

and radio and television. Here one can see, in gay-authored works, the ways in which homosexuals have sought to image themselves, while in "straight" works the stereotypes, as well as the rare instances of honest effort toward understanding, are available for inspection. In researching this third domain one cannot neglect the constraints of publishers, producers and other cultural "gatekeepers" in shaping the material.

Apart from this suggested articulation of research in three main domains, some general desiderata should be mentioned. Narrow parochialism should yield to horizons that are as broad as the subject demands. For example, a study of the gay subculture in early twentieth-century New York City should show an awareness not only of other places in America, but also of the European setting, from which so many immigrants came. Moreover, a study of causal factors should be polythematic, considering a variety of conditioning factors, and not reducing them, say, to a mere matter of the socioeconomic base (historical materialism) or conversely the downward trickle of learned notions (the history of ideas approach). Researchers must be alert to lingering biases in their own makeup, as from Christianity or secular belief systems such as Marxism. Unexpected differentiations must always be watched for: for example with male transvestites there are at least three distinct varieties, none of which is assimilable to the model of the "gay person." Finally, there is an urgent need for the acquisition of auxiliary sciences; in this field that means first and foremost foreign languages—the standard academic languages of German and French to assimilate the older literature, plus Latin, Greek, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and the like according to one's particular research interest.

Having been relegated to the margin of academia for so long, it is perhaps understandable that the field developed somewhat idiosyncratic standards,

not exempt from advocacy scholarship and apologetics. Now that these studies are receiving serious academic attention, it is essential that accepted canons of evidence and exposition be observed. In this way gay studies will not only find its proper place in the constellation of knowledge, but in so doing replace homosexual behavior in its proper context as part of the mainstream of history.

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## GENDER

In current social science usage gender denotes consciousness of sexual dimorphism that may or may not be congruent with actual genital sex in human beings. The expression *gender role* was introduced by John Money in 1955, as a relatively new use of a term that has a long history in English in other senses. In a relatively short time, however, it found acceptance in both scientific and political usage as a needed complement to the older term *sex*.

*Origins in Linguistics.* The concept of gender originated in linguistics, where it designates a specific grammatical category of the noun that can find expression morphosyntactically. In this function it bonds with adjectives ("agreement") and verbs and with particular suffixes limited to a single gender. There is also a syntactic aspect, expressed through combination with appropriate forms of the article and the pronoun. For the speaker of English, in which these relationships have been lost, they may be somewhat hard to understand. And indeed gender based upon analogy with the natural sex of animate beings is not universal; it is limited to the Indo-European and Semito-Hamitic families. However, of the six classical languages of the world, five have the category of sex gender: Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit

have the three-gender system of Indo-European—masculine, feminine, and neuter—and Hebrew and Arabic have the two-gender system (masculine and feminine) inherited from Common Semitic. Only Chinese operates with noun classes not based upon the real or ascribed sex of the person or object. But because of the cultural diffusion and influence of the first five literary languages, the intelligentsia of virtually all civilized peoples have some familiarity with the notion in its linguistic application.

*General Considerations.* In social psychology gender means one's personal, social, and legal status as male or female, or mixed, on the basis of somatic and behavioral criteria more inclusive than the genital organs alone. That is to say, human beings possess a reflective consciousness that includes a perception of the masculinity or femininity of oneself and of others. Moreover, this perception is determined by a host of traits of the individual, some having to do with secondary sexual characteristics, others conditioned by the cultural typing of modes of thought and action as appropriate to one sex or the other.

Because it is impossible to know what another human being feels, personal gender identity can only be inferred from what the subject under observation expresses in speech, gesture, and movement. These sources of data constitute one's gender behavior or gender role. Yet gender identity remains private and subjective; it is a dimension of the personality that has been scripted in the course of the individual's lifetime in accordance with forces guiding his psychological development. Gender is more subtle and more inclusive than sex, as it embraces far more than the genitals and their functioning. But because homo sapiens is characterized by sexual dimorphism—the basic anatomical contrast—human societies have gender dimorphism as well: they operate with the dichotomy masculine/feminine in assigning behavioral traits to the phenome-

non of gender.

This macroevolutionary fact—the sexual dimorphism of humanity and of its phylogenetic ancestors—predetermined the dimorphism in behavior that constitutes gender. Moreover, the accumulating evidence of animal sexology on the fetal influence of hormones on the governance of sexual behavior by way of the central nervous system precludes the ascription of gender differences to merely social and cultural determinants, even though the assignment of particular traits has an element of the arbitrary. Granted, the structure of gender in the culture of a particular society may virtually dictate what at first glance seems fortuitous; in this matter the binary logic of the differentiating process overrides the scattered distribution of a trait in real populations.

*Core Gender Identity.* Differentiation of a core gender identity probably follows the same principle as the morphological differentiation of the gonads and the internal organs of reproduction. Both systems are latent, but one alone finally becomes functional. In the case of gender identity, however, the nonfunctional schema does not become vestigial, in the true sense, but is negatively coded—marked as not to be manifested by oneself, but appropriate to members of the opposite sex and even to be demanded of them. The two-gender schema is encoded in the brain of the human subject, with one half suitable for one's personal gender identity, and the other half for use in predicting and interpreting the gender role of the opposite sex.

In the customary nuclear family, the child identifies primarily with the parent of the opposite sex, though other members of the household may be surrogates or complements for the parents. As the child grows, the models for identification and complementation extend beyond the household to include older siblings, playmates, and figures of folklore, sports, politics, the media, and even the world of learning. The latter figures require no re-

sponsive reaction, except in the world of fantasy, but they may offer an ideal which the individual strives to realize—or even excel—in the course of his lifetime.

