



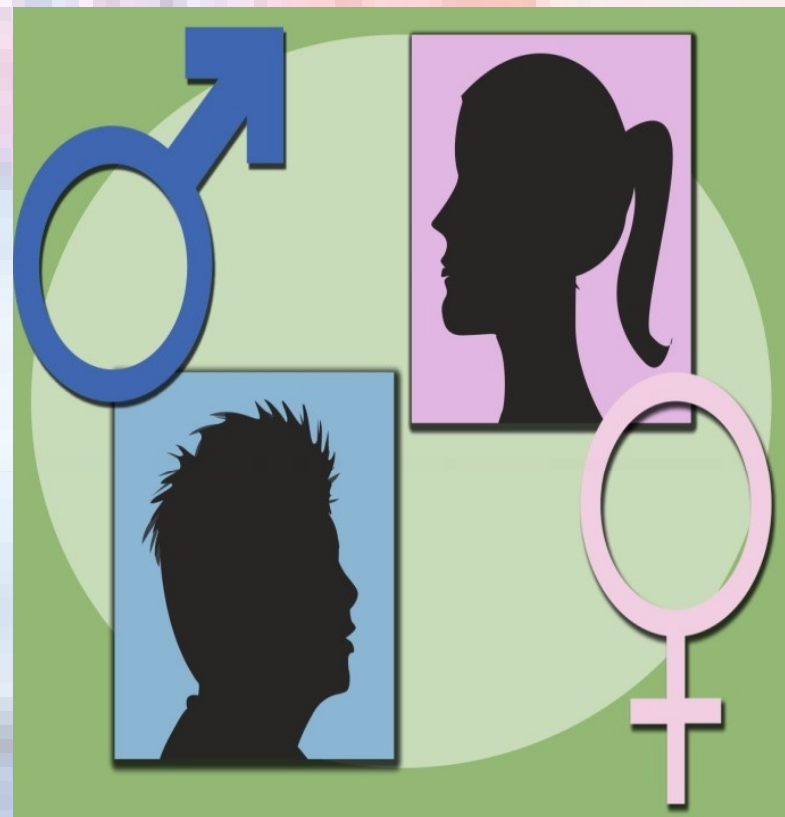
Gender and Feminism: The Conceptual Understanding and its Interaction

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What is feminism?

Feminism is a complex notion that has vast differences in meaning and connotation for people spanning generations, ethnic identities, sexual orientations, social classes, nationality, and myriad identities.

- Feminism is not a static notion; rather it evolves with us throughout our lives and is shaped by the various lenses we use to view the world at large and, most importantly, ourselves.



- “Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression”(p. viii).

- Feminism is mainly focused on women's issues, but because feminism seeks gender equality, some feminists argue that men's liberation is therefore a necessary part of feminism, and that men are also harmed by sexism and gender roles



FEMINISM VERSUS GENDER EQUALITY

Feminism is the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes

Mainly concerned with the rights of women

Gender Equality is the state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender

Concerned with the rights of everyone, irrespective of gender

Feminist Theories

- Feminist theory exists in a variety of disciplines, emerging from these feminist movements and including general theories about the origins of inequality, and, in some cases, about the social construction of sex and gender.
- Feminist activists have campaigned for women's rights—such as in contract, property, and voting — while also promoting women's rights to bodily integrity and autonomy and reproductive rights.

- Some of the earlier forms of feminism have been criticized for being geared towards white, middle-class, educated perspectives.
- This led to the creation of ethnically-specific or multiculturalists forms of feminism.
- Themes explored in feminism include art, history and contemporary art, aesthetics, discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy

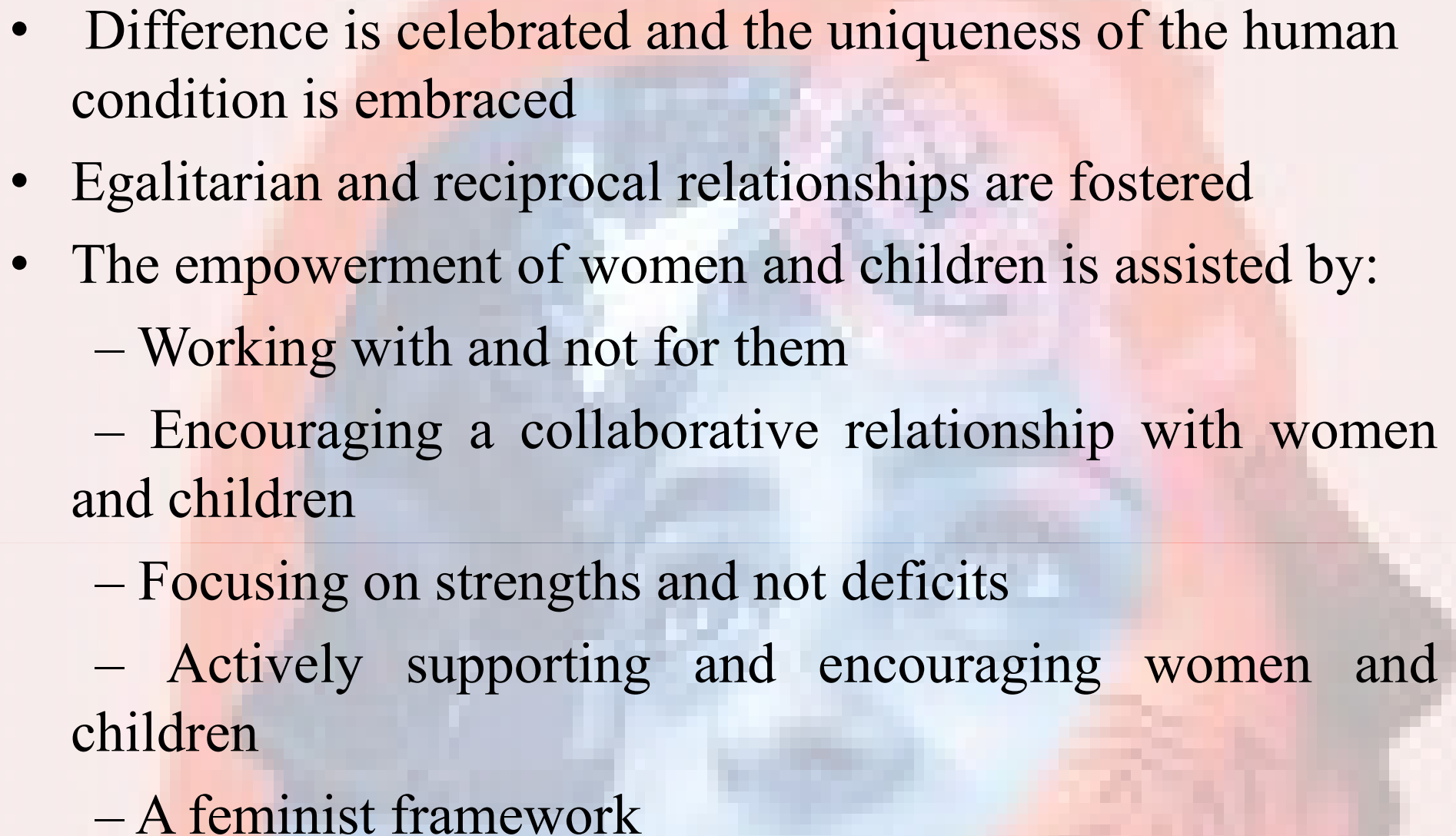
"If I had a hammer...
I'd SMASH Patriarchy"

I FOUND
IT!



Some Key principles of feminist practice

- The role of gender is recognised as a key factor in the oppression of human potential
- Patriarchal assumptions and practices that oppress and disempowered women and girls are identified and challenged
- Women's broader experiences are validated and they are seen as individuals not just as wives and mothers or potential wives and mothers

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- Difference is celebrated and the uniqueness of the human condition is embraced
 - Egalitarian and reciprocal relationships are fostered
 - The empowerment of women and children is assisted by:
 - Working with and not for them
 - Encouraging a collaborative relationship with women and children
 - Focusing on strengths and not deficits
 - Actively supporting and encouraging women and children
 - A feminist framework

Conceptualizations of Feminism

- There are many different conceptualizations, or variations, of feminism.
- Basic Introduction to some of these different perceptions of feminism.

