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Question:

Write a comprehensive note/essay on the Sex versus gender debate in feminist philosophy and social sciences, reflecting nature vs nurture argument.

Answer:

Sex Versus Gender Debate:

Sex: It is a biological determined that is prescribed at birth.

For Example: Male and Female.

Gender: It is socially constructed. It consists of some norms with which one has to conform with.

I- Nature Vs. Nurture Argument:

1.1 Nature Perspective: Nature perspective posits that different biological perspectives shapes one's gender. Human gender is makeup of chromosomes, hormones and other biological traits.

1.2- Nurture Perspective: Nurture perspective posits that different external factors, situations and experiences shape human gender. As per social learning

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theory :

"Human learn his/her gender characteristics and traits from its external environment."

Nature Point

Studies show that we inherit genes that are related to certain personality traits.

Nurture Point

Argues that two identical twins have different personalities.

II Social Construction of Gender in light of Sex

Versus Gender Debate:

2.1. Social Construction of Gender:

This theory places itself in nurture side. This theory posits that it is society and culture that define the gender of human beings. Philosophers, sociologists and psychologists argue that the difference between men and women gender is entirely social. Albeit, other biological

factors also play their parts in the formation of human personalities.

Over the course of time, modern scientists have acceptance for both nature and nurture debate. Nurture is a top layer of underlying nature of human beings.

III Theories of Social Construction of Gender:

3-1- Historicism:

This theory assigns major significance to historical events in shaping the personality of humans.

• Gerda Lerner argues in her book,

• 'The Creation of Patriarchy':

System of male dominance was created with the passage of time in history. She explains this in following steps.

- 1- Early division of Labour in Hunter and gatherer society.

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2. Men started domesticating animals.

3. They realized the importance of women in producing offsprings.

4. The concept of private property get developed.

5. Men wanted to entrust their private property to their blood progeny.

6. The concept of chastity of women and her loyalty towards husband develop.

Claude Levi-Straus' argues in his book 'The Exchange of Women':

He explained that woman was treated as a commodity.

In agrarian society, with agricultural revolution, men developed their own farmlands. As they required labour for their farmland, in this perspective they realized the importance of women in order to produce free labour in the form of offsprings.

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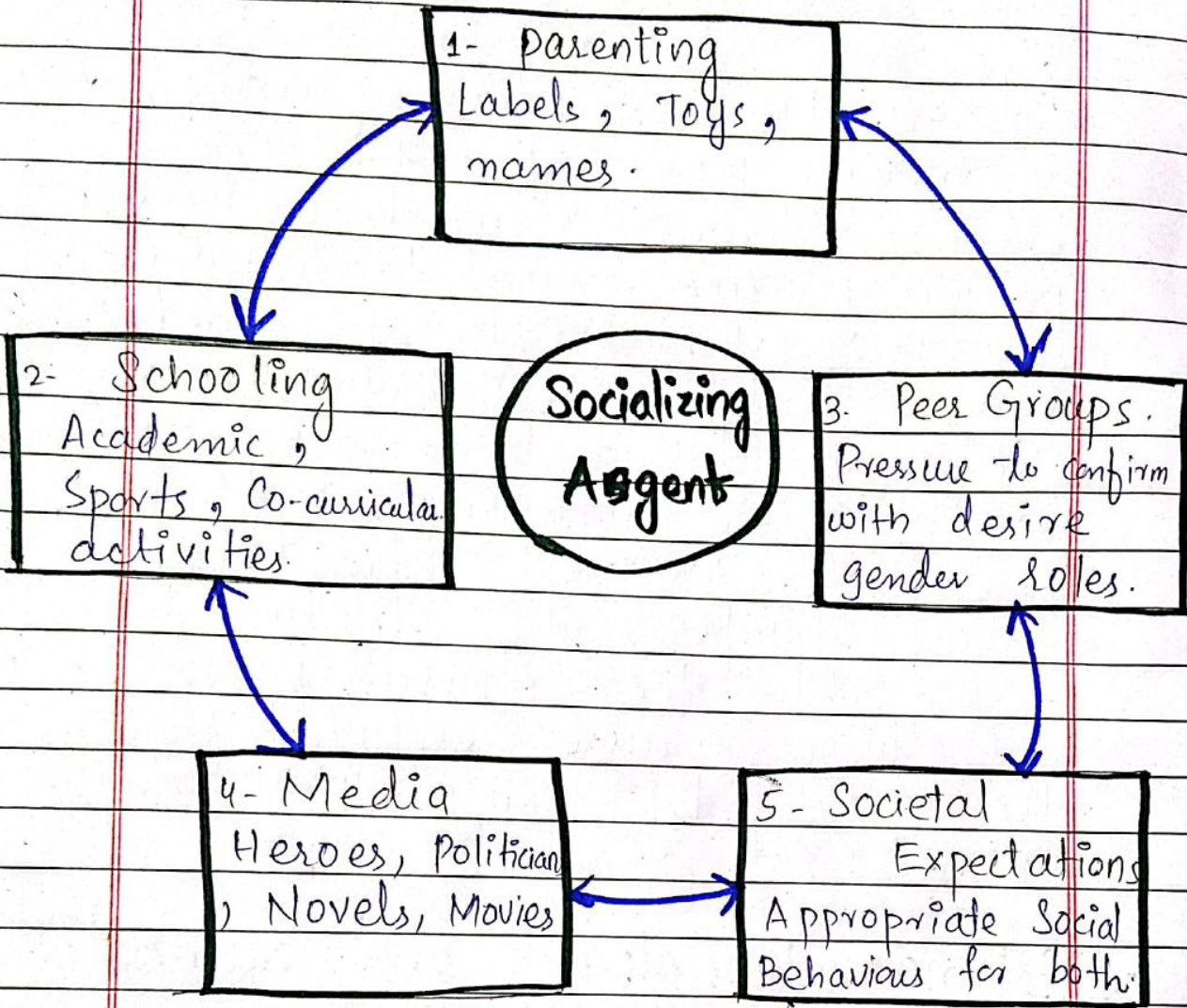
This domesticated women and fixed their role as a child producer and child reerers. Consequently, as history progressed, the society became male dominant and patriarchy was created. This lead to the establishment of legal codes that differentiated between the respected and non-respected women. From compiling legal codes to the establishment of certain beliefs and institutions, men held the central power and women were excluded from the system by fixing their role as a child machine.

