Gender Performativity in the Movie Clueless (1995) Based on Judith Butler's Approach

[Performativitas Gender dalam Film Clueless (1005) Berdasarkan Pendekatan Judith Butler]

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the 1995 film Clueless through Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which views gender as a construct shaped by societal expectations and repetitive actions. Using qualitative analysis, the research highlights how the film critiques traditional gender norms through its characters. Cher's hyperfemininity both adheres to and challenges the societal expectations, Tai's fashion-driven transformation reflects identity fluidity, and Christian's ambiguous masculinity destroys conventional norms. Additionally, humor in the film critiques class and gender constructs. The study situates Clueless within feminist and demonstrating how it portrays gender as dynamic and open to reinterpretation.

Keyword: Gender Performativity, Judith Butler theory, Clueless (1995), Movie Analysis, Feminists

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis film Clueless (1995) melalui teori performativitas gender Judith Butler, yang memandang gender sebagai konstruksi yang dibentuk oleh ekspektasi sosial dan tindakan berulang. Dengan menggunakan analisis kualitatif, penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana film tersebut mengkritik norma-norma gender tradisional melalui karakternya. Hyperfemininity Cher baik mematuhi maupun menantang ekspektasi sosial, transformasi Tai melalui fashion mencerminkan fluiditas identitas, dan maskulinitas ambigu Christian meruntuhkan norma-norma konvensional. Selain itu, humor dalam film mengkritik konstruksi kelas dan gender. Penelitian ini menempatkan Clueless dalam wacana feminis dan menunjukkan bagaimana film tersebut menggambarkan gender sebagai sesuatu yang dinamis dan terbuka untuk reinterpretasi.

Kata Kunci: Performatif Gender, Teori Judith Butler, Clueless (1995), Analisis Film, Feminisme

INTRODUCTION

Gender has always been a central theme in cultural productions, including films, which often serve as mirrors reflecting societal norms and values. The 1995 movie Clueless, directed by Amy Heckerling, offers a unique lens to explore. The sender identities are constructed and portrayed with a high-school setting. While the movie is widely recognized for its comedic portrayal of teenage life, it also subtly critiques the traditional understandings of gender roles through its characters and narrative.

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity provides a crucial framework for analyzing how gender is not an inherent identity, but rather a set of repeated actions and behaviors shaped by societal expectations. Butler (1993) argues that gender is performed rather than being biologically determined, and these performances can both reinforce and challenge established norms. In the context of Clueless, the characters' interactions, fashion choices, and dialogues exemplify the fluidity and performative nature of gender. This study aims to examine the representation of gender in Clueless through Butler's theoretical lens, highlighting how the film portrays the performative aspects of gender identity. By unpacking these performances, the analysis seeks to illuminate the ways in which Clueless both adhere to and subverts traditional gender norms, contributing to broader discussions on gender and feminism in popular culture.

Gender, as a social construct, has been a central focus of feminist and queer theoretical frameworks. Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity has significantly influenced contemporary understandings of gender identity. Butler argues that gender is not a fixed, biological trait, but rather a series of performative acts shaped by societal expectations (Butler, 1990). These ideas have been expanded in her later work Bodies That Matter (1993), where she contends that gender performance is not only shaped by societal norms but also by the discursive limits of sex (Butler, 1993). Butler's theory challenges traditional notions of fixed gender identity and opens up space for more fluid and dynamic interpretations of gender roles.

Michel Foucault's (1978) *The History of Sexuality* also informs this understanding of gender by linking sexuality to the mechanisms of power in society. Foucault's analysis emphasizes how societal structures regulate and shape sexual and gendered behaviors, reinforcing the idea that gender is a social construct rather than a biological imperative (Foucault, 1978). This perspective is further supported by Seyla Benhabib's discussion of feminism and postmodernism, where she examines the ways in which gender identities are contested and reshaped within cultural contexts (Benhabib, 1995). Additionally, feminist scholars have critiqued and expanded upon Butler's theories, highlighting the importance of social and political changes in reshaping gender norms. Gill Jagger's exploration of Butler's sexual politics and the power of performativity (Jagger, 2008) contributes to this discourse, offering a broader understanding of how gender performance intersects with societal transformation.

