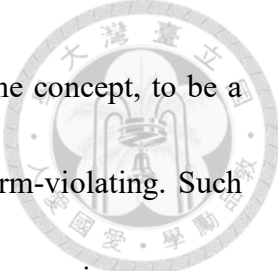


identifies being a woman as having a certain cluster of behavioral dispositions. At first glance, it might seem that the dispositional concept cannot be used to explain one's pro-attitudes. For intuitively, it is one's pro-attitudes that explain one's behavioral dispositions rather than the other way around. However, one might take some of those behavioral dispositions as constituting desires.⁵³ If so, to have some of those behavioral dispositions that make someone a woman is to have certain desires. Desires can explain other pro-attitudes. So given this idea, the dispositional concept can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes.

However, it is unclear how the dispositional concept can be used to explain one's self-beliefs. According to the dispositional concept, the dispositions that make someone a woman are *behavioral* dispositions. But the relationship between *behavioral* dispositions and self-beliefs are unclear. It is hard to see how behavioral dispositions would result in certain self-beliefs. For example, consider an individual's pernicious self-belief that she is inferior. It is unclear how any behavioral dispositional of the individual can explain such a self-belief. Because of that, the dispositional concept cannot be used to explain one's self-belief. Therefore, the dispositional concept, at best, can only satisfy one of the two requirements.

Finally, consider the norm-relevancy concept of *woman*. Like the dispositional

⁵³ For example, see Ashwell (2014).



concept, the account can explain one's pro-attitudes. According to the concept, to be a woman is to experience certain behaviors as norm-compliant or norm-violating. Such experiences may easily lead to certain desires. For example, if one experiences some behavior as norm-compliant, one may come to form the desire to behave in that way. In this way, the norm-relevancy concept can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes.

However, also like the dispositional concept, the norm-relevancy concept cannot explain one's self-beliefs. It is unclear how norm-relevancy experiences are related to self-beliefs. The experience of some behavior as norm-complaint or norm-violating is simply an experience of what one ought or ought not to do. Such an experience does not have content about who the subject is or about how the subject is. It is therefore hard to see how such an experience can lead to certain self-beliefs. Again, consider an individual's pernicious self-belief that she is inferior. It is unclear how the individual's experience of what she ought or ought not to do can explain such a self-belief. Hence, the norm-relevancy concept cannot be used to explain one's self-beliefs. In sum, the norm-relevancy concept as well satisfies only one of the two requirements.

In sum, we can see that all of the three internal concepts of *woman* cannot satisfy both of the two requirements. Therefore, all of the three internal concepts cannot help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression. We need to look for an alternative internal concept.



4.4 An Alternative Internal Concept of *Woman*

Now we still lack an internal concept of *woman* that can satisfy both of the requirements. In order to get such an internal concept, my strategy is to revise one of the three existing internal concepts, that is, the norm-relevancy concept of *woman*. The norm-relevancy concept can satisfy one of two requirements, that is, the requirement that the concept can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes. Even if the dispositional concept as well can satisfy this requirement, the norm-relevancy concept can satisfy the requirement without further assumptions, e.g., the assumption that some behavioral dispositions constitute desires. That is why I choose the norm-relevancy concept to revise.

I proposed to revise the norm-relevancy concept as follows:

S is a woman if and only if S experiences the norms of femininity and *some shared conceptions of woman* in her social context as relevant to herself.

According to this revised concept, to be a woman is not only to experience certain norms as relevant to oneself but also to experience some shared *conception of woman* as relevant to oneself. The crucial element of the norm-relevancy concept is preserved in this revised concept. But the revised concept also has an extra element, i.e., the experiences of the certain shared conceptions as relevant to oneself. Call the revised concept the *conception-relevancy concept (of woman)*. Later I will show that the conception-relevancy concept



satisfies both requirements. But let me first elaborate the content of the concept.

First consider the idea of the *shared conception of woman* in a social context. A shared conception of *woman* is a collection of shared beliefs associated with a shared concept of *woman*. Plausibly, people in a social context usually share some concept of *woman*.⁵⁴ In many social contexts, people can communicate in terms of the term ‘woman’ or the correspond terms in other languages, e.g., ‘femme’. If people in those social contexts do not share some concept of *woman*, it is unclear how people in those contexts can reliably communicate in terms of those terms.⁵⁵ Of course, the concept of *woman* that is shared in a social context may be different from the concept of *woman* that is shared in another social context.⁵⁶


When some concept of *woman* is shared by people in a social context, usually there is as well a collection of shared beliefs associated with the concept.⁵⁷ Such beliefs include beliefs about what women typically are and how women typically behave, which may be called stereotypes of women. Beliefs about the application conditions of the concept are as well included. In most social contexts, the boundary of the collection of such shared beliefs is not precise. There must be some beliefs associated with the shared concept of

⁵⁴ I think it is also possible that people in a social context share more than one concept of *woman*.

⁵⁵ Mikkola has claimed that people have roughly the same intuitions about who is a woman. If Mikkola’s claim is correct, the claim can as well support the idea that people in a social context share some concept of *woman*. See Mikkola (2009).

⁵⁶ As Dembroff and Bettcher recently emphasize, we should distinguish the concept of *woman* that is shared in the dominant contexts from the concept of *woman* that is shared in trans-friendly contexts. See Dembroff (2018) and Bettcher (2013).

⁵⁷ For discussions on the idea, see Appiah (2005, chapter 3) and Mallon (2016, chapter 2).

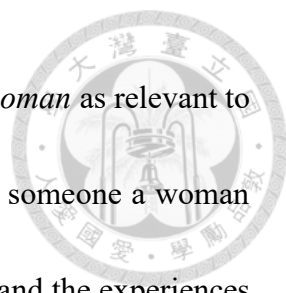


woman such that it is indeterminate whether the belief is really shared by people in the social context in question. Furthermore, if a belief is shared by people in a social context, it is still possible that some person in the context does not believe the corresponding proposition. By a shared conception of *woman*, I mean such a collection of shared beliefs associated with a shared concept of *woman*.

To experience a shared conception of *woman* as relevant to oneself is to have the feeling that the shared conception of *woman* is directly about oneself, that is, the feeling that the shared conception of *woman* says something about oneself. When someone has such a feeling, she will tend to use the conception of *woman* to view herself. Then she may come to believe that the conception of *woman* is true of her.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, that is not the only possibility. She may instead come to believe that the conception of *woman* is *not* true of her and then dismiss that conception. Just as one can experience a norm as relevant to oneself but at the same time disapprove the norm, one can experience a conception as relevant to oneself but at the same time disapprove the conception. Also, just as one may *not* be consciously aware of one's experience of the norms of femininity as relevant to oneself, one may *not* be consciously aware of one's experience of some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to oneself.

