

What is Gender Equality? A General Review of Gender Politics and Gendered Bodies in Sports

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the connections among the concepts of sex, gender, and bodies because understanding their meanings is essential for gender studies and feminist theory, especially with relation to gender politics in sports.

Keywords: *gender, sex, body, masculinity, femininity, sport, sexuality*

1. Introductory Perspectives

(1) The Concepts of Sex, Gender, and Bodies

How should we understand *gender, sex, and body*? The aim of this paper is to analyze the connections among these conceptions because understanding their meanings is essential for gender studies and feminist theory, especially with relation to gender politics in sports. *Sex* is well known to describe male and female biological differences, while *gender* refers to the range of characteristics which pertain to and differentiate masculinity and femininity based on historically, socially, and culturally accepted ideas about the state of being male, female, or Other. Put another way, the word *gender* has been adopted to describe the static social roles for males and females which are taken for granted but are fabricated by history, society, and culture and are changeable. For example, in discussing sexual differences, the association of combativeness with male and peaceful with female does not cause a feeling of discomfort, but the reverse might. However, it can be understood that not all men have a combative disposition, and not all woman have a peaceful nature. Moreover, we cannot say that the former are imperfect males, and the latter imperfect females, although they are considered to be exceptions, deviations from ordinary nature. Here, we must note that it is absurd that human nature and behavior are decided by sex because sex can be considered biologically fixed, but gender is flexible and depends on individual characteristics. One aim of gender studies is to foster flexible social attitudes towards sex

differences¹.

I do not think that I am the first to see that the notion of gender has more wide-ranging implications than sex. In academia, we can have the field of gender studies but not sex studies. We can coin the phrase *gender equality* but not *sex equality*. In short, *sex* merely connotes biological differences, but *gender* evokes ideas and opinions, frequently associated with *discrimination*. Although *sex* is decided by nature for most people, individuals can create *gender* from their natures and ideas, fighting discrimination and living by their own values unconstrained by preconceived ideas.

The expression *gendered body* arises from the imposition of a way of life and social gender roles on individuals according to sex. Most importantly, these imposed gender roles have been perceived to be as natural as breathing and have not been recognized as discrimination. This imposition has been naturally fixed not as prejudice but as common sense in human societies. We should look carefully at things and ascertain their true nature, which implies that the nature of things is present first and then understood and accepted by societies, rather than fixed by others. However, for sexual difference, this idea seems to work in reverse. It is the ideas of what males should do and what females should do that is present first, and both males and females follow these ideas in deciding their future courses.

In recent years, the notion of gender equality has been recognized to be as essential as racial equality for general human equality. Due to gender studies, women in modern

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societies can more easily live their own lives than women in the past who did not even know the phrase *gender equality*. The spread of the concept of gender equality throughout the world has created the illusion that it is reality. However, we cannot say that gender equality has been established in our society. As mentioned, whether consciously or subconsciously, modern society applies gender stereotypes which fix individuals' way of life, beginning with the belief that, at birth, boys look nice in blue clothes, and girls in pink and that, in childhood, boy should play baseball or soccer, and girls piano. This pattern continues into culture. It is an accepted notion that girls should be taught cooking, but on the professional level, most people imagine that men wield the kitchen knives and play the piano with orchestras. Gender stereotypes organize the structures of male domination and misogyny and propagate many prejudices in human society. As Exemplified in the saying "women think with their wombs," the social scheme changes merely biological differences between men and women into absolute differences in ability in various domains. The result is the false impression that women cannot make objective judgements and are excluded from public world. In the distinction between cooking as culture and as a profession, there is a gender "gaff" between men and women, although they perform the same task.