In this study, we apply Butler's theory to analyze the 1995 film Clueless as a cultural text that both critiques and reinforces traditional gender norms through its characters and narrative structures. Clueless have explored its depiction of gender through feminist and queer theories, particularly in relation to Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. Yvonne Tasker (2003) analyzed Clueless as a postfeminist film that both critiques and reinforces traditional gender roles, noting how the film's humor and satire engage with societal expectations of femininity and masculinity. Beck (2005) focused on the role of fashion in the film, arguing that it serves as a key tool for identity construction and gender performance. In her feminist analysis, Frye (2007) examined how the film portrays gender transformation, especially through the character of Tai, and how external influences shape gender performances. Montrose (2010) applied queer theory to Clueless, exploring how the character Christian challenges normative masculinity and destabilizes conventional gender identities. These studies provide the foundation for analyzing Clueless through Butler's theory, revealing how the film

both adheres to and subverts traditional gender norms. The primary difference between this journal and previous studies lies in the specific focus on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity as a framework for analyzing Clueless (1995). While previous studies have explored aspects of gender, identity, fashion, and empowerment in the film, this journal uniquely applies Butler's concept of gender performativity to provide a deeper, more systematic understanding of how gender is constructed, performed, and subverted in Clueless.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of gender in film has long been a focal point for scholars in cultural and feminist studies. Movies not only reflect societal norms but also actively participate in constructing and challenging gender identities. Amy Heckerling's Clueless (1995) has been the subject of academic discourse due to its portrayal of teenage life, consumer culture, and gender dynamics. Scholars have explored how the film critiques and reinforce stereotypes while offering nuanced portrayals of femininity and identity.

Clueless" is an American typical romantic comedy. This film can be seen as a hybrid genre, as it includes different characteristics of two film genres. In this movie, elements of humor and romance are both illustrated by its generic formulas and story content. Clueless is a gentle but scathing look at a contemporary culture rife with pretense, confusion, and contradiction. There is no longer any "outside" to this culture, as even teenage boredom is fully appropriated and absorbed by Hollywood fiction in the way Clueless does. Clueless also captures a particular moment in pop and politics for the Class of 1995. From a traditional or second-wave feminist perspective, the female protagonists of Clueless - Cher, Dionne, and Tai - are a shameful disappointment to feminism, as much as they are obsessed with fashion, makeup, and frivolous femininity. More interested in shopping than politics, the girls of Clueless define themselves and others by their appearance and consumption. Far from the idealism of the "make love, not war" generation, Cher is privileged, naïve, and

somewhat conservative, or, as Tai (Britanny Murphy) wryly notes, "a virgin who can't drive." But far from being revolutionary, Cher is also no sexual doormat: "I'm not a prude. I'm just very selective. You see how picky I am about my shoes, and they only fit my feet." As the stereotype of the "dumb blonde," Cher is also steeped in a very self-absorbed or "in the know" postmodern culture. She may be clueless about "what's really going on in the world," but her sassy quips reveal a wealth of knowledge about pop culture history.

Reflecting the rise of third-wave feminism in the 1990s, new Clueless-style chick flicks suggested that it was possible to embrace aspects of traditional "girl" femininity while still being strong, ambitious, and self-reliant. This celebration of women's culture was a reaction against the more traditional and serious style of feminism advocated by second-wave activists in the 1960s and 1970s. The new "women's power feminists" pushed back against the limitations imposed by their second-wave mothers and teachers, and against established definitions of what was "good" (i.e. empowering) and "bad" (oppressive) for them, to reclaim the joy of femininity. So, although Josh dismisses Cher's activities as manipulative, trivial, and superficial, Cher will not give up the pleasures of women's culture, such as makeup, because it is an opportunity to strengthen female friendships.

For Cher, this is not a "guilty pleasure," because her postmodern, postfeminist generation embraces hyperfemininity in a liberating, self-aware, and ironic way. As Cher's best friend said, "Cher's greatest joy in life is changing her appearance: it gives her a: it gives her a sense of control in a world full of chaos."

A specifically postfeminist second in Clueless takes place whilst Cher manipulates an instructor into converting by stating, "I instructed my PE instructor an evil male had damaged my heart, so she raised my C to a B."

