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Our Sense of Identity: "Who am I?" Gender and Cultural Studies

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Abstract

Identity is seen as a cultural and social construct, which indicates how we have been embodied and how we might represent ourselves. The knowledge that identities are the outputs of discourses is a familiar characteristic of some societal concepts. Gender, as an identity or a sense of our identity we build for ourselves, rather than something we are born with, is a constructed cultural category and is based on power relations and social norms that are part of a social system. Through gender as well as cultural studies, this paper will curiously look at the motion of mobility of self (identity) as it has been constructed in culture. The researcher also wants to note that the discursive practices such as the normal beliefs, social systems, and substantial behaviors of a cultural, religious, or social group view identity not as a kind of recognition with a group having common characteristics but as a construction among hidden cultural, political, and ideological intentions. Therefore, it is said that identity is in process and can be shaped by culture, media, and public opinion.

Keywords: Identity, Culture, Gender, Gender Studies, Cultural Studies

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Introduction

Unlike in modern societies, the identities and lives of individuals in pre-modern societies were typically focused on some rules and traditions. Survival was the conspicuous concern, and guidance was provided by family and the local environment. Individual identities or preferences were not a priority, and any diversion from authorial rules caused guilt and anxiety, because it threatened the unity produced by society's standards. It is really unhappy but accurate in a sense that all of our societies, to a more or lesser extent, do well in maintaining traditional power relationships. Identity was not a very major problem with traditional societies as the individuals were bound within the realm of their traditional system of family codes and religious consents. Their roles and functions were predefined and each one was comfortable in his / her position that he /she was assigned with by the authoritarian supports. The individual is caught up in various roles, which are often opposing to one another, so creating doubts about one's position in the society. A predetermined path with limited options based on location and social status beside traditional authority and religion was the only acceptable way to attain a self-identity. In pre-modern settings, self-identity was largely given rather than made.

Modernization improved people's chance to choose more freely. Simultaneously, stability and traditional support systems such as family diminished. Although modernity offers more options to people, it does not necessarily mean that they have full control over the shaping of their identity. As a practical term, discourse is used for the group of words, images, signs, arrangements of urban space, laws, action, events, customs, rituals, and social establishments in which we express our identity and through which we understand the world around us. The notion that identities are the products of discourses is a known feature of numerous social theories.

The notion or theory of the Cartesian self that ascribed to the human being an autonomous entity capable of achieving stability through his power of reasoning and arriving at a single selfhood is ended. Jacques Lacan criticized the notion of a stable identity. According to the Lacanian theory, there cannot exist an autonomous self, therefore, personal identity is always established in relation to others. Erik H. Erikson introduced the term identity crisis to describe the uncertainty in relation to identity. Freud did not admit the existence of any single entity that could be put forward as an answer to the question "Who am I" or "What am I". Emmanuel Levinas introduced the notion "without identity" for the vulnerability of the self. Judith Butler clarified that there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender and that identity is performatively created by the very expressions that are thought to be its effects. She sees gender identity as a product of language which purports to be a descriptive representation. We are unable to comprehend anything that remains identical over time. Since it is impossible to accept the existence of a

single pure identity, it becomes essential to deconstruct the idea, identity, and identification.

Although human beings usually identify themselves through their association with a specific community or a communal culture, this identity is not static but is in the process in itself, which is never complete. Therefore, the cultural struggle becomes a way toward a self-definition. For example, today, the media as a cultural challenge act out as one of the most influential sources of discourse that support in constructing an ideology for those in power and which produce social reality in order to validate and confirm the existing social structure. Owned by institutions or organizations, the media reinforce the present hierarchy very often in a remarkably delicate way. It is said that the subject of identity as a social and cultural construction is reinforced by popular culture. "My identity is what I am and how I am recognized rather than what I choose, want, or consent to. It is the dense self from which choosing, wanting, and consenting to proceed. Without that density, these acts could not occur; with it, they are recognized to be mine" (Connolly, 1991, p. 64).

Self-identity gained dominance in the modern era, and quick change in the human condition required individuals' revision and modification frequently. Furthermore, despite the increase of freedom to choose among a variety of options, people are subject to social control more than ever because of their profound dependence on institutions.