(2) The Weaker Sex and Gendered Bodies

Simone de Beauvoir, a French writer and philosopher who had enormous impact on the field of gender studies in the 20th century, coined the famous phrase, "One is not born but rather becomes a woman." (Beauvoir 295). Beauvoir's classic book *The Second Sex* sold more copies in the United States than her home country of France and influenced Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, even becoming a springboard for the second-wave feminism movement. In analyzing in depth "a woman's situation" from the perspective of freedom, Beauvoir asked, "What is a woman?" and answered that the human subject is a man, and a woman is just a human object, namely "the Other."

And she is simply what man decrees; thus she is called "the sex," by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex – absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other. (Beauvoir 16)

"The Other," Beauvoir explained, is understood as subordinate to men, a status that is imposed on the definition of womanhood which women should accept. A woman should be passive and play the roles of mother, wife, and daughter, subordinate to men, who should be husbands, fathers, and sons.

As Beauvoir mentioned, a social rule has been established that men may work outside the home, while women stay in the home. However, essential domestic affairs are laborious tasks, which means that women play important roles that establish the foundation of society. Many people eagerly advocate gender equality as if it were a new trend, but this concept appears to be meaningless. Why should we insist on gender equality anymore? Have not women coexisted in society with men? It should be said that, thanks to women's defense of the family and home, men can work outside the domestic sphere free from anxiety, and thanks to women's bearing and raising of children, human beings can survive. Women's very housework has built the foundations of human society, which indicates that women have worked throughout history. However, it is well known that the sexual division of labor in the modern age has weakened women's situation. The established system assigns men to production which is salaried and presumed to be important labor, while women's labor is within the family, is unpaid, and is viewed as non-productive. Why should women accept this inferior position?

Human beings can be sexually divided into the two categories of men and women, and a person's sex is determined by examining the body and pronouncing it a man's body or a woman's body. In other words, it can be said that the very body displays sexual differences. Traditionally, the body has not been studied in the humanities but in the natural sciences, such as medicine and biology; however, recent feminism studies have considered the body when analyzing gender. In the mid-20th century, feminist theorists engaged in a heated debate over whether the advantages and disadvantages of men and women have roots in the biological differences of their bodies. As early as the mid-19th century, John Stuart Mill argued that the physical differences between men and women are deeply influenced by their social positions.

In the first place, the opinion in favour of the present system, which entirely subordinates the weaker sex to the stronger, rests upon theory

only; for there never has been trial made of any other: so that experience, in the sense in which it is vulgarly opposed to theory, cannot be presented to have pronounced any verdict. And in the second place, the adoption of this system of inequality never was the result of deliberation, or forethought, or any social ideas, or any notion whatever of what conducted to the benefit of humanity or the good order of society. It arose simply from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman (owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength) was found in a state of bondage to some man. (Mill 4-5)

Mill labels the inequality of justice between men and women as “the law of the strongest” and argues that women’s subordinate position was established early in human history because women were thought to be physically weak. Over the centuries, this prejudice spread into various fields, such as politics, law, and the economy. Moreover, Mill believed that it would be difficult to change women’s subordinate position because, unlike in other types of slavery, women were trained in early childhood to voluntarily obey men’s orders and were taught that willing sacrifice was women’s nature. However, he also contended that, like slavery, gender inequality was an injustice, and prejudice against women should be eliminated. Mill’s theory can be regarded as an ancestor of 20th-century feminist theories. His assertion that society has considered gender to be an extension of biological difference tends to be interpreted as biological determinism. I object to this description because Mill’s argument should be seen to have led to the idea of the body politic developed around 100 years later by Michel Foucault. Although Mill argued that the strengths and weaknesses of men and women were naturally caused by their physical differences, he also held the opinion that women’s subordinate position was artificially created by men, who have more physical power than women. Similarly, Foucault viewed the body as influenced by history and culture and did not cling to the idea that sexual and biological differences are absolute. As Foucault maintained, power can be inscribed on the body, so women’s bodies are explained to be naturally passive, which should be interpreted to align with Mill’s law of the strongest.

