

Q) Define term masculinity and femininity.

In your opinion where do traditional gender roles come from?

Introduction

Masculinity and femininity are the terms related to a person's gender. Moreover, these are traits associated with a person's gender. The masculine are believed to be strong, dominant and leaders, whereas females are considered to be weak, irrational and emotional. Furthermore, in patriarchal societies men hold power and dominance in family, economy and politics. Such a system rewards traditional masculine behaviour and persists to discourage the feminine behaviour. Nevertheless, these are just societal made behaviours, it's not a biological behaviour.

"Masculinities are not fixed, but historically and politically constructed". (Connell).

Traits associated with masculinity:

The ensuing are the traits, believed to be true for a masculine person.

i) Leadership:

Masculine are born leaders and have sharp mind.

- ii) Dominant:
Masculine are dominant, in every aspect they work upon.
- iii) Confident:
Masculine are confident, as they know what they are up to.
- iv) Strong:
Masculine are believed to be naturally strong.
- v) Competitive:
Masculine are competitive, and eager to win.
- vi) Focused:
Masculine are focused on what they are doing, they are hard to distract.

Traits associated with Femininity:

The following are the traits linked with femininity.

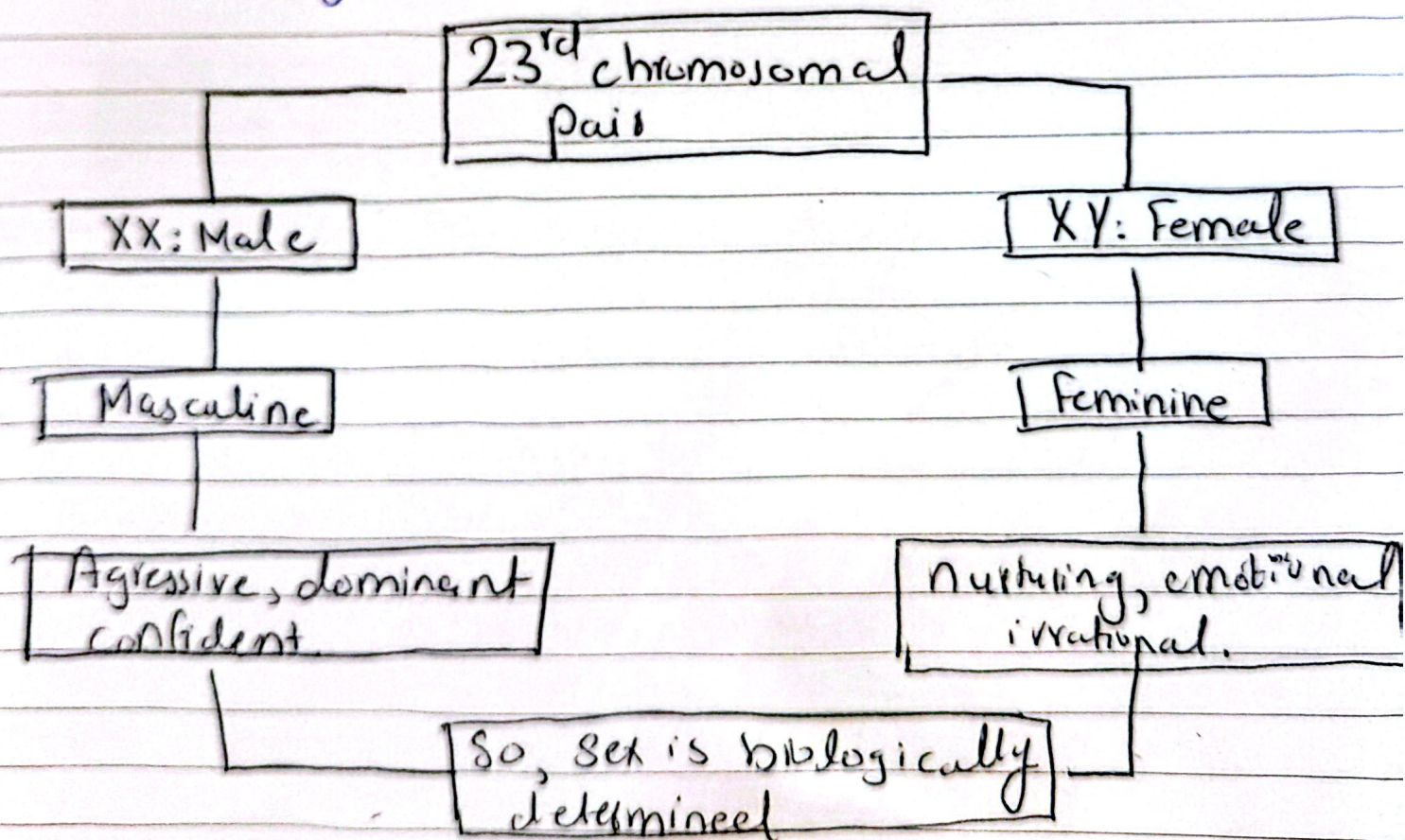
- i) Irrational:
Feminine are irrational and cannot make a decision.
- ii) Weak:
Feminine are believed to be naturally weak.
- iii) Nurturing:
Feminine are believed to care for others.