In the privileged international of women like Cher, the concept of an evil, overarching patriarchy is outwardly laughable. The uneasy adolescent humor right here comes on the price of grownup 2d wave feminists. In

Clueless, feminism is placed now no longer as a truth, however as simply as some other tale or discourse that Cher manipulates to shape her very own interests. The light-hearted banter shows the individualistic or fragmented bent of 90s feminist practices, or as Cher might say, "It's a non-public desire each lady has been given to make for herself?"

Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity, as introduced in *Gender Trouble*, provides a crucial theoretical framework for understanding the fluid and constructed nature of gender. According to Butler, gender is not an innate quality but a series of repetitive acts that align with societal expectations. This theory has been widely applied in analyzing films and literary works, revealing how characters perform and negotiate their identities within specific cultural contexts. Gender and sex are cultural constructs. Identity is always secured by stable notions of sex, gender, and sexuality. The term "gender incongruent" or "discontinuous" is used to describe people who appear human but do not conform to culturally determined gender norms (Butler 23). This implies that certain identities cannot be considered existing because they are inconsistent with culturally constructed notions of gender.

For example, femininity is culturally conceptualized as the identity of women. Individuals who behave like women but are physiologically considered men are called discontinuists. They do not conform to gender norms. The duality of sex or gender is always maintained through the repeated act of heterosexual desire. This practice of compulsive normativity ensures the performance of different terms of femininity and masculinity. "This conception of gender not only presupposes a causal relationship between sex, gender, and desire but also suggests that desire reflects or expresses gender and that gender reflects or expresses desire (Butler 30)." Persistent masculinity and femininity are an attempt to conceal the proliferation of gender performance and any gendered possibilities that may emerge outside of socially constructed norms.

The application of gender performativity in film studies has provided scholars with tools to analyze how characters construct and perform their identities. Visual elements such as costume, set design, and cinematography, combined with narrative choices, create a space where gender performances can be both critiqued and reimagined.

Scholars such as Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra have highlighted the role of female protagonists in postfeminist cinema, emphasizing their ability to reshape narratives around femininity and agency. Similarly, Clueless has been recognized for its portrayal of hyperfemininity and the use of fashion as a tool for identity construction. Cher's wardrobe, for instance, is a central element of her character, signifying her adherence to and eventual subversion of societal expectations.

Understanding Butler's concept of performativity provides insight into how culturally constructed limits can be altered. Individuals must begin to do, to perform, a different genre. In her account, gender is not fixed like sex, but rather learned and practiced. She argues that everyday actions, words, gestures, expressions, dress, and behaviors help to create the gender binary that is perpetuated. If individuals understand that gender is not a noun but a 'doing', they will eventually understand that gender is fluid. It is not a fixed physical state of gender, it is expressed in gender, the individual is a subject that is always in process. Overall, this genre theory is the basic analytical basis of the novel under study. The study uses the gender norms that have been established by society in the novel to see how society constructs normalcy for the characters in the novel under analysis. This theory is used to address the socially created structures in the novel and how the two main characters interpret their gender despite the institutionalized gender norms in the society in which they live.

Previous research has examined the intersections of gender performativity and film, often focusing on how popular media can subvert or reinforce traditional norms. Scholars such as Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra have emphasized the role of female protagonists in

reshaping narratives about gender in postfeminist cinema. Meanwhile, studies on Clueless have highlighted its depiction of hyperfemininity, fashion as identity performance, and its subtle critique of class and gender roles.

However, there is a limited exploration of Clueless specifically through Butler's theoretical lens. While existing studies have touched on performative aspects of gender in the film, they often lack an in-depth analysis of how these performances align with or deviate from Butler's framework. This study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the performative nature of gender in Clueless, offering fresh insights into its characters and narrative structure through the application of Judith Butler's gender theory.

The exploration of gender in popular culture, particularly in films, provides critical insights into the ways in which societal norms are constructed, reinforced, and challenged. Gender identity is increasingly recognized as a dynamic and performative construct, with gender roles being shaped by cultural expectations and repeated actions rather than inherent qualities. Judith Butler's ground-breaking theory of gender performativity has revolutionized feminist and queer theory by challenging traditional notions of fixed gender identity. Her work argues that gender is not something one is, but something one does -- a series of repeated acts and behaviors that align with or challenge societal norms (Butler, 1990). This theoretical framework has already been widely applied in various academic fields, including literature, sociology, and film studies, providing new ways to analyze gender in media.