According to the conception-relevancy concept of *woman*, to be a woman is to


⁵⁸ When an individual starts to use some conception of *woman* to view herself, she may also start to act in a new way. The idea is that the conception can enable her to have new intentions, which lead to new intentional actions. For the idea, see Hacking (1995).



experience the norms of femininity and some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to oneself. So according to the concept, the internal features that make someone a woman are the experiences of the norms of femininity as relevant to oneself and the experiences of some shared conceptions of *woman* as relevant to oneself. The former kind of experiences can explain one's pro-attitudes, so the conception-relevancy concept can be used to explain one's pro-attitudes.

The latter kind of experiences can explain one's self-beliefs. For example, consider a shared conception of *woman* according to which women are not good at mathematic. Suppose an individual experiences the shared conception of *woman* as relevant to herself. The individual may therefore come to believe that the shared conception of *woman* is true of her. Then she will believe that she is not good at mathematic. In this case, we can see how the experiences of some shared conceptions of *woman* as relevant to oneself lead to some pernicious self-beliefs. So the conception-relevancy concept can also be used to explain one's self-beliefs. In sum, the conception-relevancy concept of *woman* satisfies both requirements.

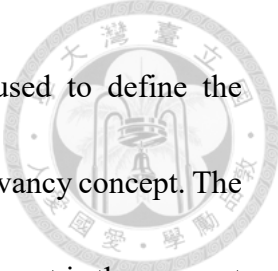
Furthermore, we can indeed use the conception-relevancy concept to give a satisfying answer to the question (II_f). The answer is that the targeted group of individuals (as opposed to another group) is the target of first-personal gender oppression because those individuals experience the norms of femininity and some shared conceptions of



woman in their social contexts as relevant to themselves. The answer is supported by the following reasoning. First-personal gender oppression emerges when there are some oppressive norms of femininity or oppressive shared conception of *woman*. There is a group of individuals who experience those oppressive norms of femininity and shared conception of *woman* as relevant of themselves. Those individuals therefore have patterns of attitudes and/or behaviors that disadvantage themselves, and in this sense, the group of individuals is the target of first-personal gender oppression. Since the conception-relevancy concept can indeed give us a satisfying answer to the question (II_f). The conception-relevancy concept can help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression.

To close this section, I consider a possible problem that the conception-relevancy concept of *woman* might encounter. The problem is that the conception-relevancy concept seems to be circular. The conception-relevancy concept is defined in terms of a shared conception of *woman* in a social context. However, a shared conception of *woman* in a social context is defined in terms of a shared *concept* of *woman* in this social context. So the conception-relevancy concept of *woman* is defined in terms of a concept of *woman*. Then it seems that the conception-relevancy concept is circular.

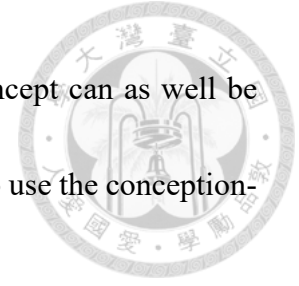
In reply, I shall note that the conception-relevancy concept is defined in terms of some other concept of *woman*. It is true that the conception-relevancy concept is define



by some concept of *woman*. But the concept of *woman* that is used to define the conception-relevancy concept is not identical with the conception-relevancy concept. The concept of *woman* that is used to define the conception-relevancy concept is the concept of *woman* that is shared by people in a social context. However, I do not take the conception-relevancy concept to be such a concept. In fact, it is unclear whether the conception-relevancy concept is shared by people in any social context. Since the conception-relevancy concept is not defined by itself, the conception-relevancy concept does not involve circularity.

4.5 Trans-Inclusion

For McKittrick (2015) and Jenkins (2016), an internal concept of *woman* is important in another way: An internal concept is what can be used to say that trans women are women. Some trans women do not *pass as* women. The way they are perceived by others is more similar to the way most cis men are perceived by others than the way most cis women are perceived by others. Since an external concept of *woman* determines whether one is a woman in terms of how one is perceived by others, those trans women usually cannot satisfy an external concept of *woman*. Hence, an external concept of *woman* cannot enable us to say that trans women are women. To say that, we need a concept that determines whether one is a woman in terms of one's internal features. That is a crucial

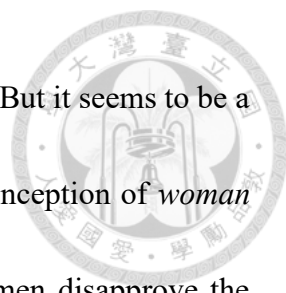


reason to have an internal concept. If the conception-relevancy concept can as well be used to say that trans women are women, we have a further reason to use the conception-relevancy concept. In this section, I discuss whether it can.

If the norm-relevancy concept cannot be used to say that trans women are women, neither can the conception-relevancy concept. So let me first suppose that the norm-relevancy concept can be used to say that trans women are women and consider an argument to the effect that the conception-relevancy concept cannot classify all trans women as women.

The argument is as follows. Since the conception-relevancy concept requires more for one to be a woman than the norm-relevancy concept, the conception-relevancy concept cannot say that trans women are women. The conception-relevancy concept requires that to be a woman, one must have not only the experiences of the norms of femininity as relevant to oneself but also the experiences of some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to oneself. So the conception-relevancy concept would be less inclusive than the norm-relevancy concept. In this way, the conception-relevancy concept would fail to classify some trans woman as a woman.

In reply, let me first argue that the conception-relevancy concept may be satisfied by all trans women. The idea is simple. It *seems* that every trans woman experiences the norms of femininity and some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to herself. Of



course, this is an empirical claim that requires further investigations. But it seems to be a plausible hypothesis. Moreover, one can experience some shared conception of *woman* without approving the conception. So the fact that many trans women disapprove the shared conception of *woman* in the dominant culture does not imply that some trans women do not experience some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to themselves. Hence, the conception-relevancy concept may not fail to classify every trans woman as a woman.

However, I also think that the conception-relevancy concept may be less inclusive than the norm-relevancy concept. The reason is that the extension of the norm-relevancy concept may include some individual who is neither a cis woman nor a trans woman. Some trans man may satisfy by the norm-relevancy concept of *woman*. A parallel point has been made by Bettcher.


Bettcher (2017) points out that a trans woman may satisfy the norm-relevancy concept of *man*. For if a trans woman is raised as a man, she may come to experience the norms of masculinity as relevant to herself. The case may be as follows. A trans woman has discomfort with her assigned male gender. However, since she is socialized as a man, she still has a sense of norm-compliance and norm-violence that corresponds to the norms of masculinity. In this way, she still experiences the norm of masculinity as relevant to herself. If Bettcher's point is correct, the norm-relevancy concept of *woman* may also be

satisfied by some trans man.

