

Chapter 6

Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Anthropologist began to delve deeper into these subjects in the 1960s and 1970s. Why did this begin to happen at this point in time?

In the Beginning

How would you define feminism?

Are men and women equal? Should we have the same rights?

Feminism had its first wave in the 19th century though the second wave brought about larger changes in the patriarchal systems in the Western world

Sexism was seen as a social issue as women began to confront the public/private divide

These struggles forced anthropologist in the 1970s to look at the role of women in a new way

The distinction between sex and gender

The question became was the male always dominant? Is it Universal?

Now in the early 21st century, anthropologist see it is not so simple a split as greater understanding of other cultures are understood

Sex, Gender, Race, and Class

Anthropologists began to realize that race and class played into how society dealt with the role of women

What are the different experiences of a wealthy white woman vs a wealthy black woman in American culture?

Gender Performativity

The question asked is do males and females conform to gender roles or perform to gender roles?

Gender Performativity

Theoretical Diversity in Studies of Sex and Gender

Cultural feminism – the binary exists with regards to roles but men and women have different essences – men mean, women nice

Liberal feminism – autonomous and self directed. Intellectually equal to men

Socialist feminism – the effect of the capitalist political economy on women

Men's studies also have place in anthropology as do women's studies and gender studies

Sex, Gender, and the Body

For much of the 20th century the role of the individual body was not looked at but seen in the broader structure of culture

Should women be able to enter a temple if she is menstruating?

Michael Foucault believed that the individual body plays a cultural and societal role in an institution such as school or through social regulations and interventions.

Should women have the right to an abortion?

Elizabeth Grosz looked at the processes of the female body

Others looked which affect (visceral arousal, emotion, or feeling) relates to meaning-making

Cyborg anthropology – cybernetic connections between humans and machines

Is every human always born male or female?

Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Sexuality – the ways in which people experience and value physical desire and pleasure

Is heterosexuality/heteronormativity the only/true way for humans?

The first known use of the term homosexuality in 1869 was actually seen as a positive

Many terms used today (lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, transgender) only took on their current meaning in the 20th century

The terms are very fluid over time and place

Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Ethnographic Context

What role might a berdache play in a culture?

How does the western view of these concepts relate to other cultural ideas?