- iv) Accepting:
Feminine are believed to be accepting, whatever has done.
- v) Emotional:
Feminine are emotional and cannot be focused.

Theories supporting gender roles:

Biological basis for sex

People who believed, that masculinities and femininities are part of gender, they believe that it happens with 23rd pairing of chromosomal pair and it solely depends on it. The situation is illustrated in diagram below.



Theories against gender roles:

Operant conditioning theory

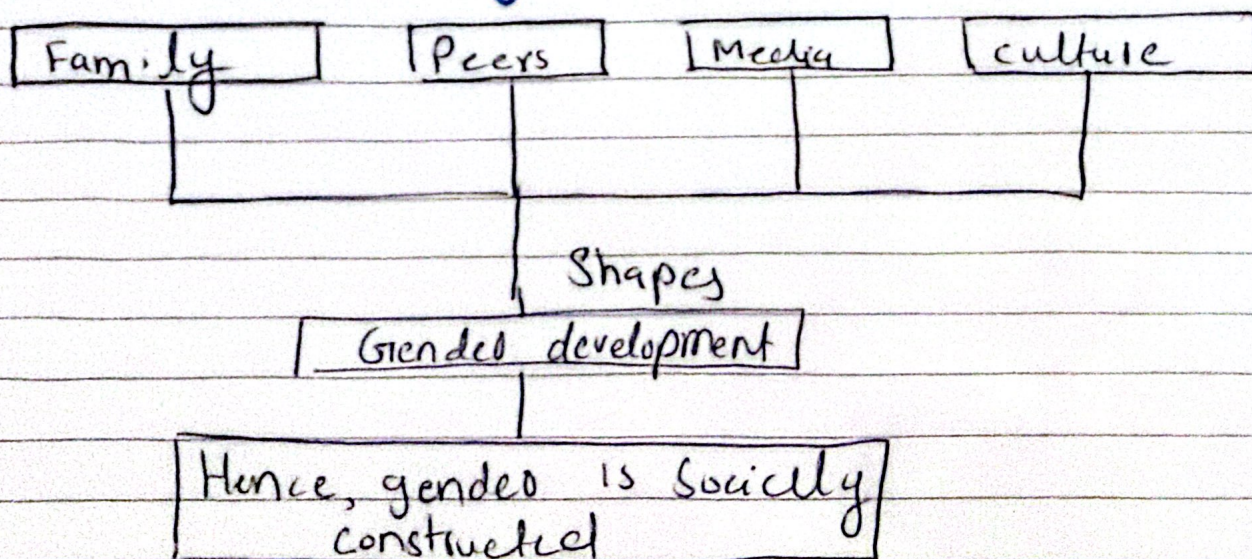
Operant conditioning theory believes, that behaviours are learnt by their outcomes. If a behaviour is rewarded, like masculine being confident, strong and rational, and feminine being weak, irrational and spontaneous. The person learns it. Eventually, leading towards gender stereotypes.