Edward Said (1994) asserts:

> Self-definition is one of the activities practiced by all cultures; it has rhetoric, a set of occasions and authorities, and a familiarity of its own. Yet in a world tied together as never before… the assertion of identity is by no means a mere ceremonial matter. (p. 280)

There are a set of fairly strong claims that identity is created in discourse, culture, and power relations.To put this very simply, for example this is to do with the way in which the identities of women are feminized within culture, through their endless contact with pictures of themselves in journals, media, popular fiction, film, and lots of popular cultural forms. The identity of male and female is shaped by the social and cultural expectations accorded to women and men, whereas sex is marked by a person's genetic or reproductive organs. We are all immersed in our sense of gender, we take for granted that we are male or female, or even that we have conflicts between our masculine and feminine side.

As a researcher, I want to note that the discursive practices such as the normal beliefs, social systems, and substantial behaviors of a cultural, religious, or social group view identity not as a kind of recognition with a group having common characteristics but as a construction among hidden cultural, political, and ideological

intentions. Identity is seen as a cultural and social construct, which indicates how we have been embodied and how we might represent ourselves. Also, through gender study, this paper will curiously look at the motion of mobility of self (identity) as it has been constructed in culture, focusing on the construction of male / female identity and gender. What I want also to undertake in this paper is to address the discrepancies, the absurdities, and deficiencies of gender constitution in relation to identity in historical and contemporary indigenous, national, and international settings.

Historical Background

The Trends and Reasons of Mobility of Self (Identity)

Unlike pre-modern societies which did perceive identities as being categorically stable, modern societies saw identity as not a fixed one. The reasons for those instabilities were very noticeable, for example the Enlightenment known as the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason was an intellectual as well as a political movement which dominated Europe mainly during the 18th century. It was an event in human history that was a wholehearted attack on traditions of the divine realm, an authoritarian church, an arranged social hierarchy, and a system of law grounded on favoring the elites rather than the individual. By the end of the 18th century, most European nations maintained activities calling for political reform, encouraged by fundamental enlightened principles which supported obvious disruptions from tyranny, monarchy, and absolutism. The main themes of the Enlightenment involved strong beliefs in reason, science, natural law, the free exchange of ideas in community discussions, and the rational development of human growth. Its focus on reason shaped philosophical, political, and scientific concepts from the late 17th to the early 19th century.

The notions of egalitarian freedom of most notably Rousseau's and Diderot's, the scientific experimentation challenge against superstitious interpretations of the living world, huge change in thought and reason, and the social contract and reformist ideals of that period began to be extended from the bourgeoisie, peasants, and urban labourers to women as well; for example the lack of a female voice in ancient period makes the task of recovering women's voices an especially difficult claim that a female should remain passive to her male counterpart, while also suppressing any innate female desire for knowledge or pleasure, which produced the idea that women existed only to please men. Drawing upon Jean Jacques Rousseau, Kerber asserts,

> To oblige us, to do us service, to gain our love and esteem, these are the duties of the sex at all times, and what they ought to learn from their infancy. The woman is framed particularly for the delight and pleasure. (Kerber, 1980, p. 25)

The movement argued that women were not naturally submissive but cultured to be so.It offered that women should obtain the same chances as men do in education, work and politics.

Unlike the early approach, the modern one has been well-defined with regards to all the social, economic, and political outlooks. Feminists have been well-orchestrated both in political and academic arguments after decolonization and globalization. Spivak, a forerunner of third world feminist theory, the theories of Kristeva, Cixous, and Irigaray as the feminist theory of Europe are frequently defined by third world critics as a dominant discourse. Women are usually considered to be more calm, inactive, emotive, dependent, patient, and outgoing than their male counterparts. Rough, vain, licentious, independent, authoritative, emotionless and frank are the keywords applied to define men.

Postmodernism covers both the arts and cultural studies. It focuses on fragmentation of social and political life, the relativism or cultural possibility of truth, the multiplicity rather than unity of human identities and cultures, and the failing of worldwide social theories. All this has resulted in a deconstruction of dominant discourse or identity to destabilize limits from bottom up. Postmodernists are anti-essentialist who make use of the word gender rather than sex to speak of men and women, since the word sex proposes essential, biological differences between men and women. They prefer the use of such words as gender and text. According to Lane (2008),

> Twentieth-century people are cyborgs, and that as such they reject all of the previous grand narratives of religion, capitalism, sexism and racism; for Haraway, the cyborg is 'postgender' and leads, in a Deleuzian fashion, to new bondings, couplings and machinic entities, such as that between human beings and animals, or, the blurred boundaries in modern science and technology between the organic and the machinic. How is the latter different from pre-cyborg identities? (p. 147)

