

# Gender. media and diversity

Literature, Russian Literature



Gender, Media and Diversity With respect to unit 2 and other related readings, it is acknowledgeable that social identities are regarded as being acts of performances. From the readings, it is easily noticeable that in social contexts, behavioral responses of individuals depend on aspects like role models, popular or conventional behavioral habits, and desirable attributes. For example in the United States, popular artists like Kanye West act as role models to teenage boys belonging to the African American ethnic group. In this case, these teenagers are highly likely to imitate the artist either through dress code or language among other identifiable parameters. Therefore, identity is an act of performance where individuals adopt certain behavioral habits, and perform them to a niche group of audiences (Farrell 39). Similarly, the readings liken the social element of gender to identity. As opposed to being biologically determined, gender is considerably regarded to as a performance. In this case, repetitive practice of habits reserved for a specific gender invariably amounts to construction of an underlying gender. Therefore, feminine and masculine genders can be socially constructed by anyone, regardless of an individual's biological sexuality. Primarily, social construction of gender implies that feminine qualities are not necessarily associated with being sexually female, while masculine qualities are not necessarily reserved for male persons. In essence, biological sexuality is natural whereas gender is culturally defined. In American societies, the aspect of gender is used to assign roles to men and women. For example, American societies perceive women as being physically and mentally weak, while their male counterparts are physically and mentally strong. As a result, mental and physical weaknesses are attributes reserved

for the feminine gender, while strength is reserved for the masculine gender (Julie and Smith 155). Whenever men display weak mental and emotional composites like crying, they are criticized by the society as possessing feminine qualities. In this case, the performance of displaying weak emotions is used to construct the feminine gender, while performances related to display of strong emotional and physical attributes is used to construct the masculine gender. Therefore, categorization of masculinity and femininity has less to do with biological sexuality, and more to do with social and cultural contexts.

Undeniably, media plays a significant role in construction of gender in societies today. For example, attributes of aesthetic appeals and physical attractiveness are reserved for the feminine gender. In popular magazines and films, women are displayed as having highly decorative dress codes. As a result, intensive use of makeup and other accessories to enhance one's beauty is synonymous to femininity today (Julie and Smith 155). On the contrary, men are perceived as being less concerned with physical attractiveness. In medial channels like television shows and magazines, men are displayed as wearing suits in official contexts and being topless or with vests in informal contexts. Therefore, reconstruction of femininity today is propagated by the media (Farrell 47). Whenever a man tries to dress well in order to become physically attractive, the society swiftly labels him as being either feminine or homosexual. In this regard, it is undeniably that gender is actually a performance as opposed to being a biologically determined attribute.

At this juncture, one can wonder whether construction of gender is

dependent on an individual's immediate environment. In this case, immediate environments may include family units, friendship circles, or local laws. From an early age, the society, especially family members and friends encourage minors to construct desirable gender qualities. For example, young girls are clothed with colorful attire as a means of encouraging them to appreciate physical attractiveness and aesthetic appeals as they grow (Julie and Smith 162). On the contrary, boys are discouraged and ridiculed whenever they are seen wearing colorful attire. Therefore, it emerges that an individual's immediate environment plays a significant role in facilitating construction of gender since childhood.

#### Works Cited

- Farrell, Susan. *Social Construction of Gender: Femininity versus Masculinity*. Pittsburg: Sage Publications, 2010. Print.
- Julie, Sandra and Smith, Feber. " On heterosexual masculinity: Some psychical consequences of the social construction of gender and sexuality." *American Behavioral Scientist Journal*, 16. 8 (2013): 154-169.