

MALE/FEMALE
ROLES
OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS®

OTHER BOOKS OF RELATED INTEREST

OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS SERIES

Discrimination
The Family
Feminism
Homosexuality
Human Nature
Human Sexuality
Inequality: Opposing Viewpoints in Social Problems
Pornography
Sexual Values
Sexual Violence
Teenage Pregnancy
Teenage Sexuality
Working Women

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES SERIES

Family Violence
Gay Rights
Marriage and Divorce
Sexual Harassment
Violence Against Women

AT ISSUE SERIES

Affirmative Action
Date Rape
Domestic Violence
Gay Marriage
Rape on Campus
Sex Education
Single-Parent Families
What Is Sexual Harassment?

MALE/FEMALE ROLES

OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS®

Laura K. Egendorf, *Book Editor*

David L. Bender, *Publisher*

Bruno Leone, *Executive Editor*

Bonnie Szumski, *Editorial Director*

David M. Haugen, *Managing Editor*



Greenhaven Press, Inc., San Diego, California

Cover photo: Planet Art

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Male/female roles : opposing viewpoints / Laura K. Egendorf, book editor.

p. cm. — (Opposing viewpoints series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7377-0130-7 (pbk. : alk. paper). —

ISBN 0-7377-0131-5 (lib. : alk. paper)

1. Sex role. 2. Sex role—United States. I. Egendorf, Laura K., 1973–. II. Series: Opposing viewpoints series (Unnumbered)
HQ1075.M353 2000

305.3—dc21

99-25743
CIP

Copyright ©2000 by Greenhaven Press, Inc.

Printed in the U.S.A.

No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means, electrical, mechanical, or otherwise, including, but not limited to, photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Every effort has been made to trace the owners of copyrighted material.

Greenhaven Press, Inc., P.O. Box 289009
San Diego, CA 92198-9009

**“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE
NO LAW . . . ABRIDGING THE
FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF
THE PRESS.”**

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

The basic foundation of our democracy is the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of expression. The Opposing Viewpoints Series is dedicated to the concept of this basic freedom and the idea that it is more important to practice it than to enshrine it.

CONTENTS

Why Consider Opposing Viewpoints?	9
Introduction	12

Chapter 1: How Are Gender Roles Established?

Chapter Preface	16
1. Biological Differences Establish Gender Roles <i>Charley Reese</i>	17
2. Culture Establishes Gender Roles <i>Deborah L. Rhode</i>	21
3. Both Biology and Culture Help Establish Gender Roles <i>Deborah Blum</i>	25
4. Brain Structure Explains Male/Female Differences <i>John Leo</i>	31
5. The Role of Brain Structure Is Overstated <i>Miranda Spencer</i>	35
6. Hormones Determine Gender Traits <i>Dorion Sagan</i>	41
7. The Idea of Multiple Genders Is Necessary <i>Alex Gino</i>	48
8. The Idea of Multiple Genders Is Wrong <i>Chuck Colson</i>	52
Periodical Bibliography	55

Chapter 2: Have Women's Roles Changed for the Better?

Chapter Preface	57
1. Women Are Still Oppressed <i>Ellen Neuborne</i>	58
2. Women Are Not Oppressed <i>Elinor Burkett</i>	65
3. Women Face Discrimination in the Workplace <i>Katha Pollitt</i>	72
4. Women Do Not Face Discrimination in the Workplace <i>Lawrence W. Reed</i>	76

5. Women's Opportunities in the Military Need to Be Expanded Rosemary Mariner	81
6. Women's Opportunities in the Military Do Not Need to Be Expanded Suzanne Fields	85
7. Society Has Lost Its Respect for Mothers Marian Kester Coombs	89
8. Society Does Not Respect Childless Women Joan Smith	95
Periodical Bibliography	100
Chapter 3: Have Men's Roles Changed for the Better?	
Chapter Preface	102
1. Society Favors Men Allan G. Johnson	103
2. Society Is Biased Against Men R.F. Doyle	110
3. Masculinity Needs to Be Restored Waller R. Newell	118
4. Masculinity Is Dangerous Susan Douglas	124
5. The Role of Fathers and Husbands Is Disrespected Stephen Chapman	128
6. The Role of Fathers Is Overemphasized Olga Silverstein and Beth Rashbaum	132
Periodical Bibliography	138
Chapter 4: What Will Improve Male/Female Relationships?	
Chapter Preface	140
1. Marriages Will Improve If Wives Submit to Their Husbands Christine McClelland	141
2. Marriages Will Not Improve If Wives Submit to Their Husbands Cokie and Steven Roberts	148
3. Mutual Respect Between Spouses Will Improve Marriage Don Browning	152