Definition

Gender

Gender is a more vague or psychological concept. It is defined as a person's self-concept like male, female, or something else. This may or may not correspond with their sex. Everyone is living with a gender and a sex, an identity, a race, ethnicity, a sexual orientation, a class, a religion, a shape, etc. It is said that gender like identity is not constant, but rather constantly shifting and changing as it operates in multiple fields at its most basic level. It is used to describe socially constructed characteristics of masculinity and femininity. Gender display is how we get recognized as male or female in everyday life and it is based on power relations and social norms that are part of a social system bigger than us. "Most researchers now agree that a man and

woman exchanging meaningful utterances in society belong to a class called gender which is a social construct, not the essentialist class of sex which belongs to biology" (Paulson, 2012, p.17). Throughout history, gender-specific restrictions have kept women from gaining access to their role as well.

Gender, that is the feminine or the masculine, is not born into us but, rather, appears as we progress and experience life. It is a socially constructed definition created through the various networks of forces that interconnect around us as we grow. These cultural discourses, "unities of theme and shared conventions of knowledge" (Melosh,1993, p.39), about gender and sexuality, shape and structure us as subjects within the social order. "Masculinity has become" as Easthope states, "privileged as self-present, norm, the knowable, light, the sun, while the feminine (presupposed by that privileging) is construed as other, deviant, different, unknown, darkness, the moon" (Easthope, 1999, p. 65).

As gender is socially constructed, negotiated and performed through language, it differs between different cultures and involves different relations of power. In Easthope's words, "If ideology specifies textual meaning in relation to mode of production, gender meanings similarly must be seen as socially determined in relation to patriarchy" (Easthope, 1999, p. 84). The power relationships between the sexes reveal a fractured world where the politics of gender is undeniably at work and a male consciousness is the dominant discourse. The gender identity of the literary study also remains silently yet significantly masculine. At its most basic level, gender is used to describe socially constructed characteristics of masculinity and femininity. The influential theorist Judith Butler has likened gender to a theatrical performance, a matter of role-playing, with no necessary correlation to one's biological sex. As societies become more complex, according to Sweetman (1997) "the roles played by men and women are not only determined by culture, but by socio-political and economic factors" (p. 6).

History

Gender Crisis and Identity Crisis

Gender Systems of Classical vs. Contemporary Period

The gender systems of classical period were patriarchal. Each of these classical periods had a separate social structure that marked its specific definition of social inequality, and each also had a somewhat dissimilar type of a patriarchal gender system. Gender relationships also appear to come in a new period in the contemporary era. Older systems of patriarchy were changed by attempts to provide women with the right to vote, improve their educational stages, and offer them with some lawful rights. The contemporary period is partly defined by shifts in gender relations, but the themes here have not been fully established. The contemporary period of world history is a vital point of change in gender relations and situations

for women. In turn, gender concerns shape part of the definition of this period after many centuries in which no essential developments happened in this ground at a global level. The contemporary period had some developments that clearly remove traditional patriarchy, although they do not necessarily establish true equality. This period of world history will perhaps be viewed as one in which many traditional gender conventions were reconsidered and traditional relationships re-formed.

The view of gender is one in which masculinity is associated with action, initiation, and dominance, while the opposite—inactiveness, consent, femininity—is thought as female. Additionally, genders are revealed through individuals' performances of femininity and masculinity. As Judith Butler (2008) argues, "gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real" (Appelrouth, 2008, p. 623). Because a woman learns to act like a woman, she is seen and, in effect, becomes a woman. The term gender crisis as well as identity crisis describes the loss of certainty about the given roles for men and women in society or its gender system. The reason goes to the politics deeply rooted in claims about essential fluctuations in the nature of gender in an evolving structure of world order similar in its newness and opportunity to that shaped by industrial capitalism. It was the age of Nietzsche and Freud, of severe social conformity, suppressed sexuality, and tough gender roles as well as increasing class conflict.

"God is dead" by Nietzsche does not pave the way to a secular society, but rather the deconstruction of sex and gender leads to the creation of sexual hybrids. Butler (2008) dismantles gender by playing intentionally with the options for numerous forms of sexual relations between people of different races that sometimes recognize the pleasures as well as the threats of power and submission.