In *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault explored the impacts of power on the body and described women’s bodies as “Docile bodies,” a view which many feminist theorists have admired. Feminist theorists, who have investigated the negative cultural association of women and bodies, were compelled by Foucault’s views to

first examine how they interpret women’s bodies, especially biological differences. Currently, most feminist scholars studying the body politic have been influenced by Foucault’s theory to a lesser or greater degree (Ogino 5). According to Foucault, women’s “Docile bodies” were constructed into bodies trained for obedience by convention and discipline in the social power structure. Consequently, women have been defined through branded bodies by power throughout history. Women have been possessed and occupied by men as their property and sexually dominated to serve men’s lust.

It has been an essential but difficult task for feminist scholars to resolve problems in how they should understand women’s bodies defined by sexual difference in the actual world. When women demand equal rights and opportunities with men, must women’s bodies be similar to men’s in both essence and function? If so, how one can interpret biological difference as having genital function? In the real world, when defining women’s sex through childbirth, can we not recognize that women cannot be the same as men in critical areas, which leads to reluctant acceptance that it might be unavoidable that women are treated unfairly by men? In short, the persistent, frustrating dilemma between equality and difference can complicate how we understand the physical and biological differences between women and men (Ogino 6).

Arguments over this problem have been broadly divided into two categories. Liberal and some radical feminists insisted that, for women to be on equal footing with men, their physical and biological distinction should be ignored. However, they found it impossible to deny women’s wombs; therefore, menstruation and pregnancy should be considered as unavoidable shackles. De Beauvoir firmly adopted this stance.

Her first menstruation reveals this meaning, and her feelings of shame appear. If they were already present, they are strengthened and exaggerated from this time on. ... When the girl finds the suspicious spots on her clothing, she believes she is a victim of a diarrhea or a fatal haemorrhage or some shameful disease. (Beauvoir 33)

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir saw only shame in menstruation. She insisted that genital functions are liabilities and that true emancipation for women is to completely control their bodies. Such thinking of women’s menstruation as an abomination appeared prominently in the United States during the 1970s. Amid heated debates and polarized public

opinion about the ratification of Equal Rights Amendment and the National Organization for Women, some radical feminists insisted that accomplishing gender equality in every area demanded that women be soldiers along with men. In their opinion, equality and sameness were synonymous, so women's bodies should function the same as men'sⁱⁱ.

In contrast, other feminists considered menstruation and pregnancy to be inextricable in women's identities and appreciated women's ability to give birth. Adrienne Rich, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristiva, for instance, ⁱⁱⁱ viewed women's physiological differences as privileges and thought that women should be understood as superior to men. Certainly, it seems important to think positively, not negatively, about the physical fate imposed by women's bodies. In this sense, the attitude that denies woman's bodily fate and insists that it is similar to men's appears to be merely creative. However, painting a rosy picture of woman's bodily distinctions and seeing them as privileges risks entering biological determinism and excluding women with infertility.

Whether viewing women's bodily phenomenon as negative or positive, these theorists started with the body. However, other scholars have not presumed bodily sexual difference but have maintained what can be called sex-gender dualism. For example, Anne Oakley, a feminist theorist working in early years of feminist studies, argued:

"Sex" is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. "Gender" however is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into "masculine" and "feminine." ... That people are male or female can usually be judged by referring to the biological evidence. That they are masculine or feminine cannot be judged in the same way: the criteria are cultural, differing with time and place. (Oakley 16)

In sex-gender dualism, sexual difference is believed to be created by social roles and norms rather than physical differences. According to this theory, sexual difference arose within the category of gender; in other words, it is a cultural construct. This idea can be comfortable and easy to accept for women in difficult positions who seek to escape the physical differences between men and women. However, by divorcing sex from gender, sex-gender dualism hides from the reality that sex is always in the human body, and the differences between men and women arise from sex. Gender equality should not be pursued without reference to sex, and

we must find equality among human beings alongside acceptance of the biological differences between men and women.