4. Men Need to Develop a New Masculinity Paul Lashmar	157
5. A Return to Some Traditional Gender Roles Would Improve Society Geoff Dench	162
Periodical Bibliography	167
For Further Discussion	169
Organizations to Contact	171
Bibliography of Books	176
Index	180

WHY CONSIDER OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS?

“The only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this.”

John Stuart Mill

In our media-intensive culture it is not difficult to find differing opinions. Thousands of newspapers and magazines and dozens of radio and television talk shows resound with differing points of view. The difficulty lies in deciding which opinion to agree with and which “experts” seem the most credible. The more inundated we become with differing opinions and claims, the more essential it is to hone critical reading and thinking skills to evaluate these ideas. Opposing Viewpoints books address this problem directly by presenting stimulating debates that can be used to enhance and teach these skills. The varied opinions contained in each book examine many different aspects of a single issue. While examining these conveniently edited opposing views, readers can develop critical thinking skills such as the ability to compare and contrast authors’ credibility, facts, argumentation styles, use of persuasive techniques, and other stylistic tools. In short, the Opposing Viewpoints Series is an ideal way to attain the higher-level thinking and reading skills so essential in a culture of diverse and contradictory opinions.

In addition to providing a tool for critical thinking, Opposing Viewpoints books challenge readers to question their own strongly held opinions and assumptions. Most people form their opinions on the basis of upbringing, peer pressure, and personal, cultural, or professional bias. By reading carefully balanced opposing views, readers must directly confront new ideas as well as the opinions of those with whom they disagree. This is not to simplistically argue that everyone who reads opposing views will—or should—change his or her opinion. Instead, the series enhances readers’ understanding of their own views by encouraging confrontation with opposing ideas. Careful examination of others’ views can lead to the readers’ understanding of the logical inconsistencies in their own opinions, perspective on

why they hold an opinion, and the consideration of the possibility that their opinion requires further evaluation.

EVALUATING OTHER OPINIONS

To ensure that this type of examination occurs, *Opposing Viewpoints* books present all types of opinions. Prominent spokespeople on different sides of each issue as well as well-known professionals from many disciplines challenge the reader. An additional goal of the series is to provide a forum for other, less known, or even unpopular viewpoints. The opinion of an ordinary person who has had to make the decision to cut off life support from a terminally ill relative, for example, may be just as valuable and provide just as much insight as a medical ethicist's professional opinion. The editors have two additional purposes in including these less known views. One, the editors encourage readers to respect others' opinions—even when not enhanced by professional credibility. It is only by reading or listening to and objectively evaluating others' ideas that one can determine whether they are worthy of consideration. Two, the inclusion of such viewpoints encourages the important critical thinking skill of objectively evaluating an author's credentials and bias. This evaluation will illuminate an author's reasons for taking a particular stance on an issue and will aid in readers' evaluation of the author's ideas.

As series editors of the *Opposing Viewpoints* Series, it is our hope that these books will give readers a deeper understanding of the issues debated and an appreciation of the complexity of even seemingly simple issues when good and honest people disagree. This awareness is particularly important in a democratic society such as ours in which people enter into public debate to determine the common good. Those with whom one disagrees should not be regarded as enemies but rather as people whose views deserve careful examination and may shed light on one's own.

Thomas Jefferson once said that "difference of opinion leads to inquiry, and inquiry to truth." Jefferson, a broadly educated man, argued that "if a nation expects to be ignorant and free . . . it expects what never was and never will be." As individuals and as a nation, it is imperative that we consider the opinions of others and examine them with skill and discernment. The *Opposing Viewpoints* Series is intended to help readers achieve this goal.