It is much less clear that the conception-relevancy concept of *woman* may be satisfied by some trans man. A trans man that is socialized as a woman may come to experience the norms of femininity as relevant to herself. But it is much less clear that a trans man that is socialized as a woman may come to experience some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to himself. If a trans man has discomfort with his assigned female gender, it is unclear how he can still experience some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to himself. Generally speaking, discomfort with an assigned gender may be compatible with the experience of the norms of that gender as relevant to oneself, but discomfort with an assigned gender seems to be incompatible with the experience of some shared conception of that gender as relevant to oneself.

Therefore, the conception-relevancy concept may be less inclusive than the norm-relevancy concept. Even so, the conception-relevancy concept may still classify every trans woman as a woman. It should be noted that my claim is rather moderate. My claim is simply that even if the conception-relevancy concept is less inclusive than the norm-relevancy concept, the conception-relevancy concept may still classify every trans woman as a woman. I do not try to establish that the conception-relevancy concept does classify every trans woman as a woman, which, I think, requires some empirical evidences.

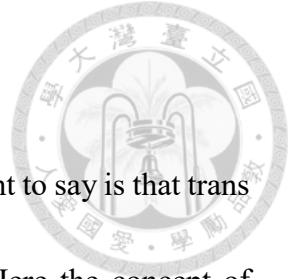




Of course, it is possible that the norm-relevancy concept cannot be used to say that all trans women are women, so neither can the conception-relevancy concept. But now we do not have some substantive reason to believe that the norm-relevancy concept fails to classify some trans woman as a woman. One might claim that there might be an individual who has a male body, sincerely claims “I am a woman” but does not satisfy the norm-relevancy concept.⁵⁹ Such an individual is a trans woman who the norm-relevancy concept fails to classify as a woman. However, I think it is very controversial whether such an individual counts as a trans woman. Therefore, I think we can still reasonably believe that the norm-relevancy concept can be used to say that trans women are women. Because of that, we can also reasonably believe that it is very probable that the conception-relevancy concept can be used to say that trans women are women.

If the conception-relevancy concept can be used to say that trans women are women, there is another way in which the conception-relevancy concept can be useful. We can easily design a concept of *woman* that can be used to say that trans women are women. For example, we can first take the concept of *trans woman* and the concept of *cis woman* as primitive concepts, that is, concepts that cannot be further analyzed. Then we can design a concept of *woman* according to which, to be a woman is to be a trans woman or a cis woman. The concept of *woman* can therefore be used to say that trans women are

⁵⁹ Jenkins discusses such a case too. See Jenkins (2018, p.738-739).



women. Nonetheless, that is clearly not what we want.

When we want to say that trans women are women, what we want to say is that trans women share some significant property with most cis women.⁶⁰ Here the concept of *woman* is used to specify such a significant property. So when we want a concept of *woman* that can be used to say that trans women are women, what we want is not simply a concept that classifies every trans woman as a woman. We also want a concept that refers to a significant property.

The conception-relevancy concept does refer to a significant property. It is significant to have the experiences of the norms of femininity and some shared conception of *woman* as relevant to oneself. As I have argued above, such experiences influence one's pro-attitudes and self-beliefs. So such experiences shape what one values and how one views oneself. Furthermore, what one values and how one views oneself influence one's life plan. Hence, having such experiences is really a significant property. Then the conception-relevancy concept can also specify the significant property that trans women share with most cis women.

In sum, it is very probable that the conception-relevancy can be used to say that trans women are women. Moreover, if the conception-relevancy concept can be used to say

⁶⁰ One may want to say the significant property is the property of having a female gender identity. If so, the significant property is not possessed by every cis woman. The reason is that some cognitively cis women do not have a gender identity. Then when we say that trans women are women, we can at most say that trans women share some significant property with *most* cis women. For the significant property, i.e., the property of having a female gender identity, is not possessed by some cis women. For a relevant discussion, see Barnes (2022).

that trans women are women, the concept can further specify the significant property that trans women share with most cis women. So we have a further reason to use the conception-relevancy concept.



4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that the internal concept of *woman* we should use is the conception-relevancy concept of *woman*, which is as follows:

S is a woman if and only if S experiences the norms of femininity and some shared conceptions of woman in her social context as relevant to herself.

We should use the conception-relevancy concept because it can help to fully understand first-personal gender oppression. For some philosophers, an internal concept of *woman* is required as a concept that can be used to say that trans women are women. In this chapter, I also argue that it is very probable that the conception-relevancy concept can be used to say that trans women are women. Hence, it is further supported that we should use the conception-relevancy concept.

Chapter 5

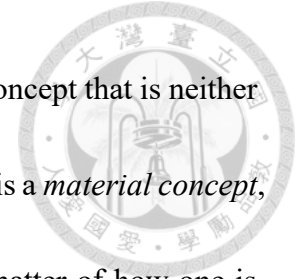
Gender on One's Body



In this chapter, I focus on bodily concepts of *woman*, i.e., the type of concepts that takes being a woman as a matter of how one is affected by one's body. The aim of this chapter is to find out the bodily concept of *woman* we should use. A bodily concept of *woman* is required to capture the factor that can be captured neither by an external concept of *woman* nor by an internal concept of *woman*. It is such a bodily concept that can help to understand *impersonal gender oppression*, i.e., those forms of gender oppression that are realized by patterns of the transfer of resources that disadvantage women. However, there is still no such a bodily concept. So my strategy in this chapter is different from my strategies in the previous chapters. I will first develop a bodily concept of *woman* and then argue that we should use this concept.

5.1 A Lesson from Class and Disability

Before I offer my bodily concept of *woman*, let me first discuss some general point about a concept of a social kind. Let me stipulate that an *external concept of a social kind* K is a concept that takes being a member of K as a matter of how one is perceived by others, and an *internal concept of a social kind* K is a concept that takes being a member of K as a matter of how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. Then the general



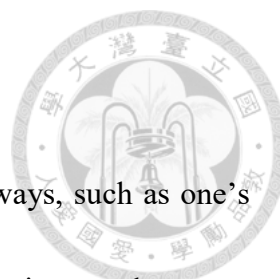
point is as follows. With respect to some social kind, we required a concept that is neither an external concept nor an internal concept. Instead, what we require is a *material concept*, that is, a concept that takes being a member of a social kind as a matter of how one is affected by one's *material property*. By a material property, I mean a property about one's *actual, rather than observed or imagined*, non-superficial bodily features or economic conditions.⁶¹ The causal significance of a material property is independent of whether the property is perceived. A material concept emphasizes the causal significance of a material property, which is why a material concept is distinct from an external concept or an internal concept.

To illustrate the general point, let me introduce some discussions on class and disability. Burman (2019) has offered a discussion on two different aspects of class.⁶² One aspect of class depends on how one is perceived by others, but the other does not. The former can be illustrated by Ásta's example of "a group of people with standing referring to the use of certain words and not others as upper class and hence conferring [the property of being upper class] on some people." (Burman, 2019, p.239) In this example, according to Ásta, whether one belongs to upper class depends on whether one is *perceived* as using certain words.⁶³ The example therefore reveals an aspect of class

⁶¹ By a superficial bodily feature, I mean a bodily feature that has to be perceived to be substantively causally significant, e.g., skin color and hair color. Then a non-superficial bodily feature is a body feature that is not superficial.

⁶² The discussion is part of Burman's criticisms of Ásta's conferralism. For Ásta's conferralism, see Ásta (2018).

⁶³ See Ásta (2018, p.50).



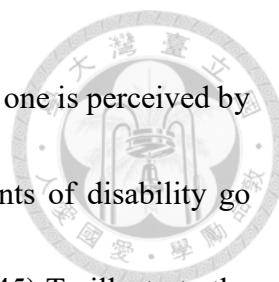
that depends on how one is perceived by others.

However, “there are other aspects of class that work in other ways, such as one’s relation to the means of production.” (Burman, 2019, p.239) Burman points out the aspect of class by considering “economic class,” which depends on “one’s place in the capitalist system.” (2019, p.240) Economic class is as well a significant social property because it “significantly impacts one’s life chances and [is] a key component of social injustice and oppression.” (2019, p.240)

Since economic class is a significant social property, a concept of economic class should be required. But given Burman’s discussion, a concept of economic class should be neither an external concept nor an internal concept. One’s place in the capitalist system is determined by one’s relation to the means of production. But one’s relation to the means of production is neither about how one is perceived by others nor about how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave.

Instead, a concept of economic class should be a material concept. For one’s relation to the means of production is about one’s actual economic conditions. A concept of economic class should takes being a member of an economic class as a matter of how one is affected by one’s relation to the means of production. Hence, the case of economic class demonstrates the general point about a concept of a social kind.

Then consider a discussion on disability. Barnes and Andler (2019) argues against

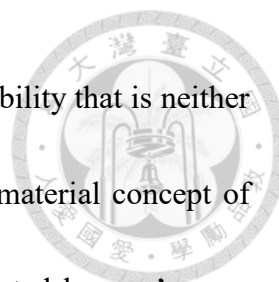


an account according to which being disabled is only a matter of how one is perceived by others.⁶⁴ Their reason is that “the social constraints and enablements of disability go beyond how others treat you or how you are perceived.” (2019, p.945) To illustrate the point, consider the following example offered by them.

Julia has rheumatoid arthritis which affects her knees, but—like many women with medically complex disabilities—she conceals this in professional contexts in order to avoid appearing weak or vulnerable. Julia also has trouble with stairs. But she goes to great lengths to disguise this. This places significant constraints on her socially—she is always planning her routes in advance, always careful to leave five minutes early from meetings so she doesn’t have to walk in groups, always getting that text that says she needs to go and run an errand right when everyone else is walking off together to get a coffee at the break. (2019, p.945-946)

In this example, being disabled brings many constraints on Julia. Like class, being disabled significantly impacts what one can and cannot do. However, those constraints are not due to how she is perceived by others. Of course, Julia is even perceived as an abled individual. Instead, those constraints are due to Julia’s disabled body.

⁶⁴ The account that is targeted by Barnes and Andler is also Ásta’s conferralism. Barnes herself also argues elsewhere against another accounts of disability that takes disability as a matter of how one is perceived by others. See Barnes (2016, chap 1).



The above discussion suggests that we require a concept of disability that is neither an external concept nor an internal concept. Instead, we require a material concept of disability that takes being disabled as a matter of how one is affected by one's non-superficial bodily features. So the case of disability demonstrates the general point too.

We have seen the general point that with respect to some social kind, we require a material concept, which is distinct from an external concept or an internal concept. I discuss the general point because it can illuminate what I am doing when I argue that we require a bodily concept of *woman*. When I argue that we require a bodily concept of *woman*, I am in fact arguing that we require a material concept of *woman*, which is distinct from an external concept or an internal concept of *woman*.⁶⁵ I am arguing that we also require a concept of *woman* that captures the factor of how one is affected by one's material property.

5.2 A Bodily Concept of *Woman*

I propose the following bodily concept of *woman*.

S is a woman if and only if

⁶⁵ There seems to be another way to develop a material concept of *woman*. It is to define a concept of *woman* in terms of some kind of economic conditions. For example, if one is sympathetic to Marxist feminist thoughts, one may favor a concept of *woman* defined in terms of one's relation to the means of reproduction. I do not pursue this route simply because I do not know how to develop such an *economic* material concept of *woman*. But I leave it open that an economic material concept of *woman* is better than a bodily material concept of *woman*.



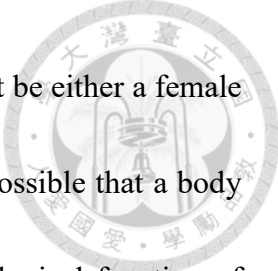
(1) S has a female body, and

(2) S's social life opportunities are affected by S's female body in a way that is not mediated by perception.

I call this particular concept of *woman* the *opportunity concept (of woman)*. In this section, I elaborate the content of the opportunity concept. Let me begin with the notion of a female body. According to my notion, having a female body is a biological property. In particular, I take female bodies as a type of bodies that has the *etiological function* of getting pregnant, giving birth and nursing. Relatedly, I take male bodies as a type of bodies that has the etiological function of producing sperms. The etiological function of a type of traits is the effects that (1) can be produced by most ancestral instances of the type and (2) cause the type of traits to be selected by natural selection.⁶⁶ So, for example, the etiological function of hearts is to pump blood. For most ancestral hearts can pump blood and that is why such traits were selected by natural selection. It should be noted that even if a type of traits has the etiological function of V-ing, an instance of the type might not actually be able to V. Some heart cannot actually pump blood. So even if an individual's body cannot actually get pregnant, the individual may still have a female body.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ For accounts of etiological functions, see Neander (1991) and Millikan (1984).

⁶⁷ The notion of a female body does face hard questions. For example, a female body may not actually be able to get pregnant, but it is difficult to say how much different such a female body can be from a female body that is actually able to get pregnant. One might also want to ask whether some genotype or phenotype is necessary for a female body. However, I think that even if those questions are difficult to



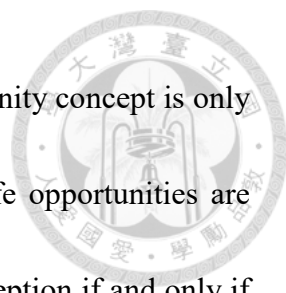
Let me be clear that I do *not* commit to the idea that a body must be either a female body or a male body. Nothing in my notions implies the idea. It is possible that a body has neither the etiological function of getting pregnant nor the etiological function of producing sperms. Furthermore, I do *not* commit to the idea that there is a clear boundary of the type of female bodies. It is possible that whether a body is a female body is an indeterminate matter. The above two ideas have been challenged by feminists by pointing out the existence of intersexed individuals.⁶⁸ Since my notions do not imply the above two ideas, my notions can as well accommodate the existence of intersexed individuals.