While much of the existing research on Clueless has explored themes of femininity, identity, and fashion (Tasker, 2003; Beck, 2005), there remains a gap in applying Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity in a comprehensive and systematic way to the film. Butler's theory offers a more nuanced approach to understanding how gender is performed, both reinforcing and subverting traditional norms through repeated actions, behaviors, and visual cues. Clueless offers a

rich text for this type of analysis because of its complex portrayal of gender dynamics within the framework of a teen comedy. The film presents a layered examination of how gender identities are negotiated, performed, and transformed within the context of high school culture, fashion, and relationships. By using Butler's framework, this study will explore the fluidity of gender in Clueless and show how characters' identities are constructed, deconstructed, and even subverted through their performances.

This research is significant because it not only adds to the growing body of work on gender in film but also expands the application of Butler's theory to a popular, accessible film. Clueless provides a unique context in which gender identity is explored through humor, fashion, and social interactions, and applying Butler's theory to this context offers new insights into how gender performativity operates in contemporary cinema. Additionally, the study engages with the subversive elements of gender that are often overlooked in traditional feminist readings of the film, particularly in relation to masculinity and queer identity.

While there have been numerous analyses of Clueless that focus on gender and identity, a significant gap remains in the application of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity to the film. Previous studies have explored the film's treatment of femininity and fashion (Beck, 2005; Tasker, 2003), but they often treat gender as a static concept rather than as a performative act. In these analyses, gender is primarily seen as something that either conforms to or critiques traditional gender roles. However, they do not fully address how gender is actively performed through the characters' actions, speech, and behaviors, and how this performance both reinforces and destabilizes traditional gender norms.

Furthermore, while studies such as those by Montrose (2010) have touched on the film's portrayal of masculinity, especially through the character of Christian, they have not explored how the film's humorous, satirical tone plays a role in deconstructing gender identity. Christian's ambiguous masculinity, his fashion

choices, and his relationships with other characters are subversive elements that destabilize conventional ideas of masculinity, yet these moments are not fully analyzed through the lens of gender performativity. By focusing on Christian's role as an example of "queer masculinity" and analyzing his performance in relation to Butler's theory, this study will deepen the understanding of how Clueless critiques and redefines masculinity.

Additionally, while previous scholars have focused on the film's feminist implications, particularly in relation to Cher's character (Frye, 2007), no study has fully explored the idea that gender in Clueless is not just something that can be performed but is also something that can be subverted and transformed over time. Cher's character, for example, begins as a stereotypical "rich girl" figure, but her emotional and intellectual growth throughout the film demonstrates how gender identity can evolve. This aspect of Cher's transformation has not been thoroughly explored in relation to

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is the most common method used in literary research to identify social condition, norms, gender, gender role, ethnicity, religion, and many more. The result of this research is presented in a form of words, not numeral explanation as in quantitative research. And textual analysis to examine gender performativity in Clueless (1995) through Butler's theory. It analyzes key scenes, character behaviors, dialogues, and visual elements to uncover how gender identities are constructed and performed.

The data collection involves selecting significant scenes that highlight gender dynamics, including interactions, fashion choices, and societal expectations portrayed in the film. The data analysis employs a thematic approach to identify patterns in character behaviors and examine how these align with or challenge the traditional gender norms. By situating the findings within the existing literature, this methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of how Clueless reflects and critiques traditional gender roles.

RESULT

The analysis of Clueless (1995) through Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity reveals significant insight into how the movie constructs and critiques gender identities. The findings are categorized based on character performances, narrative elements, and visual aesthetics, demonstrating both adherence to and subversion of traditional gender norms. See Table 1.

DISCUSSION

Cher's Gender Performance

Cher Horowitz, as the protagonist of Clueless, exemplifies Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity through her repeated actions, behaviors, and presentation of self. According to Butler's theory, gender is not a biological or intrinsic trait, but a series of performative acts and behaviors that are socially constructed and constantly reinforced through repetition, Cher's character embodies femininity through her fashion choices, speech, and social interactions, all of which are influenced by societal expectations of what it means to be a "girl" in Beverly Hills. She consistently performs femininity by wearing stylish, feminine clothes, speaking with a certain level of carelessness that aligns with a stereotypical "rich girl" persona, and engaging in behaviors that reinforce traditional gender roles, such as matchmaking and striving for romantic success. However, Cher also disrupts and challenges stereotypical gender roles, reflecting the fluidity of gender that Butler emphasizes. For example, although she appears to be a typical "girl" defined by beauty and materialism, her intelligence and emotional depth complicate this superficial femininity. She is not simply passive or dependent on others; instead, she actively engages in her school's social and academic life, demonstrating her intelligence and agency.

