



Psy 352 Gender Identity:

Psychological Theories and Literary Representations

Fall 2006

Class hours: Thur 1:00-3:45 p.m

Office hours: M, W, F 10-noon; Tue and other times, by appointment

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Purpose:

This seminar is designed to provide an opportunity for you to consider gender identity from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining literature and psychology. The psychological theories of sex-role development that we will consider are biological, social cognitive (Bandura), schema (Bem), and Freudian. A second course goal is to help you to polish your skills in written and oral communication and in critical analysis of theories and literature. The course satisfies the major “seminar” requirement and counts for the developmental area requirement.

Format:

The general format for class time will be student-led discussions, student presentations, and films or video excerpts. Prior to class, you are expected (a) to read the assignments AND ANY OTHER pertinent material you find necessary to enhance your understanding of the topics and (b) to turn in your written assignments (discussion papers) in advance by Tues. noon EVEN ON THE DAY YOU ARE A LEADER. The advanced copies serve two purposes: They ensure that you have thought about the material, and they help the discussion leaders prepare for their jobs as leaders. Leaders will be able to organize class time more effectively if they know how people reacted to the material. Note on the syllabus which days you turn in one copy (when I am discussion leader) and which, two (when class members are leaders).

Role of discussion leaders:

Prior to the class meeting, you and your co-leader will collect one copy of the students' discussion papers on the reading assignments. From these, you will organize the day's discussion, deciding what to talk about and in what order. This might be based on what material caused the most diversity of opinion or difficulty, which seem more likely to generate extended discussion, the order in which they were assigned, your personal favorites, or whatever you choose. To actually begin discussion, you might ask certain class members to summarize their positions; ask for volunteers; or ask for clarification, elaboration, or evidence for a certain statement. You are supposed to facilitate discussion, not "tell the right answer." You and your partner should make sure that all students have an opportunity to participate, and you should balance your leadership role with your partner. Do NOT split up the material with one leader solely in charge of one story or poem. [Imagine that person might be ill that day.] Both of you are responsible for everything. If at any time you are confused about how to proceed, ask me.

Role of participants and Attendance Policy:

In addition to being prepared for class by reading the assignments and writing the discussion papers, you are obligated to participate in class discussion by offering your point of view, listening actively to the views of your classmates, and seeking clarification from them as needed. Class time should be supportive, not competitive. Obviously, in a class like this, attendance and active participation is critical; therefore, absences and nonparticipation will negatively impact your grade. I understand, however, that there are personal illnesses and family crises that can arise. Therefore, you may miss ONE class without penalty; each additional missed class/not meaningful participation will lower your letter grade by 5%. Because we only meet once a week, a missed class is the equivalent of missing three normal lecture classes. If you show up for class with a highly contagious illness (e.g., flu, cold), I will ask you not to attend and it will count as an absence, so do NOT drag yourself out of a sick bed – it won't do you any good.

Grading:

Discussion leading =	16 pts
Discussion participation =	64 pts [based on peer and instructor assessment]
Discussion papers (9 @ 18 pts) =	162 pts
Final paper or project [see below] =	54 pts
Oral presentation of final paper/project =	18 pts
TOTAL = 314 pts	
A/A- range 90-100% [282-314] ; B+/B/B- range 80-89% [251-281], etc..	

Honor Code Considerations:

All discussion papers and the final paper are to be written individually and pledged* as your own work, but you are encouraged to have rousing conversations with your classmates prior to writing your papers. Use of spell-checker and grammar-checker computer programs is not only permitted, it is encouraged. See me individually about specific help from the Writing Center and the Speaking Center.