> The show does assert differences between genders and sexualities, and points towards what we might term postmodern gender and sexuality. This rejects all versions of essential femininity or masculinity and suggests that there is no singular, true gender definition … to reclaim. (Campbell, 2016, p. 257)

But instead, it is "fractured, contradictory and produced within social practices" (p. 203). There are some voices responding to Spivak's famous question, the gendered subaltern is allowed to speak. Nonetheless, according to Aniko Imre "although Jameson is not directly concerned with issues of gender, his own notion of the 'political unconscious' offers a way to deconstruct the collective, allegorical force of the national" (Imre, 2009, p. 139).

Gender Studies as an Interdisciplinary Study

Gender studies derives from the questionings of feminism which, in its several types, challenged assumptions of power grounded on the placing of women in a male-dominated and male-centred society. If everything goes beyond this norm, then it moves women from the focus of society and reduces their value and position. As

an interdisciplinary study, gender studies does cover a specific domain as women studies which include women, feminism, gender, and politics, men's studies, and queer theories. Also, it studies gender identity and gendered presentation. It is rather common to use the term gender for sex; however, this is not correct. The newborns are given male or female sex, though gender is more intricate since it includes not just biological sex but also the private sense of being male, female, both, or neither actually. Gender's self-understanding then influences gender depiction or how one displays themselves; for example, the way they perform, dress, present themselves, etc. One of the chief movements of the modern day feminism has been the widespread awareness that women are not born but made that the features of feminine gender initiates at birth and necessitates rigorous socialization and that the assumed culture's thought of the perfect woman with its gender norms can move intensely in an answer to varying economic and social situations.

Current study projects on gender studies reveal that patriarchy is not dead and that both men and women are unhappy from patriarchal observations of probable roles. When time moves toward gender observations or roles, the condition becomes even more complex since if a person does not accept to identify with the sex given at birth and selects to act out gender otherwise, patriarchy rejects intensively, and these persons see not just some injustices to their occupation but also public disrespect and in some nations even attacks.

> Weedon (1999) shows how the discourse of gender difference in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century shifted from a biological difference of gender (the different-but-equal argument), to an argument for gender sameness in liberal feminism, and to radical feminism that reasserted authentic womanhood along with a critique of patriarchy. This indicated that meanings attached to a certain label, such as woman, gender difference, cultural/linguistic difference, and English rhetoric, are dynamic in discursive formation. (Paulson, 2012, p. 103)

Culture and Cultural Studies

Gender and Identity

Culture is well-defined as the outlooks, customs, beliefs, morals, and values that differentiate one group of people from the other. It is conveyed from one generation to the other through objects, ceremonies, organizations, and numerous additional features of ordinary life. Culture affects how men and women contemplate about themselves in their gender role. According to Samovar and Porter:

> We do not have culture but that we construct culture discursively. Culture is ubiquitous, multidimensional, complex, and pervasive. Because culture is so broad, there is no single definition or central theory of what it is. Definitions range from the all-encompassing to the narrow. Culture is the deposit of

> knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meaning, social hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (Paronyan, 2017, p. 78)

Cultural studies is properly a sort of creativity in which people can realize their race, ethnicity, or gender and expresses its relationships with the greater culture. It contains detailed contemplations of matters such as gender, sexuality, and youth. The interdisciplinary arena focuses on the need to think through the social, political, aesthetic, and national settings of cultural expression. It goes in order to maintain these subjects of and conventions about identity, gender, class, the family, education, ethnicity, the environment, religion, and technology. By presenting how masculinity and femininity are constructed within some discourses, semiotic, social, and unconscious, cultural studies makes it possible to raise questions on gender and gender identity.

Colin Sparks highlights the difficulties involved in trying to define cultural studies with any degree of precision:

> It is not possible to draw a sharp line and say that on one side of it we can find the proper province of cultural studies. Neither is it possible to point to a unified theory or methodology which is characteristic to it or of it. A veritable rag-bag of ideas, methods and concerns from literary criticism, sociology, history, media studies, etc., are lumped together under the convenient label of cultural studies. (Storey, 2006, p. 194)

Gramsci sees the concept of cultural studies as the clarification and investigation of power relations focusing on class. The new perspectives of cultural studies have been through so many concepts such as gender, race, significance, and pleasure. John Fiske (1996) maintains that "culture in cultural studies is neither aesthetic nor humanist in emphasis, but political" (Storey, 1996, p.16). Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, more recently Slavoj Žižek and Judith Butler, and countless other theorists analyze the development and strategic use of discourses of gender in contemporary society and "adopt an ontological model that sees human life as an ongoing attempt to strive for the unattainable real and simultaneously avoid the inevitably traumatic encounter with it" (Imre, 2009, p. 225). Feminist perspectives are highly related to Cultural Studies and Gender Studies. Kellner, for an instance, points to "the importance of better integrating considerations of gender, race, and class as categories of social analysis in cultural studies" (Dines, 2011, p. 2).