Table 1. character performances, narrative elements, and visual aesthetics

Category	Findings	Discussions
Cher's Gender Performance	Embodies hyperfemininity through fashion, speech, and behavior; challenges norms by showcasing intelligence and emotional growth.	Illustrates the fluidity of femininity, balancing societal expectations and personal agency, aligning with butler's notion of gender as multifaced and performed.
Fashion as Identity	Fashion is used to construct and express gender identities; characters like Tai undergo transformations reflecting shifts in their identity.	Highlihts gender as a stylized perfomance, where clothing becomes a marker of societal roles and individuality.
Subversion of Masculinity	Christian's metrosexual appearance and ambiguous sexuality challenge traditional masculinity and heterosexual norms.	Aligns with Butler's argument that performances can resist normative frameworks, offering alternative portrayals of masculinity.
Humor and Gender Critique	Satirical commentary on relationship and social norms critiques gender and class expectations.	Humor exposes the superficiality of societal constructs, reinforcing Butler's idea of gender as a performance open to critique and reinterpretation

This subversion of traditional femininity through intellectual and emotional growth reflects Butler's argument that gender is not fixed or static but is a fluid performance shaped by context, intention, and social influence.

Cher's actions throughout the film reveal how gender identity is not something merely "performed" for the external gaze, but something that is deeply entangled with her internal growth. For example, Cher's decision to mentor Tai and her realization that her "matchmaking efforts have deeper emotional consequences shows a deeper, more nuanced understanding of relationships. It is through these repeated acts of emotional maturity and self-awareness that Cher shows a form of femininity that is not simply about appearances or traditional roles. Her performance of femininity becomes more

authentic as she develops an emotional and intellectual understanding of herself and others. This evolving gender performance shows how, as Butler argues, gender is an ongoing series of acts, each re-negotiated through experience and context.

Moreover, Cher's relationship with Josh offers another layer to her performance of gender. At first, Josh seems to be presented as the typical romantic interest, yet the dynamics between Cher and Josh subvert traditional romantic gender roles. Rather than Cher simply depending on Josh for validation or romantic fulfillment, their relationship becomes one of mutual understanding and growth, reinforcing the notion that gender is fluid and shaped by personal transformation rather than rigid societal scripts. Cher's emotional growth throughout the film, as she learns to see beyond superficial qualities and embraces a

deeper understanding of love and responsibility, complicates her role as a stereotypical teen girl and elevates her gender performance from one of materialism to one of emotional complexity.

Furthermore, Cher's transformation throughout the film illustrates Butler's notion that gender is constantly evolving. Cher begins by embodying a certain ideal of femininity, but as she matures, her character's development shows that these gender performances can change and adapt. Her growing self-awareness, as she learns to care for others and understand her own feelings, highlights that gender identity is not something that is determined by fixed societal scripts, but something that can evolve through repeated acts. In essence, Cher's character demonstrates that gender, according to Butler, is not a stable or natural essence, but something that is continuously constructed and deconstructed through performance. Through Cher's character, Clueless showcases how gender identities are not simply internalized but enacted and can be subverted, challenged, and redefined over time. This highlights the performative nature of gender as a social construct, rather than an inherent characteristic.

Fashion as Identity

In Clueless, fashion functions as a crucial element in the construction and performance of gender, aligning with Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. According to Butler, gender is not something one is, but something one does a performance enacted through repeated behaviors and actions that conform to social expectations. Fashion, in this sense, becomes a key mechanism through which characters assert, negotiate, and sometimes subvert their gender identities. Cher and Dionne, as the epitome of fashionable Beverly Hills teenagers, use clothing as a tool to project their social Identity and femininity. Cher's carefully chosen outfits, such as her signature plaid skirts and matching jackets, reflect both her wealth and her commitment to performing a specific, socially constructed version of femininity. She not only embodies the ideals of beauty and materialism associated with femininity, but also uses fashion to position

herself as an active agent within the social hierarchy of her high school. Her attire signals her belonging to a certain class and her role within the social dynamics, where being stylish is part of her performance as a desirable, confident, and successful girl. This aligns with Butler's argument that gender identity is a repetitive performance, and in Cher's case, her performance of femininity through fashion is a socially sanctioned and visible act.