Now consider the second clause above. According to the opportunity concept, the relevant way in which one is affected by one's body is how one's *social life opportunities* are affected by one's body. By social life opportunities, I mean those life opportunities about some social factor. For example, the opportunity to get a job is a social life opportunity. By contrast, the opportunity to jump two meters high is not a social life opportunity. I only consider *social life opportunities* because the opportunity concept is used to capture the *social consequences* of having a female body. Having a female body must as well have some biological consequences. But that is not what the opportunity concept is used to capture.

Finally, the opportunity concept is *not* about any way in which one's social life


answer, it does not follow that the notion of a female body should be abandoned or is problematic. For some criticisms of the notion, see Ayala & Vasilyeva (2015, p.727-728).

⁶⁸ See, for example, Fausto-Sterling (2000).



opportunities are affected by one's female body. Instead, the opportunity concept is only about the way that is not mediated by perception. One's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body in a way that is not mediated by perception if and only if the following counterfactual is true: If one's female body were not be perceived by anyone, one's social life opportunities would still be affected by one's female body. The opportunity concept only focuses on such a way in which one's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body. The reason is that the opportunity concept is used to capture something that is not captured by an external concept or an internal concept of *woman*.

An external concept or an internal concept of *woman* can be used to capture a perception-mediated way in which one's social opportunities are affected by one's female body. To illustrate the point, consider a community in which everyone can reliably make judgements about whether one has a female body. Also, in this community, the judgement about whether one has a female body, just like in our communities, largely affects how one is treated. Because such a judgement affects how one is treated, the judgement affects one's social life opportunities as well. Moreover, since a judgement that one has a female body is always true and caused by one's having a female body, we can say that in this community, one's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body. However, in this community, it is also true that if one who has a female body were not perceived as

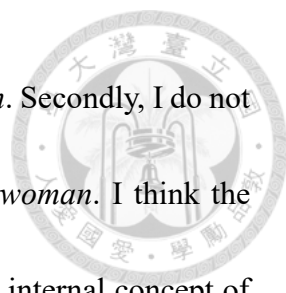


having a female body, one's social life opportunities would not be affected by one's female body. If so, in this community, one's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body only in a perception-mediated way. An external concept of *woman* is enough to capture the way in which one's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body. For in this community, it is being perceived as having a female body instead of actually having a female body that primarily affects one's social life opportunities. A similar case can be made to demonstrate that an internal concept of *woman* as well can be used to capture some perception-mediated way in which one's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body, that is, the way that is mediated by self-perception.

Therefore, in order to make sure that the opportunity concept is used to capture something that is not captured by an external concept or an internal concept of *woman*, the opportunity concept must focus on the perception-unmediated way in which one's social life opportunities are affected by one's female body.

5.3 Clarifications for the Opportunity Concept of *Woman*

I am to argue that we should use the opportunity concept of *woman*. Before I present my arguments, let me quickly make five clarifications about what I want to argue. First, I do not argue that the opportunity concept of *woman* is the only concept of *woman* that we should use. The point shall be clear because I have argued in previous chapters that

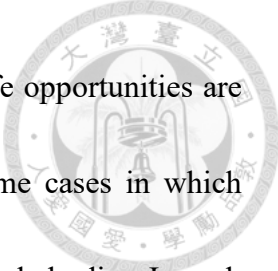


we should use certain external concept and internal concept of *woman*. Secondly, I do not argue that the opportunity concept is the most primary concept of *woman*. I think the opportunity concept is equally important as the external concept and internal concept of *woman* that we should use.

Given the first two clarifications, the third clarification is that I do not commit to some form of biological essentialism, which is roughly the view that all women have a female body. The external concept or internal concept of *woman* that we should use is satisfied by some individual who does not have a female body. Such an individual as well is a woman, which can demonstrate that some woman does not have a female body.

Neither do I commit to some form of biological determinism, which is roughly the view that one's social lives are largely determined by one's biology. It is possible that one's female body would not affect one's social life opportunities. In modern societies, one's female body can easily affect one's social life opportunities. But the primary reason is that modern societies have certain kinds of social structure. It may be the case that if certain institutions and technologies are in place, one's female body will not make any difference to one's social life opportunities.

Finally, according to my concept, to be a woman is to be an individual whose social life opportunities are affected by her female bodies. So the opportunity concept implies that women's having certain social life opportunities are partly *caused* by their female

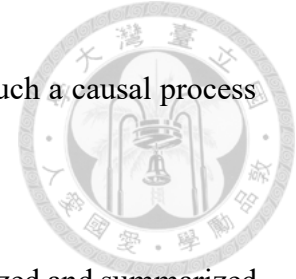


bodies. But it does *not* follow that women's having certain social life opportunities are *politically justified* by their female bodies. Later I will discuss some cases in which women's social life opportunities are *negatively* affected by their female bodies. In such cases, women have fewer social life opportunities than men, and the phenomena are partly caused by women's female bodies. However, I do *not* commit to the claim that the phenomena in question are politically justified by women's female bodies. The reason is that the phenomena are caused by women's female bodies *together with some oppressive social factors*. Since the phenomena are also partly caused by some oppressive social factors, the phenomena are not politically justified by anything.

5.4 The Opportunity Concept of *Woman* and Impersonal Gender Oppression

The reason why we should use the opportunity concept is that the concept is required to understand *impersonal gender oppression*, i.e., those forms of gender oppression that are realized by patterns of the transfer of resources that disadvantage women. To understand impersonal gender oppression, an external concept and an internal concept of *woman* are not enough. We also need the opportunity concept. To show that, in the section, I will sketch a causal process in which a woman's social life opportunities are affected by her female body in a perception-unmediated way, and because of that, the woman can

only occupy a disadvantaged position in the transfer of resources. Such a causal process demonstrates the need of the opportunity concept.




The causal process that I am going to sketch have been emphasized and summarized by Firestone as follows.

[W]omen throughout history before the advent of birth control were at the continual mercy of their biology—menstruation, menopause, and “female ills,” constant painful childbirth, wetnursing and care of infants, all of which made them dependent on males (whether brother, father, husband, lover, or clan, government, community at large) for physical survival. (1970, p.17)


What I will do is to explicate the causal process in a novel way. I will focus on how a woman’s female body affects her social life opportunities and then further puts her into a disadvantage position in the transfer of resources.