David L. Bender & Bruno Leone,
Series Editors

Greenhaven Press anthologies primarily consist of previously published material taken from a variety of sources, including periodicals, books, scholarly journals, newspapers, government documents, and position papers from private and public organizations. These original sources are often edited for length and to ensure their accessibility for a young adult audience. The anthology editors also change the original titles of these works in order to clearly present the main thesis of each viewpoint and to explicitly indicate the opinion presented in the viewpoint. These alterations are made in consideration of both the reading and comprehension levels of a young adult audience. Every effort is made to ensure that Greenhaven Press accurately reflects the original intent of the authors included in this anthology.

INTRODUCTION

“There is a definite relationship between biological reality and gender identity.”

—Robert Nadeau, professor of English at George Mason University

“Most of what we think of as essential differences between the sexes are actually the result of imposing different conditions on men and women.”

—Joan Smith, journalist and author

The first thing most parents learn about their newborn is whether the child is a boy or a girl. From that moment, most of those children act in certain ways. Girls play with dolls and braid each other's hair, while boys play with trucks and get into fights. As the children grow up, the girls are expected to be more emotional and empathetic, while aggression is seen as a typical male trait. To some people, this behavior seems perfectly natural. However, debate exists over whether seemingly gender-specific behavior is a part of nature or is the result of social conditioning.

To some scientists and theorists, the biological differences between men and women make their gender roles inevitable. These “essentialists” contend that gender behavior is coded in the brain and in the chemistry of the body. Brain structure is cited as a key reason for gender differences. For example, neuroscientists have discovered that women's brains have a larger corpus callosum, which serves as the bridge that carries messages between the right and left hemispheres. Some theorists believe this difference in structure explains why women are more intuitive and better at expressing their emotions—the two hemispheres communicate more in women's brains, so information flows more readily from the emotional right hemisphere to the verbal left hemisphere. In addition to differences in the brain, other biological factors may play a part in shaping gender behavior. According to Clinton J. Jesser, a professor at Northern Illinois University: “There . . . appear to be genetic-hormonally based differences between the sexes in general perceptual/cognitive functions as well as . . . roughness in interpersonal contact and play (all higher for males) and, later, relational affinity to others.” Hormones are believed to affect the genders in different ways, such as the way men and women respond to drugs or the association of testosterone with male aggression.

Essentialists also believe that, because of their sex, men and women have dissimilar attitudes toward marriage and procreation. Because pregnancy and motherhood are time-consuming and difficult, some analysts argue, it is natural for a woman to seek one partner who she thinks will be the best father and provider. On the other hand, impregnating a woman takes little time and effort for a man, so it is seen as biologically inevitable that a man will be more promiscuous. These biological differences further influence parenting as well. Mothers are believed to develop a relationship while the infant is still in the womb and during breastfeeding, making mothers more sensitive than fathers to the needs of nonverbal infants.

Other observers disagree that gender traits are encoded in the brain or in hormones. These experts believe that society shapes gender, pointing out that children are born into a society that has preexisting gender preferences and expectations. This view, known as social constructionism, asserts that children simply fulfill the biological image with which they identify. According to social constructionists, men and women behave differently because of social conditioning that is propagated by behaviors that are prevalent in society and reinforced by the media, family, and peers. For example, some analysts view articles in women's and girls' magazines as informing females how they should look and how they should behave. Advertisements are also seen as shaping and fostering gender stereotypes. Barbara Stern, a professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey, observes: "Stereotypes about sex-linked appropriate behaviors—including language—persist and are embodied in advertisements." She cites an advertisement for Merrill Lynch that portrayed a female financial consultant as nurturing and cooperative, while her male counterpart is described as aggressive and competitive.

Like their female counterparts, men and boys are bombarded with cultural messages, some writers contend. A boy who plays with Barbie dolls, or shows interest in other pursuits normally associated with girls, might be looked at askance, and his behavior may be corrected by peer pressure or even by parental persuasion. Columnist Katha Pollitt writes: "Could it be that even sports-resistant moms see athletics as part of manliness? That if their sons wanted to spend the weekend writing up their diaries, or reading, or baking, they'd find it disturbing?" Studies show that teachers and peers also teach boys at any early age what type of behavior to avoid or embrace; boys are kept away from the dolls and the play kitchens, note Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell, the co-authors of *Men in Perspective: Practice, Power and Identity*.

tity. These cultural messages can have their downside, some social constructionists note. Phyllis Burke, the author of *Gender Shock: Exploding the Myths of Male and Female*, writes: "Male researchers have now found that the masculine sex role is significantly related to psychological stress, and that the condition driving gender role conflict in men is a deep fear of being, or appearing, feminine."

