



Judith Butler's Theory of Performativity

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Judith Butler

Judith Pamela Butler (born February 24, 1956) is an American philosopher and gender theorist whose work has influenced political philosophy, ethics, and the fields of third-wave feminism, queer theory, and literary theory. In 1993, Butler began teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, where they have served, beginning in 1998, as the Maxine Elliot Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and the Program of Critical Theory. They are also the Hannah Arendt Chair at the European Graduate School.

Butler (who uses the pronouns "she/they") is best known for their books *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), in which they challenge conventional notions of gender and develop their theory of gender performativity. This theory has had a major influence on feminist and queer scholarship. Their work is often studied and debated in film studies courses emphasizing gender studies and performativity in discourse. Butler has supported lesbian and gay rights movements, and they have spoken out on many contemporary political issues, including criticism of Israeli politics.

Performative Act and Gender Constitution

Gender performativity is a term first used by the feminist philosopher Judith Butler in her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*. She argues that being born male or female does not determine behavior. Instead, people learn to behave in particular ways to fit into society. The idea of gender is an act, or performance. This act is the way a person walks, talks, dresses, and behaves. She calls this acting "gender performativity." What society regards as a person's gender is just a performance made to please social expectations and not a true expression of the person's gender identity.

History validates identity of an individual through the process of repetition. The acts that have been appropriated by the society over the years are bound to greater approximation and acceptance as gender. However, concrete actions or self. Instilled identities are objectified by this. Notion of historical idea on account on phenomenological discourse. Women have been unable to account for a collective approval from the society. As agenda. Hence their gender has been represented as sedimented due to the lack of clarity in history in the domain of linguistic, natural and cultural domain. Women experience lack of autonomy in the identity formation in the society.

Aspect of culture. Culture represent a real of acknowledgement or acceptance of the identity in the present phase, women have been unable to represent themselves as a collective category. As a result, in the cultural domain, women constantly attempt to. Addressed individual concern as a. Means two represent the collective consciousness in the social environment thereby. Generate a new course of identification for themselves from their past historical representation. In the first section, Butler describes performativity with a doubt. Meaning.

Dramatic and non referential. In the second section titled *Binary Gender and Heterosexual Contract*, Butler takes the reference. From Intra-genetic concepts she adopts the reference in order to emphasize the strict cultural relationships. Individuals partake based on the cultural codes of the society. However, even in the domain of relationship. Or kinship individuals experience regulatory norms. Represents represented as taboos and strict uniform cultural codes in the process of relationship. The body of the individual has been represented as a recipient that has to follow the. Cultural code as a form of ritual. According to the Anthropogenesis in the ancient civilization, the socially approved cultural codes were practiced as a ritual to generate familiarity of apps through re- enactment and re experimentation. This ancient ritual establishes that individuals perform the heterosexual order as a pre-existing code that needs to be performed repeatedly by the majority in order to be approved as a performative art. These social guidelines have been equated to a theoretical performance where only those are acceptable. That reasonable with belief of the majority social order.

In the third section feminist theory and expressive model of gender butler quotes to feminist writer the first feminist writer but you quotes is cry 3 spirit who talks about operational essentialism that represents the break from the universal order by attempting to magnify self attributes in order to be noticed by the society does this paper provides an idea of red define The Identity of women by emphasizing more on a stronger attributes

The second feminist writer that Butler quotes is Mary Anne Warren Her work *Gendercide*. The work represents the idea of generating. Factors that are able to ostracize women and suppress their strong qualities that add significance to their gender. For example, in 21st century, the strong biological attributes of a woman have been replaced by the progress of science and technology.

The solution Butler provides for the issue of gender performativity rules is by. Attempting to redefine and relocate aspects of performance of pertaining to gender by tracing the concealed gender roles that are hidden by the social system.

The Waves of Feminism

The Feminist Movement continuous to this very day as equality of women has not been achieved anywhere in the world.