Identity and Gender Identity

Identity, the ungrounded ground, refers to the overall character or personality of an individual or group. It is a subject of widespread concept and investigation for

several of the human and social sciences. For example, a young mother might define her identity as that which reflects the core of who she is, such as being a woman, spouse, and parent, and how she got to be that way. For others, religion is principally a matter of identity, as is realized among people who say: "I am Jewish, but I am not religious" or "I am Catholic, but I never go to mass." The challenge that the hero must meet is to understand his true identity, in a modern era concerned with issues of ideology and gender.

Many writers today describe gender comparatively narrowly in terms of social identities of men and women while other commentators see it more in terms of social interactions and institutions that form between groups. Identity oriented movements (e.g., feminist movements, gay rights movements) have as their goal changing the labels that have been assigned to people. Fairclough (1992) and Weedon (1987) contend that "while individuals are shaped by discursive practices, they are not merely passive transmitters of current procedures but may be active in being capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices" (Pavlenko, 2004, p. 45). Butler asserts that gender is not an immutable given, but an incessant and repeated action of some sort:

> If, in her terms, one performs 'certain kinds of gender identity,' then, 'the traditional feminist account whereby gender is socially constructed rather than "natural"' is extended and gender is repeatedly 'reaffirmed and publicly displayed by … performing particular acts in accordance with the cultural norms … which define "masculinity" and "femininity"'. (p. 271)

Therefore, it is said that identity can be shaped by culture, media, and public opinion. Furthermore, gender as an identity is in process and is the one that we form for ourselves rather than something we are born with. The knowledge that identities are the outputs of discourses, are carried by the discourses in which they are entangled, is a familiar characteristic of some societal concepts. We define our identity through our conversations with other people and in struggles with others' expectations.

Gender identity, a sense of yourself as a gendered person, boy or girl, or an individual's sense of masculinity or femininity, according to Stoller:

> starts with the knowledge and awareness, whether conscious or unconscious, that one belongs to one sex and not the other, though as one develops, gender identity becomes much more complicated, so that, for example, one may sense himself as not only a male but a masculine man or an effeminate man or even as a man who fantasies being a woman. (Repo, 2016, p. 55)

The question of indeterminacy and uncertainty arises regarding two issues of cultural and social inscriptions of gender and identity. Therefore, gender is continually in process, an identity that is performed, enacted, and actualized within

given historical constraints. Gendered identities are established through media and performance. Ironically, however, the depictions that authenticate these gender classes are often arranged for fundamentally different resolutions. For instance, they might be brought into play for the organization of main ideologies, on the one hand, and feminist troubles, on the other. Gender roles are determined to a large part by society, which is why they differ in different times and places, and why they can change with such rapidity, as they are now. Yet, there are overall trends that need explaining, such as why it is that so many societies seem to devalue that which is female. Society affects the identity-construction of the female characters. How identity is constructed in the society and how it affects female relations are a representation of the suppressive situation of twentieth-century women's lives which women experienced due to the nature of their gender and the dominant culture in which they live.

Judith Butler and her work, *Bodies that Matter and Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* highlight how the performative aspects of gender allow for a full evaluation of any new representations of femininity afforded by contemporary tales. Also, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* provides insight into the construction of the female figure in all her multiplicities focusing that we must view the facts of biology in the light of an ontological, economics, social, and psychological context. Her famous statement, one is not born but rather becomes a woman, supports her stance. In this lieu, Luce Irigaray, in her book *The Sex Which is Not One*, throws into a sharp light the role of the female as a commodity in patriarchal society. She elaborates how the feminine is always described in terms of deficiency. Nonetheless, Julia Kristeva developed the idea of abject, the situation of being supposed by others or feeling inferior, referring that abjection designates a situation of feeling that presents women and femininity before, below, and beyond culture so much so that they themselves or the feminine itself cannot be represented within it.

