

Sex versus gender

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



[Your full March 3, Sex versus Gender Sex refers to physical anatomy and biological differences between male and female; while, gender means the characteristics by which the society defines who is male and who is female. Roughgarden (22) explains the concepts of sex and gender and asserts that sex is a concept that is discussed more from a biological point of view while gender is more of a societal perspective. According to him, sex belongs to biological category and gender belongs to social category (23). This op-ed intends to expand on this supporting it through references from literature. Sex defines male and female biologically and the concept is the same in every culture. However, every culture has different concepts of gender roles that are assigned to males and females, and these are the gender roles that define the masculinity and femininity of an individual regardless of his physical anatomy or, in other words, sex. “ Men and women are social categories” and socially “ we have the freedom to decide who counts as a man and who counts as a woman” (Roughgarden 23). One culture will define an actual man who beats up his wife; while another culture will consider a person a man considering his height and voice. Some cultures define a woman as a person bearing children; while, others will define a woman as individuals with delicate stature. These are all the gender roles that every culture assigns to men and women, thus associating these roles with one gender. Feminist theories have arisen because of distinction in gender because “ most feminists differentiate sex from gender” (Nfah-Abbenyi 16). Generally speaking as in all cultures, male gender is associated with roles like going out for jobs, playing games, joining clubs, and becoming politicians; while, female gender is associated with roles like running a

house, bearing children and raising them up, doing grocery, serving the family, and the like. Thus, we assign specific roles to one gender and call it man or woman. However, we do not have that liability for the biological category of sex. Sex is defined by Nature: sex with smaller gametes (sperms) and Y-chromosomes is male; while, sex with larger gametes (ova) and X-chromosomes is female. Sex is defined at the time of fertilization of egg. If a Y-chromosome from male fertilizes an X-chromosome from female, then the resulting sex is male. When an X from male fertilizes an X from female, the resulting sex is female. These and some other features like the structure of reproductive system define which one is male sex and which is female. Hence, the distinction of sex is defined by the Nature depending upon certain physical features; while, the distinction of gender is defined by the society depending upon the societal roles (Powell 4). Hence, we conclude that male and female form biological categories or the two sexes; while, man and woman form psychosocial categories or the two genders. Biologists talk about gamete size when defining sex; but, poets talk about power and courage while talking about men, and about gorgeousness and motherhood while taking about women. The former is the biological perspective and the latter is the social perspective. Works Cited Nfah-Abbenyi, Juliana Makuchi. "Gender and Feminist Theory." *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, and Difference*. USA: Indiana University Press, 1997. Powell, Gary N. "Sex versus Gender." *Women and Men in Management*. USA: SAGE, 2010. Roughgarden, Joan. "Sex versus Gender." *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*. USA: University of California Press, 2004.