First Wave: (Suffrage) 19th and 20th century. It is focus mainly on suffrage, alongside other legal rights Second Wave: (Equal Pay) Focus mainly on sexuality, reproductive rights, and the wage gap

Third Wave: Fights for Equality by focusing exclusively on Female Victim of gender neutral issues. Third-wave feminism refers to several diverse strains of feminist activity and study, whose exact boundaries in the history of feminism is a subject of debate, but is generally marked as beginning in the early 1990s and continuing to the present. The movement arose partially as a response to the perceived failures of and backlash against initiatives and movements created by second-wave feminism during the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, and the perception that women are of "many colors, ethnicities, nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds". Rebecca Walker coined the term "third-wave feminism" in a 1992 essay. It has been proposed that Walker has become somewhat of a symbol of the third wave's focus on queer and non-white women. Third Wave feminists have broadened their goals, focusing on ideas like queer theory, and abolishing gender role expectations and stereotypes. Unlike the determined position of second wave feminists about women in pornography, sex work, and prostitution, third-wave feminists were rather ambiguous and divided about these themes (feminist sex wars). Rebecca Walker promoted third wave of feminism magazine called M.S Magazine – against Lawyer . Leaders and

Activists of the Third Wave

Judith Butler 1956: From the Women's Movement Today Judith Butler is well known as a theorist of power, gender, sexuality, and identity. In her most influential book, Gender

Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990), Butler introduced the notion of "gender performativity." Gender Trouble by Judith Butler.

Rebecca Walker 1969 From The Women's Movement Today . One of the founders of third-wave feminism and the coiner of the term "third wave," activist, author, mother, and daughter of African American author Alice Walker and Jewish attorney Mel Leventhal, Rebecca Walker (1969–) was born in Jackson, Mississippi, where her parents were active participants in the Civil Rights Movement.

Naomi Wolf 1962: Naomi Wolf From Culture Wars Feminist author Naomi Wolf is known for her best-selling first book, The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women (1991), regarded as one of the central texts of third-wave feminism.

Sex/Gender: Feminist and Phenomenological Views

Feminist theory has often been critical of naturalistic explanations of sex and sexuality that assume that the meaning of women's social existence can be derived from some fact of their physiology. In distinguishing sex from gender, feminist theorists have disputed causal explanations that assume that sex dictates or necessitates certain social meanings for women's experience. Phenomenological theories of human embodiment have also been concerned to distinguish between the various physiological and biological causalities that structure bodily existence and the meanings that embodied existence assumes in the context of lived experience. In Merleau Ponty's reflections in *The Phenomenology of Perception* on the body in its sexual being, "he takes issue with such accounts of bodily experience and claims that the body is "an historical idea" rather than "a natural species." Significantly, it is this claim that Simone de Beauvoir cites in *The Second Sex* when she sets the stage for her claim that "woman," and by extension, any gender, is an historical situation rather than a natural fact.

Idea of Phenomenology

Her objective is to study feminism through Phenomenological dispose. According to Spinoza "I think therefore I am" 17th century. An individual identity is represented in society through Performative Acts.

According to Butler -Sex is considered as an abstract notion. The notion of sex restricts women on the domain of their biological construct. So, hence a woman is confined only to a nurturer & a weak physical constitution.

Gender is given importance over sex as gender is constructed as a concrete process by two main agents: History and culture

Idea of History

History validates the identity of an individual through the process of reputation. The act that have been appropriated by the society over a year are bound to greater appropriation & acceptance as gender. However discrete actions or self-willed identities are objectified by phenomenological discourse women have been unable to account for a collective approval from the society as a gender . Hence their gender identity has been represented as sedimented due to lack of clarity in history in domains of linguistic , natural & cultural domains . Women experience lack of autonomy in the identity formation in the society.

Aspect of culture

Culture represents a realm of acknowledgment or acceptance of the identity in the present phase. Women have been able to represent themselves as a collective domain women constantly attempt to address individual concern as a mean to represent the collective consciousness in the social environment . There , generate a new course of identification for themselves from their past historical representation . In the first section , Butler describes performativity with a double meaning i.e., dramatic & non – representational .

Common Traits between Feminism and Phenomenology Butler presents the similarity between the concept by giving a reference of the feminist Simone de Beauvoir and the phenomenologist Moris Merleau Ponty.