***"On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this work, I have followed and will continue to observe all regulations regarding it, and I am unaware of any violations of the Honor Code by others."**

Guide for Discussion Papers:

In keeping with the theme of the course, gender identity, focus your reactions to literary pieces on what each says about gender. In general, you primarily should address what evidence in the literary excerpt/book supports or exemplifies the particular psychological theory or psychological research finding that is under discussion that week. In what ways do the literary author's story or characters support or contradict the psychological material? Secondly, identify what literary images or symbols the author uses to emphasize or convey the characters' gender identities. For example, names sometimes evoke personality traits or set you up to think of a character is gendered ways. Sometimes characters are compared to animals that, by analogy, connote gendered characteristics (e.g., a woman is likened to a doe or rabbit; a man is a fox or a bull). Clothing, weather, time of year, etc. might be used to associate men or women with particular traits. Because your papers will be relatively short, you need only the briefest of introductory paragraphs that alerts your reader to the structure and main points of your paper; do NOT summarize the psychological readings as if you were writing an essay test. Rather, the

papers are more like “applications” of the psychology material to the literary pieces.

Type papers, 3-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, one-sided (if possible). Short quotes, appropriately noted with page numbers, are OK but they should not dominate your paper. If you use unassigned materials (e.g., a child development text), then cite regular bibliographic references (APA style is required for Psychology majors; others may use MLA). Material that everyone has read (i.e., part of the assigned readings) can be noted in passing; a full reference is not necessary.

Final Paper or Project:

You may choose one of the following two options for a final paper/project.

Choice 1:

Cat's Eye oral presentation and paper:

After the class reads Margaret Atwood's **Cat's Eye** and analyzes the book for its demonstration of girls' and boys' aggressive styles (see Days 11-13 below), you will write a paper that is about three times longer than a normal discussion paper (i.e., it will be 10-12 pages). In it, you will relate **Cat's Eye** to both Freudian and Schema/SCT theory and incorporate some literary analysis. Do not attempt to relate the book to biological theory. The main character's dreams and art work can get you started on the literary analysis, or you can interpret major recurring symbols such as the bridge connecting her school to her home. Before the paper is due, you'll have an opportunity to present your ideas orally and get feedback from your classmates that you can use in your paper.

Choice 2:

Data Collection Project:

You will scientifically sample and analyze children's books, children's TV shows, or children's movies for the degree to which they portray (a) an equal or unequal number of male and female main and secondary characters, and (b) similar or different personality traits, career choices, toys and activities, for boys and girls. Using a technique similar to what you will read about on Day 2 in Diekman and Murnen (2004), operationally define and then count characters and categorize the situations that occur to them and the props they use. Pay attention to the copyright date on books, shows, or movies, and address whether there are noticeable changes over time. Write a scientific-style paper that describes your hypotheses, methods, results, and conclusions. It should be about 10-12 pages long. Before the paper is due, you'll have an opportunity to present your ideas orally and get feedback from your classmates that you can use in your paper.

BOOKS you'll probably want to purchase (we'll read them entirely):

1. Colapinto, J. (2001). **As nature made him: The boy who was raised as a girl**. New York: Perennial.
2. Boylan, J. F. (2003). **She's not there: A life in two genders**. New York: Broadway Books.
3. Toni Morrison's **The bluest eye**.(any edition)
4. Bem, S. (1998). **An unconventional family**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
5. Margaret Atwood's **Cat's eye**. (any edition)

All other readings are on electronic reserve at the library. Whether you print your own copy is your choice, but you'll probably want to.

The daily calendar and complete reading list follows.

Day 2: Aug 31 **Stereotyping- Normative Images**

READ:

- a) Siegler, R., DeLoache, J., & Eisenberg, N. (2006). **How children develop** (2nd ed.). New York: Worth. [excerpts from Chp 15: Gender Development, pp. 572-588 and 594-602.] This reading gives you an overview of the entire course's psychological aspects. For this day, concentrate on pages 572-576 and 594-602.
- b) Diekman, A. B., & Murnen, S. K. (2004). Learning to be little women and little men: The inequitable gender equality of nonsexist children's literature. **Sex Roles, 50**, 373-385. Focus on the Intro (pp 373-376), skim the Methods, skip the Results, focus on the Discussion (pp. 381-382), and look at the Appendix (pp. 382-384).
- c) Rose, S. (1985). Is romance dysfunctional? **International Journal of Women's Studies, 8**, 250-265.
- d) Romance novel [any; often available cheaply at second-hand bookstores or thrift stores] [Note to other instructors: I pass out my own collection of these, prescreened so that they are not too explicitly sexual.]

DISCUSSION PAPER #1 – ONE copy

Possible ideas:

1. Compare the “typical” romance novel or adventure story [Rose's article ideas] to your particular novel for (a) the physical description of the heroine and hero (and rival, if there is one), (b) what relationship the characters have (e.g., employer-employee; co-workers; mutual friends of some third party), age spread, SES differences, (c) what their encounters are like, and (d) which plot elements reveal the masculine and feminine stereotypes exemplified by the romance or adventure novel genre. [Be careful that you do NOT give a plot synopsis—that's probably irrelevant.] Literary devices can probably be worked into points (a) and (c).
2. Using some of the Diekman and Murnen ideas, evaluate the extent to which your novel was sexist or nonsexist. Be specific about the data you used to draw your conclusion (e.g., of the X characters in the book, Y% were men. Women's roles were ...; men's roles were ...). Literary devices might be brought in to substantiate that the setting was feminine or masculine, that the male characters had more power, etc.

Be prepared to share the gist of your paper during class.

Day 3: Sep 7 **Biological Influences-1**

READ:

- a) Siegler, R., DeLoache, J., & Eisenberg, N. (2006). **How children develop** (2nd ed.). New York: Worth. Focus on pp. 576-579 [“Biological perspectives”]
- b) Colapinto, J. (2001). **As nature made him: The boy who was raised as a girl**. New York: Perennial.

In class, we'll see “Sex Unknown,” which is based on the Colapinto book and discuss the book.

No paper is due.

“Sex Unknown” [videorecording] is produced by Andrew Cohen and Stephen Sweigart. WGBH Boston Video, c2001. [Part of the NOVA series]. See <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/gender/> [retrieved 1-14-07]

Day 4: Sep 14 **Biological Influences-2**

READ:

- a) Gold, C. (2001). The intersex spectrum. Retrieve from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/gender/spectrum.html>
- b) Fausto-Sterling, A. (2001). Two sexes are not enough. Retrieve from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/gender/fs.html>
- c) Boylan, J. F. (2003). **She’s not there: A life in two genders**. New York: Broadway Books.

DISCUSSION PAPER #2 -- TWO copies (one for me; one for discussion leaders)

Questions you might consider in the paper (or make up your own):

What do Brenda/David Reimer’s and James/Jenny Boylan’s stories tell us about nature and nurture as influences on gender identity? What does being a boy/girl/man/woman mean to each of them? What signaled gender to them (e.g., body parts, clothing, toys, friends, lovers)? Can you disentangle gender identity from masculinity/femininity? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

Day 5: Sep 21 **Social Cognitive Theory [SCT]-boys**

READ:

- a) Siegler, R., DeLoache, J., & Eisenberg, N. (2006). **How children develop** (2nd ed.). New York: Worth. Focus on pp. 579-583 [“Gender Socialization”]
- b) Bandura, A. (1986). **Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory**. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. “Gender role development” section, pp. 92-98.
- c) Martin, C. L., Ruble, D. N., & Szkrybalo, J. (2002). Cognitive theories of early gender development. **Psychological Bulletin**, **128**, 903-933. Read just pages 904 (starting at the heading “overview and critique of SCT”) to p. 907 now. We’ll get the rest on Day 7.
- d) Conroy, P. (1986). **The prince of tides**. excerpt from Chapter 15, pp. 97-101. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. [Excerpt begins about 14 pages into the chapter, with the sentence “On the Saturday before my father departed for Korea . . .”]
- e) Gaines, E. J. (1963). The sky is gray. Reprinted in H. L. Gates & N. Y. McKay (Eds.). (1996). **The Norton anthology of African American literature**, pp. 2182-2202. New York: Norton.
- f) Lester, J. (1973, July). Being a Boy. **Ms**, 112-113.
- g) Baker, R. (1982). **Growing up** (pp. 94-97). New York: Congdon & Weed. Reprinted in D. N. Sattler, G. P. Kramer, V. Shabatay, & D. A. Bernstein (Eds.). (2000). **Child development in context: Voices and perspectives** (pp. 66-68). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

h) Salisbury, G. (1995). Ice. In A. Mazer (Ed.), **Going where I'm coming from: Memoirs of American youth** (pp. 18-26). New York: Persea Books.

i) Pleck, J. (1976). My male sex role—and ours. In D. S. David & R. Brannon (Eds.), **The forty-nine percent majority: The male sex role** (pp. 254-264). New York: McGraw-Hill.

DISCUSSION PAPER #3 (2 copies)

Use social cognitive theory and literary analysis to interpret some of the selections. [You're responsible in class for all literary excerpts even if you don't include all of them in your paper.]

Day 6: Sep 28 **Social Cognitive Theory-girls**

READ:

Morrison, T. (1970). **The Bluest Eye**. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. [more recent editions are widely available, e.g., (2000). New York: Knopf.]

DISCUSSION PAPER # 4 (2 copies)

Use social cognitive theory and literary analysis (e.g., setting, seasons, characters' names, the Dick-and-Jane reader excerpts that introduce each chapter). Focus on GENDER, not ethnicity (despite that being the book's focus). Consider, for example, how traditional the characters' sex roles are – what are the life experiences for the mothers vs. the fathers; for the girls vs. the boys. In Diekman & Murnen's terminology, does the book present a sexist model for readers?

Day 7: Oct 5 **Schema Theory**

READ

a) Siegler, R., DeLoache, J., & Eisenberg, N. (2006). **How children develop** (2nd ed.). New York: Worth. Focus on pp. 584-588 ["Cognitive contributions to gender development"]

b) Martin, C. L., Ruble, D. N., & Szkrybalo, J. (2002). Cognitive theories of early gender development. **Psychological Bulletin**, **128**, 903-933. Read the rest of the indicated sections: p. 909 Cognitive-Developmental Theory: Major features; skip p. 910 Eval. of gender constancy & conclusions; read p. 911-913 (Gender Schema theory through Conclusions); skip 913-917; read 917 (Early origins) through 918; skip 919-922; read 923 (Features of a cognitive approach) through top paragraph p. 924; skip next 3 paragraphs; read 924 (Active self-initiated view) through p. 927 left column.

c) Bem, S. L. (1993). **The lenses of gender**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. pp. 2-5, 42-43, 80-81.

d) Bem, S. L. (1998). **An unconventional family**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

e) Klein, N. (1973). **Girls can be anything**. New York: Dutton.

[Read when you get to the mention of this story in Bem's **An unconventional family**, p. 119.]

DISCUSSION PAPER # 5 (2 copies)

Use Bem's schema theory to analyze Bem's unconventional family.

Day 8: Oct 12 **Freud**

READ:

- a) Nye, R. D. (2000). **Three psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers** (6th ed.). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole. [excerpts from chapter on Freud: pp. 10-29.]
- b) Pollack, W. (1998). **Real boys: Rescuing our sons from the myths of boyhood**. New York: Holt. pp. 20-51.
- c) Gerstenberg, A. (1941). **Overtones: A play in one act**. Boston: Baker's Plays. Reprinted in S. Eagleton (1988). *Women in literature: Life stages through stories, poems, and plays* (pp. 313-321). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- d) Miller, S. (1986). **The good mother**. New York: Harper & Row. Chapter 12, pp. 243-273.
- e) O'Connor, F. (1981). My Oedipus complex. In **Collected stories** (pp. 282-292). New York: Knopf. (Note, this is the same character as in "The Sissy" for Day 9)
- f) Augustine, J. (1973, Fall). Secretive. **Aphra, The Feminist Literary Magazine**, 4(4), 13-17. Reprinted in M. A. Ferguson (Ed.). (1986). **Images of women in literature** (4th ed.), pp. 88-91. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. NOTE: more recent editions of this book may not have the selection.

