

## CHAPTER 2

# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

By

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## QUESTIONS # CHAPTER 2

**CSS 2016:** What are Theories of Social Construction of Gender?

**CSS 2018:** Write A Comprehensive Essay on Sex Vs Gender Debate in Feminist Philosophy and Social Sciences reflecting Nature Vs Nurture Argument.

**CSS 2020:** Gender Studies has multiple meanings. How do you construct the word 'Gender'?

# HISTORICIZING CONSTRUCTIONISM

- Gendering is a "cultural" process, that is, a cultivation of human "nature" determined by the vicissitudes of early childhood or the customs of one's community; or as a "social"
- Society/Culture
- Religion
- Media
- Language
  - Construction of perceived social reality is made through language
- **Reasons for constructing gender in society and categorizes.**

# EVALUATION OF GENDER ROLES

- **Gender and Gender Identity**

- **Gender**– Gender includes people's self image and expectations for behavior among other things.

- **Gender identity** - Gender Identity: a person's internal feelings, and the labels they use, such as male, female, or transgender.

- A. Transgender, or Trans:

- B. Transsexual:

# QUEER THEORY

MEANING OF QUEER?

# QUEER THEORY

- Introduction/History
- Background (Three Factors)
- Reason

Sigmund Freud said that since men have a penis, they have inherent social and societal power—what he called the phallus. Women want the phallus, obviously, but they have no penis. So receiving the penis (during sex, yes, teehee) bestows upon them some of that magical penis power.

- Central Argument
- CORE THEORISTS:
  - i. **Michael Foucault** - rejection of biological explanations of sexuality
  - ii. **Judith Butler** - sexuality, is not an essential truth
  - iii. **Gayle Rubin** - sexual expressions are made more valuable than others

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF QUEER THEORY:

- i. Challenged traditional form of sexuality e.g. 'sodomy'
- ii. All concepts from sexual behaviors to sexual identities are socially constructed e.g. **Sexual Orientation**
- iii. Nothing within your identity is fixed e.g. **Forms of Sexism**
- iv. Always ask Qs who am I really? There is not really an 'inner self' e.g. **Changing identities**
- v. Promoted independence in sexual orientation e.g. **LGBT**
- vi. Gender, like other aspects of identity, is a performance (though not necessarily a consciously chosen one). Again, this is reinforced through repetition. People can therefore change e.g. **Cultural role**
- vii. The binary divide between **masculinity and femininity** is a social construct built on the binary divide between men and women – which is also a social construction.
- viii. Penis is no longer centre of attraction.
- ix. Focuses on mismatch among sex, gender and desire.

# IS SEX SOCIALLY DETERMINED TOO?

- Gender is social and sex is biological
- Mental image of biological sex & determination
- Behavioral patterns
- Example
  - Caster Semenya (Los Angeles Times)
  - Julia
  - Texas marriage laws
  - African Countries

# IS SEX SOCIALLY DETERMINED TOO?

- 5 specific measures of Biological Sex
  - Chromosomes, Genitals, Gonads, Hormones, Secondary Sex Characteristics.
- 5 alpha reductase deficiency
  - It cannot be restricted to genetics or genetics
  - Trans women have both breasts and genitals
- Sociologists disagree with sex division; intersex born infants range 500- 1000

# MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES

- Definitions
- Shaped by socio-cultural factors
- Theories
  - Natural theory
  - Social theory
  - **Connell gave socio-economic analysis**
    - a. Masculinities hegemonic masculinities subordinated masculinities
    - a. Forms of femininities are emphasized femininity, resistance femininity and complex femininity)
- **Reasons of masculine traits in women**

# NATURE VERSUS NURTURE: A DEBATE IN GENDER DEVELOPMENT

**Natural:** physiological differences in males and females (typical male and female characteristics—sexual organs, weight, muscular, larger, deeper voices, navigation methods, math, spatial abilities —sensitivity to touch and sounds, willingness to communicate, eye contact for longer periods, recognizing people and places in photograph, reach puberty earlier, higher verbal abilities)

# NATURE VERSUS NURTURE: A DEBATE IN GENDER DEVELOPMENT

## **Cultural:**

i. Gender Identity (Male/Female)

e.g. Occupation, appearances, opportunities, roles etc.

i. Sigmund Freud Concept (3-6 years)

e.g. gender identity and sex typed behaviors

i. Psychoanalytical Theory

e.g. oedipal conflict & Electra conflict

i. Social learning theory

ii. Self socialization (18-36 months)

iii. Cultural transmission theory

E.g. rooms, toys, cloth

iv. Genetic Factor and Gender

e.g. Appearance, features that may appear abnormal , differences in visual spatial and verbal abilities