Queer theory:

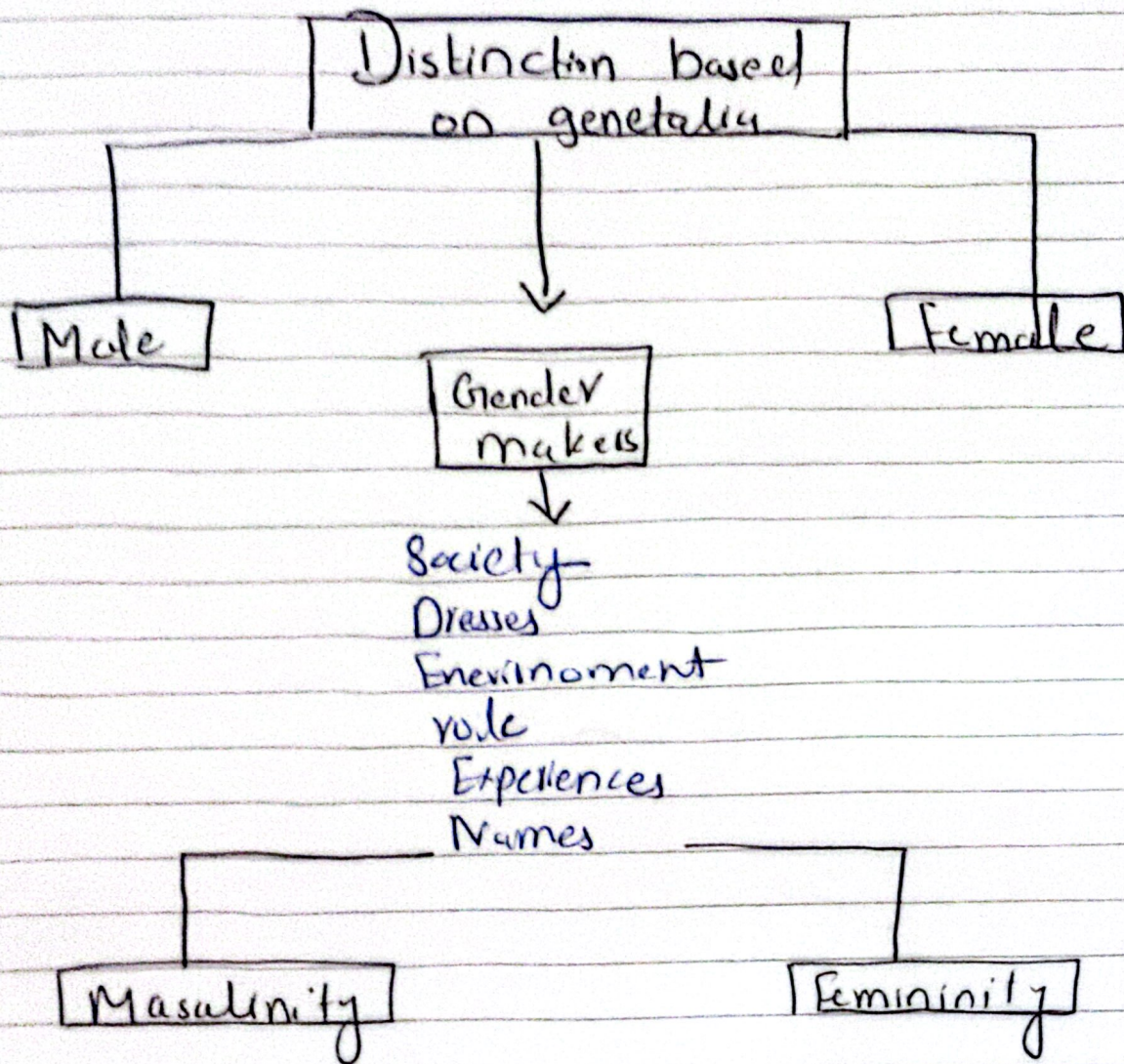
The word queer means 'unusual' or 'strange'. This theory emphasizes on that gender roles are not fixed, gender is fluid.

"Around, 17% of population falls to fall within male and female categories of sex" (Fausto).

How Queer theory nurture of gender development



Judiths Loobes gender thesis:



"Individuals are biologically sexed not gendered. However they are taught to be masculine and feminine."
(Judith Loobes).

The above thesis of Judith Loobes shows that agents of socialization decide our roles, patterns and how shall we behave, particularly men and women.

Conclusion / my Opinion:

The aforementioned theories and points that are discussed, I believe that society is the one who teaches us how to be a man or to be a woman. The terms masculine and feminine are socially constructed, they are just profoundly embedded into men's consciousness that they are dominant and strong, as they are superior than women. However, these are just societal thoughts and beliefs.

"Throughout an individual life, their role, dress, behaviour, and names are constructed by society" (Judith Lorber).