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Gender Roles: Nature vs. Nurture

A gender role is a position held by an individual either within a family setting a relationship, or society (Fausto-Sterling 19). A person can be one of two genders, either male or female. Gender roles are often action-oriented and focused on an individual playing a nurturing role within a family setting or working outside of the home. According to history, particularly in traditional settings, the man of the family is usually the one who makes the most money and supports the family. He performs much hard work to earn the money needed to support his family. On the other hand, the woman of the family serves as the caretaker. She is the one who remains at home while her husband works outside of the home. She tends to the household chores and the children, and she also supports her husband in many ways. However, in today's times, gender roles have been split. This is evident by the fact that more women are becoming the ones who earn the money for their families, providing most of the income and needs for the household.

The lines between gender roles are blurred by the day, which is evident in the fact that more stay-at-home dads are taking care of households and children while their wives go to work. This is irrespective of whether or not someone is heterosexual, homosexual or transgendered. Furthermore, i

nsufficient epidemiological data exists that shows the difference between being homosexual or transgendered. By definition, a homosexual person has a sexual relationship with

a partner of the same sex, and this is particularly perceived as being men. This refers to gay men who are lovers and know each other well in a sexual sense, instead of having sex with female partners. Many homosexuals eventually have same-sex marriages, and this alone is widely discussed in society, considering campaigns that took place to legitimize same-sex relationships and to legalize same-sex marriages (Small 100). However, some genetic irregularities occur in moderate frequencies, such as about one in every thousand births resulting in intersex conditions. In most informal cases, these include a person's genetic profile that shows that he or she is a different sex from what their body suggests. This is basically confusion in body tissues, which includes both male and female sexual characteristics appearing on the same person at the same time. For example, a man can have ovarian tissue in his testes, while women can have testicular tissue in their ovaries. This is called a hermaphrodite condition, creates confusion in a person's genetic and gender balance. Thus, they are not properly able to play their expected gender roles in society.

All societies have has a mechanism to allow for variations in gender roles. This allows all males to perform female tasks while those who identify with being men perform masculine tasks. This was called *berdache* in the olden tradition (Williams 127), where a male, with not many strengths, skills and expertise like his fellow male counterparts, plays a female gender role while strong men go to work. In modern societies, gender roles are hardly emphasized. In fact, they advocate for empowering women and educating female children. Hence the slogan, *what a man can do a woman can do better*. This shows just how open society is for both sexes to free participation of gender roles. Men can work in traditionally feminine jobs, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, while women can also perform functions that have been traditionally for

men, e.g., leadership and administration. It has been found that both sexes are equal and can perform each other's roles competently.

Nature versus nurture refers to the importance of the distinctive qualities of an individual compared to personal experiences. In other words, this phrase deals with environmental influences and heredity on human development and social advancement.

According to science, it is believed that people behave according to their dispositions, genetics or animal instincts, for example, the nature theory defining human behavior. Another group make think the exact opposite, which is that people behave as they do because of the teachings they have been exposed to, which causes them to behave the way they do. This is the nurture theory and it defines human behavior. Both theories are partly correct, according to proof from understanding the human genome. The reason for this is because nature endows humans with inborn abilities and traits while nurture takes these genetic tendencies and molds them during the maturing and learning processes.

There are five genetic patterns (or five sexes) in which individuals in the universe belong, thus it is not accurate to say one is either a male or a female. In reality, society attempts to force these five genetic patterns into two gender identities. These five sexes are male, female, true hermaphrodites, and two other types of pseudo-hermaphrodites. A true hermaphrodite has one male gonad and one female gonad. A pseudo-hermaphrodite has either male or female gonads, but not both of them. Additionally, this type has ambiguous genitalia. Therefore, because of these facts, one cannot simply lump all genders into two conventional divisions only, i.e. male and female, since hermaphroditism exists (Fausto-Sterling 159).

Work Cited

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