Identity is dynamically under constant development and implies contradictions.Feminists need gender terms to identify and explain determined social inequality between males and females. They focus on gender issues within any ideological construction to comprehend gender inequality through numerous social roles and lived experiences of women. It deconstructed the idea of the essential self and developed many theories in varieties of disciplines which help to reply to the issues like identity, social construction of gender and sex, gender equality, opposition to violence, sexual equality, lesbianism, anti-hierarchy, refusing submission, more sexual freedom, equality and responsibility, gendered anti-authoritarianism, critique of the command and gender violence, respect of women's freedom, consciousness in the couple relationship, diversity, awareness of gender oppression, power, the differences in the physical relationship between males and females; legal and economic inequalities, gender solidarity, analysis of the gender

differences, ethics of relationships, queer theory, specific oppression of women, egalitarian relationships, useful tool for people of all genders and sexual orientation, sex equality, sexual freedom, gender consciousness, deconstruction of dominating relations, and emancipation.

Identity, although considered to be fluid, is sought and formed on many grounds by human beings such as social interaction. Women have the ability to survive and become accustomed more easily in modern society than men. First-wave feminism, emphasizing the equality of men and women, addressed the problem of women's political identity by making an attempt to fit women into the universal category of citizen. The most prominent goal of the second-wave feminist movement was to bring about a sense of gender equality to ensure their own identity. For women who identify with the third wave of feminism, this unstable and complex view of gender is central. As J. Lane (2006) mentions:

> We are living through a movement from an organic, industrial society to a polymorphous, information system—from all work to all play, a deadly game. Donna Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs' (2003, 20) at the same time, questions must be raised about the uniformity and extent of change, which makes gender history a complex part of the contemporary global mosaic. Though there were differences in timing and extent, widespread changes occurred in women's political and legal rights. (p. 55)

Also, Hermannsdóttir (2011) remarks:

> Although globalism and escalated amount of mediated experience have presented a more unitary framework of experience in modernity, it creates deeper forms of fragmentation and larger gap between individuals. Variety of options in modernity for individuals causes anxiety in the sense that making the right choice is a troubling notion. (p. 2)

Nietzsche distinguishes between sex and gender and suggests that education might change the way gender is constructed. The change of these conditions will bring about at least a limited loss of the sense of identity. The representation of female identity offers a greater understanding of social constraints and demands on women. Gender, as a social group related to a certain sex, a term that points to identities that are in process and socially constructed as masculine or feminine as opposed to an only biological definition of one's sex. As has been mentioned before, one purpose of cultural studies is to create a joint identity among those who admit their importance; that common identity is generally defined by the most authoritative in the culture. Postmodern theorists insist that the word gender be used because, unlike sex, it does not suggest that there are essential, inherent, biologically determined differences between men and women regarding their identities. As Kenway explains:

> Since the mid-1980s we have witnessed the rise of postmodern theorizing in much educational and feminist scholarship . . . and Gramsci is no longer a fashionable theorist. . . . Throughout this period there has been much more interest in. . . . multiple identities rather than political identities . . . discourse rather than the politics of discourse, performance rather than poverty, inscription rather than political mobilization, and deconstruction rather than reconstruction. (Weiler, 2001, p. 60)

Conclusion

Our identity is never fully well-articulated to us. By the 21st century, under the influence of globalization, we are reaching a point at which civilization itself as an expression of identity will begin to yield ground to other, more global forms of identity. The contemporary period is partly defined by shifts in gender relations, as Butler calls for disruptions of gender expectations but the themes here have not been fully established. At the same time the gender system that would replace the patriarchal system, however, has not been clearly defined. The new system is not completely egalitarian and does not fully address women's economic role or the issue of male violence against women. To the postmodernists, all gender differences are societal constructs products of the leading discourse, so the terms masculine and feminine are not as the creation of nature but rather as consequences of a process of human construction.

Gender as an identity or a sense of our identity we build for ourselves, rather than something we are born with is a constructed cultural category, rather than a natural given one and it is based on power relations and social norms that are part of a social system; therefore, gender as a social construct is embedded in social structures and organizations and continually moves and alters over time and place, though often in ways that reproduce the present repetitive situation.

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Author's Biography



Hossein Sabouri was born in Tabriz – Iran. He has got his B.A, M.A, and Ph.D. in English Language and Literature in Iran and India, respectively. As an associate professor of the University of Tabriz, he has written 5 books, 25 articles, translated 6 books from English into Farsi, edited several articles, and presented more than12 international articles.