Consider a heterosexual woman who has a female body. Her female body will affect her social life opportunities concerning having children. Suppose the woman and a man form a family. They decide to have children. Now it is the woman rather than the man that is able to get pregnant. So if they decide to have children, it is the woman who have to go through the process of pregnancy. However, during pregnancy, the woman must undergo many hormonal and physiological changes. Some of them bring burdens to, or even disadvantage, a pregnant woman. The most obvious change is the weight gain of



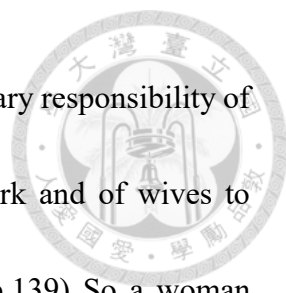
pregnant women, which may affect a woman's mobility. But there are also changes that are not so obvious. For example, it has been documented that some of women's cognitive abilities such as the memory ability and the speed of information processing are decreased during pregnancy. (Buckwattler et al., 2001; de Groot et al., 2006) Also, women consume more energy during pregnancy, (Butte & King, 2005) which make it easier to get fatigue. Sleeping quality may be negatively affected too. (Pien & Schwab, 2004; Sedov et al., 2018) Some research also shows that the hormonal changes of pregnant women may contribute to psychological illness. (Brummelte & Galea 2010) Because of those changes, it may become harder for a pregnant woman to engage into their work, making it more difficult for a woman to accomplish professional achievements. The influences may even continue after the woman has finished the process of pregnancy. Hence, if the woman is to have children, she is less likely to accomplish professional achievements. However, consider the man. To have children, he need not go through the process of pregnancy. So his social life opportunities will not be affected as heavily as the woman's social life opportunities will be.

The above case demonstrates that a woman's opportunities of accomplishing professional achievements while having children can be affected by a woman's female body. Because of her female body, a woman may have fewer opportunities of accomplishing professional achievements while having children than her male partner.



Furthermore, the unequal distribution of social life opportunities in a family will easily result in other unequal distribution of social life opportunities in the family. For example, consider the opportunities of not being subordinate in a family while having children. If a woman having children is less likely to accomplish professional achievements, that will have some economic consequences. Such a woman will be more likely to have less income than other male members in her family, who, in many cases, is her husband. As Cudd observes that in our societies, “wealth determines power,” (2006. p.149) the distribution of income in a family affects the distribution of power in a family. If one earns less income in a family, one usually has less power in the family. Hence, such a woman will be more likely to have less power than other male members in her families. Having less power makes one subordinate in a family. Therefore, a woman having children is more likely to be subordinate in her family. Again, the problem does not happen to men. Hence, we can see that a woman’s female body can affect a variety of significant social life opportunities.

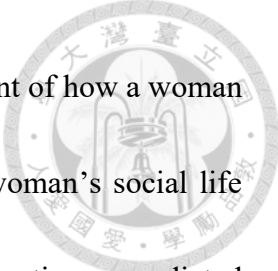
Moreover, in the above case, a woman’s social life opportunities are affected by her female body in a way that is not mediated by perception. The above descriptions involve nothing about how the woman is perceived by others or herself. Of course, in modern societies, how a woman is perceived usually play a role in the unequal distribution of social life opportunities discussed above. For example, Okin has pointed out “the



continued *perception* of most men and women that it is still the primary responsibility of husbands to ‘provide for’ their wives by participating in wage work and of wives to perform a range of unpaid ‘services’ for their husbands.” (1989, p.139) So a woman having children is usually expected to be the primary caretaker while a man having children is not. The result is that a woman is assigned more responsibilities concerning child-rearing and household than her male partner. A woman therefore has to spend more time on child-rearing and household work than her male partner. That as well makes it harder for a woman to accomplish professional achievements while having children,⁶⁹ which as well affects the woman’s status in her family.

However, even if there are no such expectations of women, a woman who is to have children still have to undergo those hormonal and physiological changes that may bring burdens to her. Those burdens will still affect the woman’s social life opportunities in absence of those expectations. Imagine a community where women are not expected to be the primary caretakers. Further suppose that in the community, people believe that women’s work performance is as good as men’s performance. Even in such a community, the hormonal and physiological changes during pregnancy would not disappear. Those changes may still result in the unequal distribution of social life opportunities in a family. Hence, the unequal distribution of social life opportunities in a family results not only

⁶⁹ Okin has documented many consequences that are harmful to women. See Okin (1989, chapter 7).



from how a woman are perceived but also from something independent of how a woman are perceived, i.e., what a woman's female body are like. Then a woman's social life opportunities must as well be affected by her female body in a perception-unmediated way.

I have demonstrated that a woman's social life opportunities may be affected by her female bodies in a perception-unmediated way. If a woman's social life opportunities are affected by her female body in a perception-unmediated way, the woman may be forced to occupy a disadvantaged position in the transfer of resources. To illustrate the point, consider a woman whose social life opportunities are affected by her female body in a perception-unmediated way. So, for example, the woman is less likely to accomplish professional achievements while having children and more likely to be subordinate in her family while having children. The woman's social life opportunities may therefore lead to an actual unequal distribution of power and wealth in her family. So in her family, the woman may come to have less power and wealth than her male partner. If so, the transfer of resources in the family would as well disadvantage the woman. Since the woman has less power and income than her male partner, it is no surprise that the woman would offer many resources to her male partner without getting proportionate resources back. In this way, the woman comes be targeted by gender exploitation.

Outside the family, the woman's social life opportunities may make her unable to be

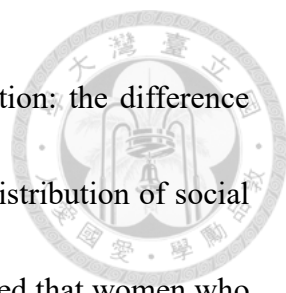


assigned a high-paying or high-status task. For example, suppose the woman really have children, and because of that, she cannot accomplish some professional achievements. In this case, the woman may therefore be assigned a low-paying or low-status task. Then the resources that the woman can use an amount of labor to acquire would be fewer than the resources that her male partner can use to acquire. In this way, the woman also comes to be targeted by oppressive gendered division of labor.

I have sketched a causal process in which a woman's female body affects her social life opportunities in a perception-unmediated way, and in so doing, makes her to be targeted by impersonal gender oppression. To understand such a causal process, an external concept and an internal concept of *woman* are not enough. Instead, the opportunity concept is also required. That is why the opportunity concept is required to understand impersonal gender oppression.

I have pointed out that the opportunity concept is required to understand impersonal gender oppression. But I have to note that I do *not* claim that the opportunity concept is the most important concept with respect to our understanding of impersonal gender oppression. How a woman is perceived by others or by herself also play a role in impersonal gender oppression.⁷⁰ So an external concept and an internal concept of *woman* are as well required and are equally important as the opportunity concept.