Similarly, Dionne's style, characterized by extravagant outfits and bold accessories, also reinforces her social identity as someone who is in control of her image and aware of how she is perceived by others. Both Cher and Dionne's fashion choices reflect Butler's idea that gender performance is not just about personal expression but about navigating societal expectations and maintaining social power. Tai's transformation, however, offers a more complex exploration of fashion and identity in the context of Butler's theory. When Tai first arrives in Bev Beverly Hills, her clothing is less stylish and more reflective of her "outsider" status, aligning with the social perception of her as awkward and unrefined. As she undergoes a makeover. Tai's clothing choices become more fashionable and in line with the femininity projected by Cher and Dionne. This physical transformation marks a shift in Tai's self-perception and social status, as she moves from being an outsider to aligning herself with the dominant social group. Tai's change illustrates Butler's idea that gender identity is fluid and subject to transformation through performative acts, like fashion. Through the repeated act of dressing in a more fashionable, "feminine" way. Tai not only conforms to societal expectations but also takes on a new identity--one that is more accepted within the high school's social structure.

In all these characters, fashion serves as a marker of gender performance, aligning with Butler's view that gender is something enacted through socially prescribed acts. Fashion is not simply a matter of personal preference but a means of enacting and performing gender according to social norms, while also revealing the characters' individual agency in choosing how they want to perform and negotiate their

gender roles. The characters in Clueless demonstrate how gender is not an innate or stable identity but something shaped through continual acts of performance, with fashion acting as one of the most visible and powerful expressions of that performance.

Subversion of Masculinity

Christian's character in Clueless offers a compelling example of how gender performance can challenge traditional masculinity, aligning closely with Judith Butler's theory of gender as a performative and fluid construct. Butler argues that gender is not biologically determined but is instead enacted through a series of performances that are shaped by cultural norms and expectations. Christian's portrayal, with his metrosexual appearance and ambiguous sexuality, subverts the traditional ideals of masculinity and offers an alternative gender identity that resists conventional.

Categorization.

Christian's fashion choices are a primary means by which he disrupts normative masculinity. Unlike other male characters in Clueless, who conform to conventional masculine styles (such as the jocks and the more stereotypical "bad boy" types), Christian's wardrobe is more closely aligned with feminine, fashionable, and even "gay" markers. His impeccable sense of style, which includes items like pastel-colored shirts, tailored suits, and perfectly coordinated accessories, challenges the rigid boundaries between masculinity and femininity. According to Butler's theory, these choices reflect gender as a performance, a set of actions and behaviors that can transcend traditional gender boundaries. Christian's use of fashion as a marker of his identity illustrates Butler's argument that gender is not inherently tied to one's biological sex or societal expectations but is instead something that can be performed in diverse and non-normative ways.

Moreover, Christian's ambiguous sexuality further complicates traditional notions of masculinity. While he is initially presented as a potential love interest for Cher, his lack of interest in her romantically, coupled with his more openly affectionate behavior toward other men (especially when he dances with Cher and Dionne in a way that seems more intimate than expected), subverts the idea of heterosexual masculinity. Butler's theory emphasizes that gender performance is not only about how one presents their external identity, but also about how those performances interact with and challenge societal norms. Christian's portrayal of an alternative masculinity-one that is more fluid, open, and undefined illustrates Butler's view that gender can be flexible, even in contexts where dominant cultural ideals insist on a fixed binary of masculinity and femininity.

Christian's character represents a subversion of masculinity by demonstrating that gender performance is not restricted to the binary codes of "man" and "woman." By embodying a form of metrosexuality that includes traits traditionally associated with femininity, such as an interest in fashion and appearance, and by presenting his sexuality as ambiguous, Christian challenges the societal expectations of how men should behave and how they should express their gender. This aligns with Butler's notion that gender is not a stable identity, but a series of performances that can either reinforce or disrupt established social frameworks. Christian's presence in the film supports Butler's assertion that gender performance is open to reinterpretation and resistance, highlighting the fluid and performative nature of identity. His character shows that masculinity, like femininity, is not a fixed essence but a performance that can be redefined, expanded, and contested.