Judith Butler put forth a different position than sex-gender dualism: both sex and gender are socially and culturally constructed. She stated that "when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one." (Butler 10), arguing that it is nonsense to even distinguish sex from gender:

Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender, indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all. (Butler 10-11)

From Butler's argument that human beings can exhibit the characteristics of men and women without reference to physical difference, we receive the impression that sex and gender should be divorced, which falsely indicates that Butler supported sex-gender dualism like Oakley. However, this is a premature judgment. As mentioned, Oakley regarded sex as not the same as gender, so her interpretation of sex remained unresolved. In contrast, Butler treated sex the same way as gender, as socially and culturally constructed. Her argument that sex is not presented as substantial only its own but only within social structures launched queer theory centered on the keyword *performativity* during the 1990s. She considered sexuality as well as sex and gender and criticized the forced system of heterosexuality. According to Butler, sex is not much more than regulation by a system which demands heterosexuality based on the idea of sex dualism, of men or women. In other words, sex should be understood not as biological but as artificial^{iv}. Butler's theoretical attempt to do away with body politics based on sex dualism influenced the thinking of sexual minorities, such as intersex individuals and those with gender identity disorder. For them, it is more important to determine their sex in spirit than the physical body.

2. Gender Politics in Sports in General

(1) The Concept of Masculinity in Modern Sports

In the previous section, I introduced perspectives in gender studies in general. In this section, I examine how masculinity and femininity have been structured in modern sports and how the sexual differences between men and women have been recognized in this field.

I have mentioned that, whereas sex arises from biological elements, gender originates from social, historical, and cultural elements. In other words, the biological field is separate from the social, historical, and cultural fields, so sex and gender also should be considered separately. However, in actuality, these concepts have close connections and are regarded as the same rather than independent. In short, one who is female in her sex must live as a woman in gender, and likewise versa for males. This system can be applied to sexuality, which constructs it is natural that women love men, and men must love women. G. Rubin called this ideology as “the sex/gender system.”

I call that part of social life the “sex/gender system,” for lack of a more elegant term. As a preliminary definition, a “sex/gender system” is the set of arrangements by which society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied. (Rubin 159)

Ultimately, there are only two categories in both sex and gender, so individuals are obligated to conform their appearance and behavior to the category to which they belong. Individuals categorized according to the sex/gender system are trained to fit their sexual category. Robert W. Connell called the individual’s sexualization “socialization” which starts at birth.

The new-born baby has a biological sex but no social gender. As it grows older society provides a string of prescriptions, templates, or models of behavior appropriate to the one sex or the other. Certain agencies of socialization – notably the family, the media, the peer group and the school – make these expectations and models concrete and provide the settings in which they are appropriated by the child. ... The result is a gender identity that in the usual case corresponds to the social expectations for that sex. (Connell 191–192).

Connell insisted that social theory and gender-role theory have very close connections and that socially determined norms have strong effects on individuals’ way of life.

Sexualization, created by sex dualism, has been reinforced by the development of modern industry, in which men labor are paid production workers, while women perform unpaid, non-productive work inside the house. As stated, this system has weakened women’s position and strengthened male domination.

According to Connell, this hierarchy of men and women can be observed in the fields of sports and labor. Here, I focus on the former^v. Connell maintains that men do not possess masculinity by nature but gradually acquire it in their social life, especially through sports.