NO Discussion paper because of the short school week (Fall Break), but be prepared to discuss in class all the literary readings as if you had written a paper.

Day 9: Oct 19 **Consolidation-1 (all prior theories)**

READ:

- a) Bem, S. L. (1993). **The lenses of gender**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. pp. 16-29, 56-62, 111-115.
- b) Beck, M. (2001). My life as an intersexual. Retrieve from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/gender/beck.html>
- c) Ovid. "Salmacis and Hermaphroditus" from **The Metamorphoses**, Book IV. (1986 translation by A. D. Melville, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 83-85)
- d) Dillard, A. (1987). excerpts from **An American childhood**. New York: Harper & Row. pp. 45-49 [Part One, chapter beginning "Some boys taught me to play football" and 86-93, Part Two, chapter beginning "The interior life expands and fills."] (Note, both are Dillard's autobiographical essays--the same character—and she's a female.)
- e) Conroy, P. (1995). excerpt from **Beach music**, Chapter 21, pp. 339-353. New York: Bantam.
- f) O'Connor, F. (1960). The Sissy. In E. Abels & M. G. Smith (Eds.), **40 best stories from Mademoiselle, 1935-1960**, pp. 383-392. New York: Harper
- g) Ephron, N. (1972, May). A few words about breasts: Shaping up absurd. **Esquire**, 95-97. Reprinted in D. N. Sattler, G. P. Kramer, V. Shabatay, & D. A. Bernstein (Eds.). (2000).

Child development in context: Voices and perspectives (pp. 98-101). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

DISCUSSION PAPER # 6 (2 copies)

Possible topics:

What elements of each theory do you see in Dillard, Conroy, O'Connor, Ephron?

Presuming that Ovid was trying to explain a rare but known condition (hermaphroditic individuals), where does he stand on the nature-nurture question?

Evaluate/react to Beck's statements: "I was born a tiny, helpless almost-boy, but the way my world responded to me is what made and makes me intersexed." Is Beck saying that gender identity is more nurture than nature? In what ways is Beck's experience similar to and different from Reimer's and Boylan's?

Day 10: Oct 26 **Consolidation-2 (all prior theories)**

- a) Rich, A.(1973). Diving into the Wreck. In **Diving into the wreck, poems 1971-1972** (pp. 22-24). New York: Norton. Reprinted in M. A. Ferguson (Ed.). (1986). **Images of women in literature** (4th ed.), pp. 507-509. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. NOTE: more recent editions of this book may not have the selection.
- b) LeGuin, U. K. (1969). "The Question of Sex." Chapter 7 from **The Left Hand of Darkness**. New York: Walker. [See end of syllabus for hand-out on this chapter]
- c) Clausen, J. (1980). Daddy. In **Mother, sister, daughter, lover: Stories** (pp. 16-21). Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press. Reprinted in M. A. Ferguson (Ed.). (1986). **Images of women in literature** (4th ed.), pp. 182-185. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. NOTE: more recent editions of this book may not have the selection.
- d) Apple, M. (1988). Bridging. In P. S. Prescott (Ed.), **The Norton book of American short stories**, pp. 692-700. New York: Norton.
- e) Gordon, M. (1997). Raising Sons. In M. Crawford & R. Unger (Eds.), **In our own words: Readings on the psychology of women and gender**, pp. 269-274. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- f) Gorelick, S. (1994, November/December). The gender trap. *Ms*, 5(3), 60-64. Reprinted in M. Crawford & R. Unger (Eds.). (1997). **In our own words: Readings on the psychology of women and gender**, pp. 329-333. New York: McGraw-Hill.