However, the essentialist and social constructionist views are not incompatible. Most theorists contend that biology and sociology are, if not equally influential in determining gender behavior, then at least inseparable. Deborah Blum, a professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, observes that the testosterone levels of female lawyers or police officers are higher than those of stay-at-home mothers. She notes that one cannot ascertain whether the testosterone level influenced the career choice or vice versa, thus indicating how biological and social forces cannot be wholly separated. In fact, the exact influence may never be known because gender expectations are forced on individuals at an early age. Edley and Wetherell cite studies that show parents treat boys and girls differently from the day of birth, even decorating the bedrooms of newborns with gender-specific wallpaper. As a result, the authors note, "It becomes virtually impossible to decide whether a particular behavioural sex difference is the result of biological factors or differential parental treatment."

Some physical differences between men and women are undeniable. But universal explanations do not exist for all gender differences, great or small. *Male/Female Roles: Opposing Viewpoints* considers the behavior of men and women in the following chapters: How Are Gender Roles Established? Have Women's Roles Changed for the Better? Have Men's Roles Changed for the Better? What Will Improve Male/Female Relationships? In these chapters, the authors debate whether men and women have naturally distinct roles or if these roles are part of social expectations.

CHAPTER 1

HOW ARE GENDER ROLES ESTABLISHED?

CHAPTER PREFACE

In the 1960s, the penis of an eight-month-old boy was accidentally destroyed during minor surgery. His parents were told by a doctor to raise the boy as a girl and surgery was performed to create female anatomy. At first, this surgery was considered a success and reported in medical journals as proof that sex-reassignment surgery was viable. However, three decades later it was revealed that the child—known pseudonymously as John/Joan—had always thought of himself as a boy, despite being dressed in girl's clothes and raised as a girl. John/Joan wanted to learn how to shave, played with his twin brother's toys, and voiced interest in being a garbage collector. When he was a teenager, his father told John/Joan about the surgery, and the boy underwent a sex change to return to his birth gender. Although unable to father children, John eventually married and adopted his wife's children. Critics of sex-reassignment surgery cite this case as proof that gender identity is part of an individual's biology or "nature" and not something that is learned through observance of social conventions. Doctors Kenneth Kipnis and Milton Diamond, writing about the case, observe: "Though Joan learned all she was supposed to, her behavior nonetheless exhibited quintessential male elements. . . . Feminine social imprinting did not occur."

But even with such a compelling case, some scholars believe that it is not biology that determines sexual identity. They contend that social and cultural messages also influence—or "nurture"—gender. According to Deborah L. Rhode, a law professor who has written on gender issues, parents, teachers, and the media are key influences in creating gender identity. For example, she argues, parents prefer that their children play with gender-appropriate toys. "Although over four-fifths of surveyed parents say that it is important for children to play with toys of all kinds, they provide more approval for 'sex-appropriate' choices," she writes. Because parents and the rest of society have culturally constructed views of typical and appropriate gender behavior, they consciously or unconsciously convey these expectations to children. The children are usually eager to fulfill the expectations, Rhode contends.

A consensus may never be reached in the debate over whether nature or nurture has the greatest influence in determining gender. In the following chapter, the authors propose various biological and cultural aspects of identity that may shape gender roles.

1

VIEWPOINT

“Male and female differences,
physical, emotional and mental, are
biological, not environmental.”

BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES ESTABLISH GENDER ROLES

Charley Reese

In the following viewpoint, Charley Reese argues that, contrary to the belief of feminists, gender is determined by biology and not by environment. In cautioning against those who would ignore the biological differences that shape their gender, he cites the case of Shannon Faulkner. The first woman allowed to enroll in the Citadel—a South Carolina military college—Faulkner dropped out soon after her entrance, citing stress and exhaustion. According to Reese, Faulkner made the correct decision in leaving the Citadel because she heeded her inherent nature. Reese is a syndicated columnist.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. According to Reese, what are some mental skills in which men are superior to women?
2. In the author's view, what type of women can physically keep up with men?
3. What does Reese think has caused many of the twentieth century's problems?