The physical sense of maleness is not a simple thing. It involves size and shape, habits of posture and movement, particular physical skills and the lack of others, the image of one’s own body, the way it is presented to other people and the ways they respond to it, the way it operates at work and in sexual relations. In no sense is all this a consequence of XY chromosomes, or even of the possession on which discussion of masculinity have so lovingly dwelt, the penis. The physical sense of maleness grows through a personal history of social practice, a life-history-in-society. ... In Western countries, for instance, images of ideal masculinity are ... constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport. (Connell 99–100)

Viewing modern sports from the perspective where men must perform masculinity, we can grasp that there are deep connections between sports and masculinity. Here, sports refer to modern sports, which first emerged in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries^{vi}. In the early stages, modern sports were developed in the United Kingdom. After the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, society demanded male domination amid industrialization and mechanization, and sports were believed to be suitable for developing men who possessed idealized characteristics, such as health, bravery, and orderliness. In this context, public schools, which were a training ground for elites, become an important arena for the development of modern sports. The educational ideology which valued modern sports can be called athleticism. This ideology viewed young, middle-class men as elites who had gained power through industrialization and replaced the noble class. During the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom, sports were increasingly modernized as capitalism became entrenched. The whole of society was fascinated by open competition, which strongly influenced the sporting world. However, it must not be forgotten that, unlike in the past, competition here occurred through arguments, not

swords, as evidenced by the establishment of the parliamentary system in this age. Norbert Elias called this environment *civilization* and maintained that, at this time, it drove people to follow the rules in the sporting world. In sum, the modernization of sports can be regarded as a non-violent movement^{vii}. Of course, considering the increasingly destructive wars after the Industrial Revolution, it is simplistic to equate modernization with non-violence.

It is important that, whether competition occurred through arguments or swords, men occupied the leading parts, so masculinity was constructed as playing a leading role. While modern society has always required men to be masculine, sports have been considered the best stage for them to prove their masculine gender identity in contrast to with the Other of femininity. Todd Crosett, in “Masculinity, Sexuality, and the Development of Early Modern Sports,” traces a close relation among sports, masculinity, and the ideology of male domination:

Only when gender analysis is applied to the development of sport can we begin to explain why sport bloomed in a society that was becoming increasingly rationalized. In a society concerned with sexuality and manliness, sport was a purposeful and rational activity. Just as the accumulation of wealth served as a sign of salvation or a moral lifestyle during an early period, athletic prowess served to symbolize morality, rationality, and superiority in young men and was a measurable sign of clean living and future success. ... It functioned as an institution that along with other social institution defined male sexuality as distinct from and superior to female sexuality. (Crosett 53)

The element of masculinity lies behind modern sports, which attach importance to strength, the fighting spirits, an ascetic life, and emotional repression. In other words, men have expressed their masculinity through modern sports, which should be understood as an important stage for sustaining the dominant gender hierarchy, as well as creating masculinity.

(2) The Concept of Femininity in Modern Sports

Women were excluded from modern sports developed to serve men's demonstration of masculinity. How then have women become engaged in modern sports? Competition is an important element of sports, so the various physical differences between men and women, such as muscle strength, staying power, and instantaneous power, have naturally created a hierarchy: women inferior to men in

competitive power were considered best suited for sports which emphasized the display of external beauty, such as figure skating, rhythmic gymnastics, and synchronized swimming. Women were regarded as second rate in competitive sports viewed as more important than these expressive events. While modern sports served to strengthen masculinity, they also structured femininity. In modern society, men dominate the highly profitable, media-darling, such as baseball, soccer, rugby, and basketball. Thus, we observe that modern sports continues to support male dominance, and we can understand Crosett's description of sports as “an institution that along with other social institution defined male sexuality as distinct from and superior to female sexuality” (Crosett 53).

When women have participated in competitive events, how have they been treated? Certainly, women have always been understood by physical differences and the gender hierarchy and have faced the dilemma described by Japanese feminist scholar Chizuko Ueno in her impressive theory in *Nationalism and Gender*. She argued that “when women become citizens of a nation, they should make an alternative decision, emphasizing sexual difference or ignoring it. If they chose the former, they must be feminine, and if the latter, they have to be second rate” (Ueno 67-74). Ueno pointed out that women's civilization has been always associated with gender and contended that it is impossible to emancipate women in modern society. Her argument holds true in modern sports. If women accept their physical differences from men and compete separately from men, women should admit that they are the weaker sex and need to be protected. However, if women ignore the differences, they likely will be defeated by men due to their bodily disadvantage and must admit that they are second rate. Here, women cannot escape from physical differences and gender hierarchy.