DISCUSSION PAPER #7 (2 copies)

Possible themes:

What elements of each theory do you see in each piece?

When you first read Rich's poem, did you picture the character as male or female or both or neither? What symbols and images helped you draw that conclusion? What IS the character's mission?

Fantasies (such as LeGuin's) present the fundamental mysteries of gender in an unrealistic fashion (in the literal sense of not being like known reality), to try to see ourselves from a new perspective by imagining what else we might have been. Did she get it right? Would

it be appalling to not have our gender acknowledged in everyday interactions? Do Gethenians present a challenge to the Investigator in the same way that Beck's brazen androgyny (Day 9) presented a challenge to the people he encountered?

Day 11: Nov 2

Begin reading Atwood's **Cat's Eye**.

In class, see "Ma Vie En Rose" ["My Life in Pink"]. We'll discuss the Freudian elements and the cinematic devices (symbols, colors, points of camera view) that support that perspective. No paper due.

Scotta, C. (Producer), & Beliner, A. (Director). (1997). **Ma vie en rose** [Motion Picture]. France. Available from Columbia TriStar Home Video, 1999. In French with English subtitles. For more about the film, see <http://www.sonypictures.com/classics/mavieenrose/>

Day 12: Nov 9

Finish reading Atwood's **Cat's Eye**.

DISCUSSION PAPER #8 (2 copies)

Analyze the movie "Ma Vie En Rose" from Biological and SCT/Schema theory, and the cinematic devices that support those perspectives.

Day 13: Nov 16

READ

a) Thorne, B. (1986). Girls and boys together...but mostly apart: Gender arrangements in elementary schools. In W. W. Hartup & Z. Rubin (Eds.), **Relationships and development** (pp. 167-184). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

b) Crick, N. R., Bigbee, M. A., & Howes, C. (1996). Gender differences in children's normative beliefs about aggression: How do I hurt thee? Let me count the ways. **Child Development**, **67**, 1003-1014.

DISCUSSION PAPER # 9 (2 copies)

List examples from **Cat's Eye** of Thorne's four types of cross-sex interactions (border work, heterosexual-infused, traveling in the world of the other, and relaxed) and of Crick et al.'s notion of relational aggression. This is just a list – not a coherent essay.

Day 14: Nov 30

Oral presentations on your **Cat's Eye** final paper or research project for class feedback.

Final paper due by 5 p.m. Monday Dec. 11.

Handout:

Background for reading Chapter 7 “The Question of Sex” from Ursula LeGuin’s **The Left Hand of Darkness**.

A federation of planets, called the Ekumen, sends “investigators” to visit secretly new planets to learn enough about the place so they can later openly send an informed “envoy” to invite the new planet members to join the federation. Chapter 7 is one investigator’s field notes. The investigator, Ong Tot Opping, is visiting the planet that the natives call Gethen (thus they are Gethenians) but the planet is called Winter by the visitor, because of its harsh climate. Gethen has two major nations: Karhide and Orgoreyn, each with its own language. When you read a notation such as “(Kard. **secher**)” you’re just being told the Karhidish word – these will not be important for our purposes.

The investigator Ong is in Karhide; another investigator mentioned in the chapter, Otie Nim, is in Orgoreyn, and a third investigator is named Tinibossol.

Among the planets of the federation are Terra (people = Terrans, which in other science fiction books is a synonym for Earth), S (people = hilfs), Rokanan, and Chiffewar. Ong speculates in the first paragraph that Terra originally had proto-hominid autochthones* but was colonized by the “Hainish” (yet another planet’s people), and perhaps Gethen was similarly colonized.

*The word “autochthones” is defined as “aboriginal person. Somebody who is descended from the earliest inhabitants of a region” (according to the **Encarta World English Dictionary**).