“One is not born a woman but becomes a woman” Simone de Beauvoir “Body is a historical situation” Morris Merleau Ponty.

Binary Genders and the Heterosexual Contract

In the second section titled “Binary Gender & the heterosexual contract” Butler takes the reference from autoerogenic concepts. She adopts this reference in order to emphasize the strict culture relationships individuals partake based on the cultural codes of the society. However the domain of relationship the domain of relationship or kinship individuals experience regulatory norms represented as taboos and strict uniform cultural codes. In the process of relationships, the body of the individual has been represented as a recipient that has to follow the cultural code as a form of ritual.

According to the anthropogenic’s, in the Asian civilization the socially approved codes were practiced as a ritual to generate familiarity of acts through re – enactment & reexperimentation . This ancient ritual establishes that individuals perform the heterosexual order as pre-existing code that needs to be performed repeatedly by the majority in order to be approved as a performative act. These social guidelines have been equated to an theatrical performance where only those are acceptable that is reasonable with belief of the majority social order.

Sex and Gender

Sex is the term used to reference to the biological attribute of a person, in most cases falling into category of either man or woman, and in most cases reflected in the chromosomal difference (XX-Woman XY-Man) .

Gender refers to how a person express their identity as either male or female, based on clothing behaviors, and the use of particular linguistic structure (such as he/ she).

Performativity is that exist in the stylized repetition of acts – clothes, speech and body language which over a period of time come to define a particular gender one cannot freely choose a performance . This something that society determines through the way in which it tells us what constitute male and female behaviors . Although these stabilizing identities do exist. Most notably achieve such as drag, which draw attention to gender performativity qualities these are exception that are largely repressed because of societies deeply ingrained attitude towards gender.

Feminist Theory: Beyond an Expressive Model of Gender

In third section Feminist Theory: Beyond an Expressive Model of Gender Butler quote is Gayatri Spivak “Generational essentialism ” -Represents the break from the universal order by attempting to magnify self. Attributes in order to be noticed by the society. Thus, Spivak Provides the idea of redefining the identity of women by emphasizing more on a stronger attributes.

Mary Anna Warren her work Gendercide The work represents the idea of generating awareness about the dominating factor that are able to criticize women and suppress their strong qualities that add significance to their gender. For example; 21st century, the strong biological attributes of a woman have been replaced by the progress of science and technology.

- Promote Feminist ability.
- Gender awareness

The solution Butler provides for issues in gender performativity role is by attempting to redefine and relocate aspects pertaining two gender by tracing the concealed gender codes that are hidden by the social system.

The critical genealogy of gender to rely on a phenomenological set of presuppositions, most important among them the expanded conception of an "act" which is both socially shared and historically constituted, and which is performative in the sense as previously described. But a critical genealogy needs to be supplemented by a politics of performative gender acts, one which both describes existing gender identities and offers a prescriptive view about the kind of gender reality there ought to be. The description needs to expose the reifications that tacitly serve as substantial gender cores or identities, and to elucidate both the act and the strategy of disavowal which at once constitute and conceal gender as we live it. The prescription is invariably more difficult, if only because we need to think a world in which acts, gestures, the visual body, the clothed body, the various physical attributes usually associated with gender, express nothing. In a sense, the prescription is not utopian, but consists in an imperative to acknowledge the existing complexity of gender which our vocabulary invariably disguises and to bring that complexity into a dramatic cultural interplay without punitive consequences. It is necessary to reread the texts of western philosophy from the various points of view that have been excluded, not only to reveal the particular perspective and set of interests informing those transparent descriptions of the real, but to offer alternative descriptions and prescriptions; indeed, to establish philosophy as a

cultural practice, and to criticize its tenets from marginalized cultural locations. . Regardless of the pervasive character of patriarchy and the prevalence of sexual difference as an operative cultural distinction, there is nothing about a binary gender system that is given. As a corporeal field of cultural play, gender is a basically innovative affair, although it is quite clear that there are strict punishments for contesting the script by performing out of turn or through unwarranted improvisations. Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds.