### Three Theories of Gender

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<th>Theory</th>
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| **Gender Essentialism**                                             | According to this theory of gender:  
- Nature provided humanity with two sexes (male and female), determined by our external and internal genetalia. This is a binary rooted in biology/nature.  
- Our biological make-up is essentially linked to our gender identity/expression/role (for example: a woman, who has a vagina and breasts, uterus, xx chromosomes, and an appropriately female hormone balance, will automatically be more emotional than most men, have a tendency toward motherhood and nurturing/caring professions, etc. simply because biology dictates it).  
- “Gender” can be used interchangeably with “sex” because both are rooted in nature, and essentially linked  
- Any gender expression not usually linked with the appropriate biological make-up would then be considered “abnormal” or “unnatural” |
| **Sex - Gender - Sexual Orientation Triangle**                      | According to this theory of gender, sex, gender, and sexual orientation are three separate components of our sexual identities. Each one of us has a sex, a gender, and a sexual orientation, and the combinations of these three components are endless. Our sexual identities, combining these three components, are as unique as our fingerprints.  

**SEX = body/biology**  
- Characteristics: chromosomes, hormones, external and internal reproductive organs and body parts (breasts, penis, ovaries, etc.)  
- Options: male, female, intersex  

**GENDER = culture**  
- Gender Identity: internal sense of who we are in terms of gender  
- Gender Expression: the way we communicate our gender identity to the world (clothing, hair styles, mannerisms, etc.)  
- Gender Role: set of expectations society places on us regarding how we interact with others in society (family roles, occupations, etc.)  

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION = relationship/attraction**  
- Our sexual orientation describes the relationship between who we are (our own gender identity) and who we are attracted to (others’ gender identities)  
- Options: heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, pansexual, omnisexual, MSM, WSW, same-gender loving, and countless others. |
| **Postmodern Theories of Gender**                                   | According to theorists including Judith Butler, Kate Bornstein, and Riki Ann Wilchins:  

**SEX is an act, i.e. intercourse**  
**GENDER = BODY/BIOLOGY + CULTURE**  
Therefore: The categorization of bodies into two sexes is just as socially constructed as the categorization of all other cultural, behavioral, psychological characteristics into two genders.