With the advent of hormonal puberty, a new milestone in psychosexual development is reached, namely the ability to fall in love. The onset of this capacity is not simultaneous with puberty, but is triggered by a mechanism whose site is still unknown. Falling in love resembles imprinting in that a releaser mechanism from within must encounter a stimulus from without before the event can occur. That event has remarkable longevity; its echoes can last a lifetime. The stimulus, normal or pathological, that will affect a given individual will have been written into his psychosexual program, so to speak, in the years before puberty and as far back as infancy.

*Broader Connotations.* Beyond the sphere of sexuality in the narrow sense, a vast amount of human behavior is gender-marked in that what men do one way, women do another way. Such gender-related behavior ranges from fashions in dress to conventions at work and earning a living, from rules of etiquette and ceremony to labor-sharing in the home. These stereotypes of what is masculine and what is feminine ultimately stem from such macroevolutionary differences as stature, weight, and muscle power, menstruation, childbearing, and lactation, but the conventions themselves are defined by custom—the accumulated residue of economic and cultural processes—which may resist change or conversely be subject to sudden shifts of taste and fashion. What matters is that they exist at any given time and place, that in all societies human beings are exquisitely sensitive to the signals and cues emanating from others, and that if a collective can adapt and change the signals over time, it cannot obliterate them altogether.

Cultural tradition determines not just the criteria of behavior related to sexual dimorphism, but also sundry criteria of

sexual interaction. An age (such as our own) that has undergone tremendous cultural change has also seen the traditional norms of sexual behavior rejected and openly flouted. While there has been no change of tradition in respect to the pairing of couples similar in age—with its negative implications for the man-boy homosexual relationship—the sanctions against homosexuality are being reexamined and (with much ambivalence) eased in favor of consensual activity between adults. The trend is toward greater individual freedom, though not necessarily toward a greater social good. The leading pressure point of change in the area of gender is toward a greater diversity and plurality of roles, for males and for females, on a basis of interchange and reciprocity. Nature and nurture interact in the determination of gender; some gender traits are common to all members of the species, while others result from the unique life history of the individual.

The genetic code does not find expression in a vacuum, it requires a permissive environment. The limits of permissiveness are prescribed for each species and must be empirically defined for each variable, including gender identity. The bulk of the available evidence points to the early years of life as very important for gender-identity differentiation. There is a parallel here with the ability to use language: by the age of five a child has an effective grasp of the grammatical and syntactic principles of his native tongue, and his gender identity is firmly imbedded. As a system in the brain, the latter programs a boy's masculine behavior and imagery while at the same time programming the feminine counterpart as the mirror image of the boy's own reactions in relationships with the opposite sex. Gender identity is not simply the effect produced by an immanent (genetic) cause; the genetic endowment interacts with the environment to yield the final effect.

The only absolutes in male and female roles are those determined by the

genital apparatus: males ejaculate, females menstruate, gestate, and lactate. Other criteria of sexual dimorphism either derive from these irreducible four, or are functions of time and place—as can be learned from economic history and cultural anthropology. The optional (and optimal) content of male and female roles is changing and will change further with the evolution of technology and society. Ideally, both parents will agree on the role suitable for each child, even if the goal is not always easy to achieve. Also, the child's family will ideally not be isolated and stigmatized for the role definition it has chosen, since this societal reaction would mark a child negatively among his age-mates, and could force him to choose between his parents and his peer group.

*Ludic (Playful) Variations on Gender.* In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, members of Europe's aristocracy enjoyed dressing in the clothing of the opposite sex. From the Chevalier d'Eon (Charles d'Eon de Beaumont; 1728–1810), who adopted women's dress during a diplomatic mission to Russia, stems the name that Havelock Ellis invented for transvestism: Eonism. In the nineteenth-century these practices trickled down to a larger public through the popular stage productions employing female and male impersonators. These performers in turn were imitated by people of working-class origin, giving rise to the modern drag queen and the mannish dyke. In the period after the **Stonewall Rebellion** (1969+), drag queens were prominent in activist circles, combining a defiance of society's gender norms with opposition to sexual conformity. This old tradition in a new guise, sometimes known as *gender bending* or *gender fuck*, is notable not only for its political awareness, but also for the fact that the illusion of assuming the opposite sex need not be convincing—indeed it is often deliberately not. Such behavior reflects an intuitive awareness of the sophisticated contemporary concept of gender. Social psychology and social activism meet.

*Gender Studies.* Along with women's studies, gender studies have since the early 1970s become a focus of attention in the academic world. Articles, monographs, and books are devoted to the problem of gender, and to such questions as how it can be measured by standardized tests, how it is socially defined in different historical epochs, and how it affects the functionality and the psychic health of the individual in various occupations and life stages. Crossing as they do the boundaries of conventional disciplines, gender studies and women's studies utilize a multidimensional approach to arrive at a deeper understanding of the forces that shape and maintain sexual identity in human beings. Gender studies also intersect with a reexamination of the legal status of men and women, and the effort to correct **discrimination** against women by legal enactments and their enforcement. In 1988 the University of Texas Press began to publish a journal, *Genders*, with a primarily cultural emphasis.

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## GENDER DYSPHORIA

See *Dysphoria, Gender*.

## GENET, JEAN (1910–1986)

French poet, novelist, and playwright. The son of an unknown father, abandoned by his mother shortly after his birth, Genet was brought up by a country couple. At a very early age, Genet began to think that there was no clear-cut distinction between parent, master, and judge—a conflation that was to become the cornerstone of his philosophy. At the age of 16 he was convicted of theft and sent to a reform