Reprinted from Charley Reese, “Faulkner Was Feminists’ Pawn,” *Conservative Chronicle*, September 13, 1995, with special permission from King Features Syndicate.

I don't know which has been sadder—watching young Shannon Faulkner decide that, after all, she really didn't want to be a Citadel cadet or the fire-hosing of venom on both Faulkner and the Citadel by feminists and male feminist-panderers.

Actually, both Shannon Faulkner and the Citadel are simply victims of feminist ideology that is based on a false premise—namely, that differences between men and women are a result of social conditioning.

DIFFERENCES ARE BIOLOGICAL

There is a ton of medical studies which disprove that idiotic notion. Male and female differences, physical, emotional and mental, are biological, not environmental.

Men have greater size and strength, a greater capacity for short-term energy output; women have lesser size and strength but a greater capacity for endurance. Mentally, men are better at spatial and mathematical skills and logic; women are better at verbal and social skills and empathy.

Temperamentally, men are inclined toward dominance, rank-related aggression (competitiveness), independence, psychopathy and sensation-seeking. Women are inclined toward submission, defensive aggression, attachment and nurturance, anxiety and security-seeking.

These characteristics are taken from studies by Symons, 1979; Seward and Seward, 1980; and Ellis, 1986. All are quoted in the 1989 book *The Great Sex Divide*, by Dr. Glenn Wilson, senior lecturer in psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London. Scott-Townsend is the publisher.

CONTROLLED BY GENES

The point is that Faulkner was used as pawn by feminists to make an ideological Brownie point, but in the end, she listened to her inherent nature and quit an environment to which she is not suited. No one should blame her or find fault with her. In leaving, she did the right thing.

As much as an affront to our dignity as it may be, we are all at the mercy of genes and hormones to a much larger extent than social determinists are willing to admit, though by now, social determinism is pretty much a flat-earth theory held only by intellectual reactionaries.

To head off those who always cite the exceptions, I will remind you that the characteristic of nature is profusion, not uniformity. There are certainly some women who can keep up with the boys—but they will have narrow pelvises and greater amounts of

male hormones than the average.

Conversely, there are men with wider pelvises and more female hormones who tend to exhibit certain female characteristics, such as passiveness.

WOMEN'S NATURE IS DIFFERENT FROM MEN'S

Feminism has been at war with human nature from the beginning, and nowhere more so than in its fierce campaign against motherhood. Babies and children, feminists rightly perceive, are what make women's lives dramatically, unalterably different from men's. For the past three decades, feminist scholars and writers have attempted to prove that our roles as parents, like our roles in the workplace, are interchangeable with men's.

Biology, however, has persistently behaved like an impolite relative who will not leave a family event. For example, a Harvard Medical School study reported in 1997 that women undergoing infertility treatments had levels of depression comparable to patients with AIDS and cancer. Alas, it isn't social conditioning that makes women grieve this way. It is written into our DNA.

Mona Charen, *Women's Quarterly*, Spring 1998.

Actually, radical feminists are doing the same thing homophobes do: They beat up on and bully women for something they can't help—being women. Nature doesn't give a flea's hind leg for our social theories, fads, fashions, political ideologies and other nutty ideas with which people preoccupy themselves. Nature just is. And all of us are part of it whether we like it or not.

DO NOT FIGHT NATURE

A source of much of the 20th century's madness, cruelty and bloodshed has been the result of the refusal to live in accordance with nature or to even recognize its reality. Any time we are out of sync with nature, we, not nature, will be the loser and the sufferer.

We must adapt to reality; reality will not adapt to us or allow us to shape it. That's what Shannon Faulkner discovered when she met the reality, as opposed to the theory, of being a cadet at the Citadel.

CRACKPOT FEMINISM

Feminism in the United States is a current mania. The combination of mediocre minds and cowardice is a fertile field in

which to grow all kinds of manias, cockamamie theories and ideologies.

Nevertheless, feminism needs to be dragged and dropped into the ashcan of crackpot ideas. It has nothing whatsoever to do with real people and nothing to offer people except miserable carping and undeserved guilt trips.

Neither Shannon Faulkner nor the Citadel deserves any criticism.