⁷⁰ However, some feminists have argued that the difference between female bodies and male bodies is an important cause of how women are perceived in modern societies. See Firestone (1970), O'Brien (1983), and Antony (2020).



Let me repeat a point that has been made in the previous section: the difference between female bodies and male bodies do not justify the unequal distribution of social life opportunities discussed above. Consider the question. Is it justified that women who have children should have fewer opportunities concerning their works and their status in families because they are the only people who are able to give birth? The positive answer could be supported only if it is inevitable that women having children have fewer opportunities concerning their work and their status in families. That is, the positive answer could be supported only if the situation cannot be changed. However, it is not inevitable. With the help of technologies, policies and institutions, women who have children can have equal opportunities concerning their works and their status in family as men who have children have. The answer to the above question is therefore negative. Hence, though the difference between female bodies and male bodies causes some unequal distribution of social life opportunities, the different does not justify the unequal distribution of social life opportunities.

5.5 The Utility of the Opportunity Concept of *Woman*

In this section, I discuss some other cases in which the opportunity concept is useful, which constitute further reasons for us to use the opportunity concept of *woman*.

5.5.1 *The Difference Between Gender and Race*

My first and second cases have the same spirit. In both cases, an intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body is recognized. The opportunity concept is useful in that it can provide an account of the intimate relationship.

In the first case, an intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body is recognized to explain the difference between gender and race. To see the difference between gender and race, consider Alcoff's analysis. The analysis begins with the different mechanisms underlying racism and sexism. According to Alcoff, both racism and sexism involve "a claim of causality between physical features and intellectual, moral, and emotional attributes." That is, both ideologies claim that some physical features causally determine a wide range of one's other features. However, to make such a claim being accepted by us, "[r]acism must convince us that *biologically insignificant* physical attributes such as skin color, the shape of the nose or eyes, or hair type are actually very significant and the signs of fundamental differences in human capacity." [emphasis added] (2006, p.164) In contrast, sexism targets biologically more significant attributes such as "the capacity to sustain an infant entirely on the production of one's own body, to give birth, to nurse, are much more significant attributes" and makes them "exhaustively and implausibly significant in determining women's lives." (2006, p.164) Alcoff summarizes that "the variable of reproductive role provides a material infrastructure for sexual



difference that is qualitatively different from the surface differences of racial categories.” (2006, p.165) In a word, it is suggested that gender, unlike race, involves some biological significant attributes.⁷¹

Alcoff then continues to illustrate the consequences of the above difference by the following passage.

The foolhardiness of formulating legal protections based on a presumed sameness between men and women has been well established by now, as pregnancy must be labeled disability and maternity-leave reforms are stymied by the insistence that they be absolutely equal to paternity leave. And there is no place for a provision for breast-feeding in a legal discourse predicated on individuals undifferentiated by sex. Whether women want to “overcome” such differences by technological means is a question that is altogether different in kind from the question of whether we want to overcome the historical and social conditions that make affirmative action necessary to redress racial inequality. (2006, p.165)

The passage makes clear that the biologically significant attributes associated with being a woman also result in some social consequences about women. So the passage points out that in order to achieve gender equality, the biological differences between women and

⁷¹ A similar line of thoughts can be found in Antony (2020).



men must be taken into account.


In sum, Alcoff's analysis suggest an intimate relationship between gender and some biologically significant properties, which distinguish gender from race. In particular, Alcoff's analysis suggest an intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body. The opportunity concept then provides an account of the intimate relationship. According to the opportunity concept, the intimate relationship is constitutive: To be a woman is to have a female body that affects one's social life opportunities. In this case, the opportunity concept is useful.⁷²

5.5.2 The Radical Feminist Conception of Gender Oppression

There is another case in which an intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body is recognized. The case is about the radical feminist conception of gender oppression. According to radical feminism, gender oppression consists in "the male control of women's bodies." (Jaggar 1983, p.266) In particular, it is the reproductive and sexual functions of women's bodies that are the targets of the male control.

The conception of gender oppression therefore presupposes an intimate relationship

⁷² In fact, Alcoff use the analysis to support an account of gender that is similar to the opportunity concept. Alcoff's account claims that "[w]omen and men are differentiated by virtue of their different relationship of possibility to biological reproduction, with biological reproduction referring to conceiving, giving birth, and breast-feeding, involving one's own body." (2006, p.172) According to this account, having a female body makes a difference to women's possibilities. Moreover, being a woman is partly a matter of one's possibilities' being affected by one's female body. In this way, the account resembles the opportunity concept. See Alcoff (2006, chapter 6).



between being a woman and having a female body. According to the conception, gender oppression targets women because of the sexual and reproductive functions of women's bodies. The sexual and reproductive functions of women's bodies are central to what it is to have a female body. So the conception can be understood as the idea that gender oppression target women because of women's female bodies. If so, the conception can be valid only if there is an intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body. In this way, the conception presupposes such an intimate relationship.

Again, the opportunity concept provides an account of the intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body. According to the opportunity concept, the intimate relationship is constitutive in the way that to be a woman is to have a female body that affects one's social life opportunities. Hence, the opportunity concept is useful if one accepts the radical feminist conception of gender oppression.

One may regard the radical feminist conception of gender oppression as being too simplistic. But even so, one may still accept the weaker claim that that the male control of women's bodies is *part of* gender oppression. For those who accept the weaker claim, they must still commit to an intimate relationship between being a woman and having a female body. Hence, the opportunity concept is as well useful if one accepts the weaker claim.

5.5.3 *The Idea of Gender as the Social Significance of Sex*



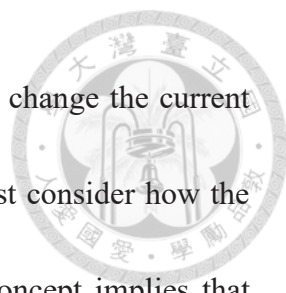
If one accepts the idea of gender as the social significance of sex,⁷³ the opportunity concept can be useful as well. For the opportunity concept can be used to capture a distinctive sense of social significance. In some sense of social significance, gender is the social significance of sex to the extent that having a gender consists in the *social meaning* of being perceived as having a sex. Here the social meaning of being perceived as having a sex refers to the way people treat and view those who are perceived as having a sex. For example, being a woman consists in the social meaning of being perceived as having a female body.

However, there is another plausible sense of social significance, according to which, gender is the social significance of sex to the extent that having a gender consists in the *social consequences* of having a sex. For example, being a woman consists in the social consequences of having a female body. It shall be clear that the opportunity concept can be used to capture this sense of social significance. For according to the opportunity concept, being a woman does consist in the social consequences of having a female body.

