



CULTURE & GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

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What is Gender?

Two common contexts

1. Application form
2. Grammar

Gender in commonsensical understanding

- In the first context – used interchangeably with ‘SEX’
- In the second context – it refers to the way of classifying nouns
 - a) **Masculine Nouns** – refer to words for a male figure or male member of a species
Eg. man, father, hero, heir, monk, actor, prince, rooster, stallion etc.
 - a) **Feminine Nouns** – refer to female figures or female members of a species
Eg. woman, mother, heroine, heiress, nun, actress, princess, hen, mare etc.
 - a) **Common Nouns** – refer to members of a species without specifying the gender
Eg. Pupil, student, artist, teacher, nurse, parent, friend, client etc.
 - a) **Neuter nouns** – refer to things that have no gender
Eg. rock, table, pencil, etc.)

Gender in our course - theoretically loaded

SEX

- male or female or a third gender
- Biological – i.e. determined by body – sex/reproductive organs and hormone
- Ahistorical – not affected by time
- Universal – not affected by space

GENDER

- Masculine or feminine
- Social/cultural
- Historical – i.e. changes from time to time
- Region and culture specific – changes from place to place and culture to culture

Sex Vs Gender - 1

Sex - Biological

- A category that refers to the fact of one being male or female or the third gender

Identified by

- ✓ Body parts/sex organs – male and female genitalia
- ✓ Reproductive organs – uterus, ovary/testis
- ✓ Hormone - estrogen and testosterone

Gender - Social/cultural

- A category that refers to the fact of one being masculine or feminine

Identified mainly by

- Style, behaviour, character traits, desires, tastes, etc which to a large extent are constructed in the social and cultural realm rather than determined by one's biology

Sex Vs Gender - 2

Sex – Ahistorical and universal

- Ahistorical – Not affected by time
- Universal – not affected by space

Gender – historical and region/culture specific

- Historical – affected by time
- Region/culture specific – affected/conditioned by the social, regional and cultural differences