How has women's physical fragility been constructed? For this point, I need to review major studies. A main view is that fragility can be shameful for men but is an essential quality of femininity. The problem is not so much women's physical fragility as their desire for it. Regarding this point, McCaughey argued that “aggression falls outside the bounds of ‘ladylike’ behavior” (McCaughey 57), and Dowling observed that “women are less powerful, aggressive, active, and strong men – and this is either ‘natural’ or simply naturally inevitable” (Dowling 56). Women need to be weaker than men and not fully developed; therefore, the problem lies not in women's physical fragility but in their

conceptual fragility. In this view, the essence of femininity is to not display physical power, and women need to avoid being like men by using their physical power. Behind this conception that attributes superiority to women's fragility is an ideology that associates femininity with physical negativity.

Secondly, women's fragility is affected by the mass media, which tend to present women as passive and to emphasize their fragility. Most movie and television viewers are men, so these programs treat attractive women as exhibitions. As well, news shows identify women but never men as the victims of sex crimes. McCaughey argued that "the ideal of femininity has normalized and thus perpetuated rape culture because, insofar as femininity excludes aggression, women are set up to be easy, and easily rationalized, targets for abuse" (58). According to McCaughey, men are considered to be overwhelmingly stronger than women, so men must be assailants, not victims. In contrast, women are passive, so they are easily attacked and raped by men and need to be protected by men. Women tend to acquire perceived notions from the mass media that their bodies are fragile.

It has been difficult for women to participate in sports on an equal level with men because modern sports were a stage to structure masculinity and male domination. If women participated in sports, they were caught in the dilemma of whether to accept or ignore their difference. As Russett argued, in *Sexual Science*, that "a great deal of the late-nineteenth-century writing on gender difference is overtly emotion-laden" (Russett 12), this conception has persisted since the 20th century, discouraging women from participating in competitive sports even in the 21st century.

3. What is Gender Equality?

As stated, many feminist scholars have developed arguments about the body in academic discourses and have struggled to resolve the dilemma of difference and equality, especially in the field of sports. The mission of gender studies is to end inequalities and to liberate women. It is true that every human being's body is regarded as male or female. How should we, as flesh-and-blood beings, understand the arguments given by feminist scholars while living in this actual world? We should not forget that gender equality is highly complicated for various reasons. First, both essentialism, which treats sexual difference as absolute, and constructionism, which insists that differences are changeable,

are true in the actual world. It is true that sexual difference cannot be changed easily, and in this sense, there are absolute bodily differences between men and women. However, not all men possess masculine bodies, and not all women's bodies are feminine. Individuals who deviate from masculinity or femininity can manage to live in society. Therefore, it is also logical that sexual differences are flexible. We point to sexual minorities as the most visible evidence of the flexibility of difference. It should be understood that the differences called sexual difference cannot be applied to all men and women. Rather, this difference is meaningful only when comparing the nature of men and women as groups, that is, at the statistical level. It is unreasonable to fix human beings to stereotypes based on merely statistical differences. Stereotypes are not discriminatory by themselves but can give rise to discrimination^{viii}. Even if stereotypes related to sexual difference are rational, it is absurd that individuals are stereotyped unless the stereotype is completely accurate.