5.5.4 *Emancipatory Aims*

Finally, the opportunity concept can enable us to think of some certain way to change

⁷³ For discussions of the idea of gender as social significance of sex, see Ásta (2011).



women's social situations that we may easily ignore. The way is to change the current social situations in terms of technologies. To illustrate the point, first consider how the opportunity concept affects our cognition. Since the opportunity concept implies that women's social life opportunities are affected by their female bodies. The opportunity concept draws our attention to the perception-unmediated relation between women's female bodies and their social life opportunities.

By drawing our attention to the perception-unmediated relation between women's female bodies and life opportunities, the opportunity concept then calls for the ways of changing women's social situations by changing the perception-unmediated relation. It is significant to call for this kind of ways of changing women's social situations. It prevents us from focusing *exclusively* on how women are perceived. In order to change women's social situations in this way, we have to pay our attention to other places.

If we do not focus exclusively on how women are perceived, we will be more likely to think of the ways of changing women's social situations in terms of technologies. Technologies seem irrelevant to how women are perceived. Therefore, if we only consider how to change women's social situations by changing how women are perceived, we may easily ignore how technologies can help to change women's social situations.⁷⁴ One

⁷⁴ Of course, the opportunity concept can as well suggest ways of changing women's social situations in terms of policies and institutions. But those ways are less likely to be ignored when we consider how to change women's social situations by changing how women are perceived. That is why I focus on technologies.



concrete example of how technologies can help is contraceptive technology, which prevents women from being easily constrained by the possibility of getting pregnant.

Technologies may also be developed to decrease as much as possible the burdens that result from the hormonal and physiological changes during pregnancy. Therefore, the opportunity concept can help to illuminate the important way to change women's social situations. The opportunity concept is especially useful in this way.

In sum, the opportunity concept can be useful in a variety of ways. So we have further reasons to use the opportunity concept.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that we should use the opportunity concept of *woman*, which is as follow.

S is a woman if and only if

(1) S has a female body, and

(2) S's social life opportunities are affected by S's female body in a way that is not mediated by perception.

We should use the opportunity concept because it is required to understand impersonal gender oppression. Moreover, there are other ways in which the opportunity concept can

be useful. So we have further reasons use the opportunity concept.



Chapter 6

Conclusion: The Triple-Concept Model



In previous chapters, I have argued that we should use the following three concepts of *woman*.

(E_w) S is a woman in context C if and only if in context C, some individuals with standing confer a status on S by their perception that S has the relevant feminine property in C.

(I_w) S is a woman if and only if S experiences the norms of femininity and some shared conceptions of woman in her social context as relevant to herself.

(B_w) S is a woman if and only if (1) S has a female body, and (2) S's social life opportunities are affected by S's female body in a way that is not mediated by perception.

We should use the three concepts of *woman* because they can help to understand gender oppression in a good way. Also, in previous chapters, I discuss other utility of those concepts, which further supports the claim that we should use them. Since we should use those concepts of *woman*, we should use the corresponding concepts of *man*, which are as follows.



(E_M) S is a man in context C if and only if in context C, some individuals with standing confer a status on S by their perception that S has the relevant masculine property in C.

(I_M) S is a man if and only if S experiences the norms of masculinity and some shared conceptions of man in her social context as relevant to himself.

(B_M) S is a man if and only if (1) S has a male body, and (2) S's social life opportunities are affected by S's male body in a way that is not mediated by perception.

I contend that the three types of gender concepts are equally important. Jenkins has called the result of her ameliorative project the *twin-concept model*. (2016, p.418) So let me call the result of my ameliorative project the *triple-concept model*. Let me conclude my thesis by pointing out some ontological and political upshots of the triple-concept model.

In Chapter 1, I have noted that a concept of *woman* may not correctly specify what it is to be a woman, i.e., what it is to have the property of being a woman. But it should be noted that since the triple concepts of *woman* can help to understand gender oppression in a good way, it is sensible to think that all of the triple concepts of *woman* correctly specify what it is to be a woman. That is, we can have something like an inference to the best explanation and conclude that all of the triple concepts of *woman* correspond to some

property of being a woman.



The upshot is that there are *three ways of being a woman* that correspond to the triple concepts of *woman* respectively. The point can be extended to the idea that there are *three ways of having a gender*.⁷⁵ The first way of having a gender is about how one is perceived by others. The second way is about how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. The third way is about how one is affected by one's body. In a word, the triple-concept model suggests *a pluralist metaphysics of gender*.

By recognizing three ways of having a gender, we can also recognize many types of *political and moral significance of gender*. Undoubtedly, one's gender is a politically and morally significant to the extent that one's political and moral life is structured by one's gender. By how does one's gender structure one's political and moral life? Now we can answer the question in terms of the three ways of having a gender.

The first way of having a gender is about how one is perceived by others. If one has a gender in this way, one's gender would be relevant to whether one could receive *respect* from others. Respect is morally and politically significant.⁷⁶ In this way, one's gender must be politically and morally significant. Furthermore, according to (E_W) and (E_M), the way of having a gender as well involves a status that is conferred upon an individual. A status consists of a set of constraints and enablements. In this way, one's gender is also

⁷⁵ The view can be called *gender pluralism*. For a discussion on gender pluralism, see Jenkins (2022).

⁷⁶ See, for example, Darwall (1997).



politically and morally significant to the extent that the set of constraints and enablements that is conferred upon an individual may conflict with the individual's moral entitlements.

Both Jenkins (2020) and Ásta (2019) make use of the idea to specify a distinctive form of injustice.

The second way of having a gender is about how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. More precisely, the way of having a gender is about how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave *in response to certain social norms and shared conceptions*. If one has a gender in this way, one's gender would be relevant to whether one has *autonomy*. For example, if one has a gender in this way, how one perceives oneself and is disposed to behave might be simply determined by the relevant social norms and shared conception. If so, one's autonomy is undermined. For one does not have control over how one perceives oneself or is disposed to behave. So here is another way in which one's gender is politically and morally significant.

The third way of having a gender is about how one is affected by one's body and especially, how one's social life opportunities are affected by one's body. It shall be obvious that *social life opportunities* are politically significant. For some discussions on distributive justice are about the distribution of opportunities.⁷⁷ Hence, one's gender may be politically significant to the extent that one's gender is relevant to one's social life

⁷⁷ For example, see Rawls (1971), Cohen (1989) and Arneson (1989).

opportunities.

In sum, the triple-concept model can also be relevant to the metaphysics and politics of gender. In this way, the triple-concept model can further contribute to our overall understanding of gender. So we have more reasons to adopt the triple-concept model.



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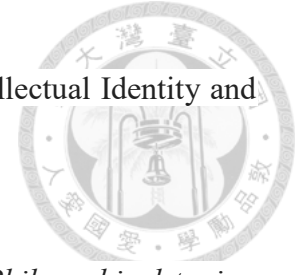
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