3.2 Ethnomethodology and Symbolic

Interactionism:

Ethnomethodology: Human behaviours and personalities are developed through socialization and interactions.

How do Socialization Agents Socialize Genders Differently?



Judith Butler Concept of Gender Performativity — "Doing Gender"

Judith Butler argues in her book
"Gender Trouble":

"Nobody is born one gender
or the other. We act, walk

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talk and speak in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or woman."

Simone de Beauvoir:

She argues in her book "The Second Sex" that civilization define the role of women. Women learn their roles from external environment. Men define themselves with respect to characteristics of power includes:

- Strong
- Influential
- Leaders.

Women define themselves with respect to characteristics includes:

- Fragile
- Submissive
- Frail.

Social institutions reinforce these roles of both men and women. We can conclude this from one of her famous quotations i.e.,

"One is not born but rather becomes a woman." (Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex)

Nancy Chodorow:

As per her philosophy, men learn their roles in association with their father. Women learn their roles in association with their mothers. She argues in her book "The Reproduction of Mothering" that gender construct differently at homes.

3.3 Theory of Material Dependence:

This argues that women depend on their father before marriage and after marriage, they depend on their husband. Women submit their wills according to wishes of those who control them as a result of dependency. Historically, men held financial power, so he were able to create institutions that were in his favour and women were excluded from it. This theory combines impulses of marxism and radical feminism. Due to financial

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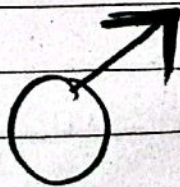
men create domination over women and this lead to the establishment of patriarchy. They exclude women from power corridors and assign them certain roles that are in return beneficial for men.

Point to Ponder:

Venus is a Roman goddess of love, sex, beauty and fertility. Her symbol depicts hand mirror of Venus which demonstrates that beauty is a symbol of women.



Mars is a Roman god of war. His symbol depicts shield which demonstrates that strength is a symbol of men.



Case Study:

Margaret Mead's Cross-Cultural Studies on Gender Roles:

Margaret Mead's cross-cultural studies on gender roles in societies like the Tchambuli in Papua New Guinea demonstrated that gender roles vary widely between cultures, indicating that these roles are learned rather than biologically determined.

Interplay of Nature and

Nurture:

While the debate often positions nature and nurture in opposition, however modern scholars recognize that both biological and social factors interact in shaping gender.

For instance:

While hormonal differences may influence behaviour, societal

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norms strongly shape how these behaviours are expressed.

Conclusion:

The sex versus gender debate in correspondance with nature versus nurture argument demonstrate that both nature and nurture play their role in shaping human personality. However, the social construction of gender under the context of nature vs. nurture argument is more tilted towards nurture side in shaping human personalities. Its various theories elucidate that albeit biological factors play their role in shaping gender but it is the society and culture that mainly shape gender traits.

Key Takeaways:

• Nature: Biological factors shape human gender.

• Nurture: Society shapes gender

• Social Construction of Gender:

Difference between men and women: gender is entirely social.

• Historicism, Ethnomethodology and theory of material dependency all theories elucidate that ~~so~~ gender is socially constructed instead of biological.



Outline:

Question: Write an essay on the sex versus gender debate in feminist philosophy and social sciences, reflecting nature vs nurture argument.

I- Sex Vs. Gender Debate

1.1 Definition of Sex

1.2 Definition of Gender.

II- Nature Vs. Nurture Argument

2.1 Nature Perspective

2.2 Nurture Perspective

III- Social Construction of Gender in Light of Sex Vs. Gender Debate

3.1 Social Construction of Gender

3.2 Theories of Social Construction of Gender
→ Historicism

→ Ethnomethodology and Symbolic Interactionism.

Judith Butler Concept of Doing Gender.

Simone de Beauvoir.

Nancy Chodorow.

3.3 Theory of Material Dependence

3.4 Case Study: Margaret Mead's Cross-Cultural Studies on Gender Roles

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- IV- Interplay of Nature and Nurture
- V- Conclusion
- VI- Key Take-ways.