The second problem is women's trained diffidence. Most women who have been treated as unequal to men in society have accepted their position, albeit with a sense of discomfort. Whereas some women have protested being considered the weaker sex, others have enjoyed a feeling of stability from their subordinate positions. Natsuko Yoshizawa, a Japanese feminist scholar, stated that "[w]omen have not necessarily been excluded, suppressed, and discriminated by male dominance in society unilaterally. While women have an unequal relationship with men as inferior, they have become the other involved party who has constructed the unequal and male-dominated society" (Yoshizawa 172). Yoshizawa concluded that, "when a person is in the depth of misery of discrimination, if she does not feel as 'misery,' it is not significant and justifiable that people around her recognize her position as discriminatory and make an accusation against it" (Yoshizawa 22). There is rationality in Mill's argument: "It arose simply from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman (owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength) was found in a state of bondage to some man" (Mill 4-5), so women accepted their position of inequality. In modern society, 150 years after Mill's age, education and ideology have completely changed, but many women are still unwilling to be independent and instead regard their position of dependence on men as happy. In this reality, is feminism, whose mission is to eradicate the ideology of inequality between men and women, not a

concern for women who willingly accept dependence? Moreover, will achieving gender equality bring happiness to every woman, or could gender equality be an unwanted favor for women who welcome neither equality nor independence? We should note that the actual world is full of diversity beyond male and female. As long as the purpose of gender equality is to bring happiness to women, we should not forget that the sense of happiness depends on individuals, and opinions on the meaning of equality also vary.

In the field of sports, the most emphasized element is competition. I maintain that it is nonsensical to deny physical differences in the strength of men and women. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that women are the sex that gives birth, for which they are subject to various limitations in their social life. As mentioned, the aim of gender equality is very complicated and cannot be achieved completely due to the unavoidable physical differences between men and women. Although it might be understood that there is no equality between women and men as a whole, it is important to struggle to achieve equality on the individual level.

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Notes

ⁱIn gender studies, a notion that recently has become widely accepted holds that even sex is not absolute but is changeable. In other words, it is absurd to impose gender dualism on human beings because there are transgendered people and intersexed people. However, we cannot help but conclude that changing sex is extremely difficult in reality, considering that those who do so are regarded as the handicapped or deformities, that is, sexual minorities.

ⁱⁱShulamis Firestone, a feminist theorist, followed Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* with *The Dialectic of Sex*, in which she recognizes the biological inequalities between men and women and argues that women's suppression results not from economics but biology; Shulamis Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolutions*.

ⁱⁱⁱLuce Irigaray, *Ce Sexe Qui N'en Est pas Un* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1977); Julia Kristiva, *Pouvoir de L'horreur, Essai sur L'abjection* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1980); Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986).

^{iv}Joan W. Scott's theory is similar to Butler's. Scott argues that the dualistic thinking of sex or gender gave rise to the false idea that the body does not belong to the spirit or society but to biology, and, therefore, absolute and unavoidable differences between men and women exist; Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott, *Feminists Theorize the*

Political (New York: Routledge, 1992).

^vConnell described the hierarchy between men and women in labor: “The sexual division of labour at its simplest [is the] allocation of particular types of work to particular people. It is a social structure to the extent that this allocation becomes a construction for further practice. This happens in several interrelated ways. First, the prior division of work among people becomes a social rule allocating people to work. An employee entering a firm is given job X if a woman, job Y if a man. The working of such rules is found in almost every study of paid employment that has considered the issue of gender, and this is no primitive hangover found only in low-technology industries. . . . Through such mechanisms, the sexual division of labour is transformed into an apparently technical division of labor, resistant to the more obvious antidiscrimination strategies. Where men are usually better prepared or trained than women for a given job, choosing ‘the best applicant’ will normally mean choosing a man. The almost complete dominance of the upper echelons of universities by men is a striking example of this indirect discrimination.”

^{vi}A significant difference between ancient and modern sports is that, in the latter, internationally acknowledged and systematized rules have been established for each event.

^{vii}See the following about the modernization of sports in the United Kingdom: N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982); N. Elias and E. Dunning, *The Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

^{viii}Not only women are under pressure due to gender stereotypes. Even men, who are regarded as socially superior, tend to feel stressed from the obligation to be masculine.