Humor and Gender Critique

In Clueless, humor plays a pivotal role in both reinforcing and critiquing the gender and class norms that shape the characters' lives, highlighting the performative nature of these societal constructs. Cher's witty, satirical remarks, often delivered with irony or self-awareness, offer a layered critique of the social hierarchies around her. These moments of humor reflect Judith Butler's notion that gender is a performative act, something that is constructed and continuously enacted through social behaviors, rather than an innate, natural quality. Through humor, the film not only

showcases how these gender and class roles are repeated and reinforced, but also allows for a subversion of them, suggesting that these roles can be questioned, reshaped, or transformed.

Cher's comments about dating and social hierarchies are prime examples of this satirical critique. For instance, she frequently refers to her matchmaking skills and the surrounding relationships with a detached, often ironic tone, highlighting the superficiality of her peers' romantic interactions. When she remarks, "You see how picky I am about my shoes and they only go on my feet," she draws attention to her consumerist and class-conscious attitude, using humor to critique how people often judge each other based on material possessions, appearances, and status. At the same time, her self-awareness and use of humor indicate that she is not entirely unaware of the performative nature of these roles. This aligns with Butler's theory that gender is not a stable identity but rather a series of repetitive acts that are socially enforced. Cher's remarks about dating and class subtly expose the constructed nature of these performances, suggesting that they are not inherently meaningful but are shaped by social expectations and can be subject to critique.

Moreover, the film uses humor to question the fixedness of gender roles. In several scenes, Cher's remarks about boys, relationships, and beauty standards offer a critique of traditional femininity. For example, her comment, "I totally paused," while discussing her inability to help Tai with her makeover, is a moment where Cher's performance of femininity the desire to help another girl "improve" her looks-intersects with a satirical critique of that very impulse. Through this humor, Clueless invites the audience to reflect on the absurdity of such gendered expectations, while simultaneously affirming that these expectations are socially constructed. In line with Butler's argument, Cher's humor not only reinforces but also opens the possibility for the transformation of gender roles. By performing femininity with wit, irony, and a sense of self-awareness, Cher

challenges the notion that gender roles are fixed or essential. Her humor allows her to navigate, resist, and even subvert the rigid gender expectations imposed on her, providing a space for critique and transformation. This approach reflects Butler's view that gender is a dynamic performance-a set of acts that can be altered or resisted, rather than a natural, unchangeable aspect of identity.

In sum, the humor in Clueless serves as tool for deconstructing and questioning the social structures surrounding gender and class. Through Cher's satirical observations and witty dialogue, the film critiques the performative nature of these roles while also demonstrating their malleability. This aligns with Butler's theory that gender is not only a societal performance but also a performance that can be critiqued and transformed. The film thus allows for the disruption of traditional gender and class norms by presenting them as socially constructed and open to reinterpretation, all through the lens of humor and satire.

CONCLUSION

The study explores gender performativity in the 1995 film Clueless through the lens of Judith Butler's theory, demonstrating how the film constructs, critiques, and subverts traditional gender norms. The findings reveal that gender in Clueless is depicted as a fluid and performative construct, rather than an inherent or fixed identity. Through characters like Cher, Tai, and Christian, the film illustrates the performative nature of gender by showcasing how actions, fashion, and societal interactions shape identity.

Cher's hyperfemininity and her eventual growth underline the fluidity of gender performances, while Tai's transformation through fashion and social integration highlights the adaptability of gender roles in response to societal expectations. Christian's ambiguous masculinity further challenges traditional norms, offering a subversive portrayal of male identity. Additionally, the use of humor critiques and destabilizes fixed notions of gender and class, aligning with Butler's argument that gender is an open,

dynamic process subject to critique and reinterpretation.

Overall, Clueless provides a rich ground for examining the performative aspects of gender, blending satire and cultural commentary to both reinforce and question societal norms. This analysis contributes to the broader discourse on gender and feminism in popular culture, emphasizing the value of Butler's theory in uncovering the complexities of identity construction in media narratives.

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