Liberal Feminism

- Liberal feminism is a traditional perspective that was established as a part of the first wave of feminism.
- It is often the root of comparison when it argues that “society has a false belief that women are by nature less intellectually and physically capable than men”

• Modern liberal feminists argue that patriarchal society fuses sex and gender together, making only those jobs that are associated with the traditionally feminine, appropriate for women deconstructing contemporary conceptualizations of feminism.



Radical Feminism

- argues that the root cause of the problem is not femininity, but the low value that patriarchy assigns to feminine qualities.
- If society placed a higher value on feminine qualities, then there would be less gender oppression.
- In this way, the volume should be ‘turned up’ on all forms of gender expression – androgyny, femininity, masculinity, and multiple forms of gender expression

Marxist/Socialist Feminism

- Marxist feminists argue that the path to gender equality is led by the destruction of our capitalist society.
- speaks out to issues such as unequal pay, obstacles to achieving or excelling in certain fields, and the frequent lack of family-friendly policies at many of the institutions and national organizations of higher education.
- Socialist feminists purport that women can only achieve true freedom when working to end both economic and cultural oppression.

Black/Womanist Feminism

- The term Womanist is often used to describe the experiences of a woman of color, including the intersections of race and gender.
- The Black Womanist feminism (or Black Feminist Thought) movement comes out of the feminist movement of the 1970's and is a direct interface with the civil rights movement, as it recognizes that women of African descent in the U.S. faced a unique set of issues that were not being addressed by the predominantly white feminist movement.

Native American Feminism

• This perspective places a focus on the preservation of cultural identity and the role women play within the tribe as the keepers of that identity, thus insuring the culture is subsequently passed on to future generations.



Asian-American Feminism

It includes women in the U.S. whose ancestors are from a number of countries throughout Asia (including East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia) as well as multi-racial women.

- Throughout centuries of colonization, Western values and educational norms were pressed upon Indigenous people and educational systems of South and East Asia, the Americas, Africa and Australia.

Arab American Feminism

- Arab American feminism often addresses key issues of politics and modernity, East/West relations, religion, colonization, and relationships between and across gender and class.

- Muslim women have historically favored two major feminist paradigms: Secular feminism and Islamic feminism.



Multicultural Feminism



- United States every woman has different intersecting identities and therefore, is not alike with any other woman.
- This lens on feminism takes into account a number of different interconnected identities and influences; it is sometimes utilized as an umbrella through which many various perspectives can be considered.

Eco Feminism

- Eco feminists argue that there is a correlation between the destruction of the planet and the exploitation of women worldwide by the patriarchy.
- This particular area of feminism intersects with issues of socioeconomic privilege, speciesism, and racism.
- Eco feminists contend that both the destruction of the planet and its inhabitants are at stake, and the only way to avert these disasters is through taking a feminist perspective of the world.

Postmodern Feminism

This sees female as having been cast into the role of the Other. They criticize the structure of society and the dominant order, especially in its patriarchal aspects.

Many Postmodern feminists, however, reject the feminist label, because anything that ends with an “ism” reflects an essentialist conception.

Postmodern Feminism is the ultimate acceptor of diversity. Multiple truths, multiple roles, multiple realities are part of its focus. There is a rejectance of an essential nature of women, of one-way to be a woman.

Gender theory by Judith Butler, Candace West Don H. Zimmerman, Luce Irigaray

- Judith Butler: According to Butler's theory, gender is essentially a performative repetition of acts associated with male or female.
- Currently, the actions appropriate for men and women have been transmitted to produce a social atmosphere that both maintains and legitimizes a seemingly natural gender binary.

Candace West Don H. Zimmerman :

- **Zimmerman** argued that gender is something that humans created. As humans, we have categorized and defined many aspects of life.
- If someone was not in favor of their gender role or did something that was not deemed "correct" for that gender this person would be committing an act of social deviance.

- **Luce Irigaray** : Irigaray draws upon Karl Marx's theory of capital and commodities to claim that women are exchanged between men in the same way as any other commodity is.
- She argues that our entire society is predicated on this exchange of women.
- Also Irigaray's analysis of women's exclusion from culture and her use of strategic essentialism have been enormously influential in contemporary feminist theory

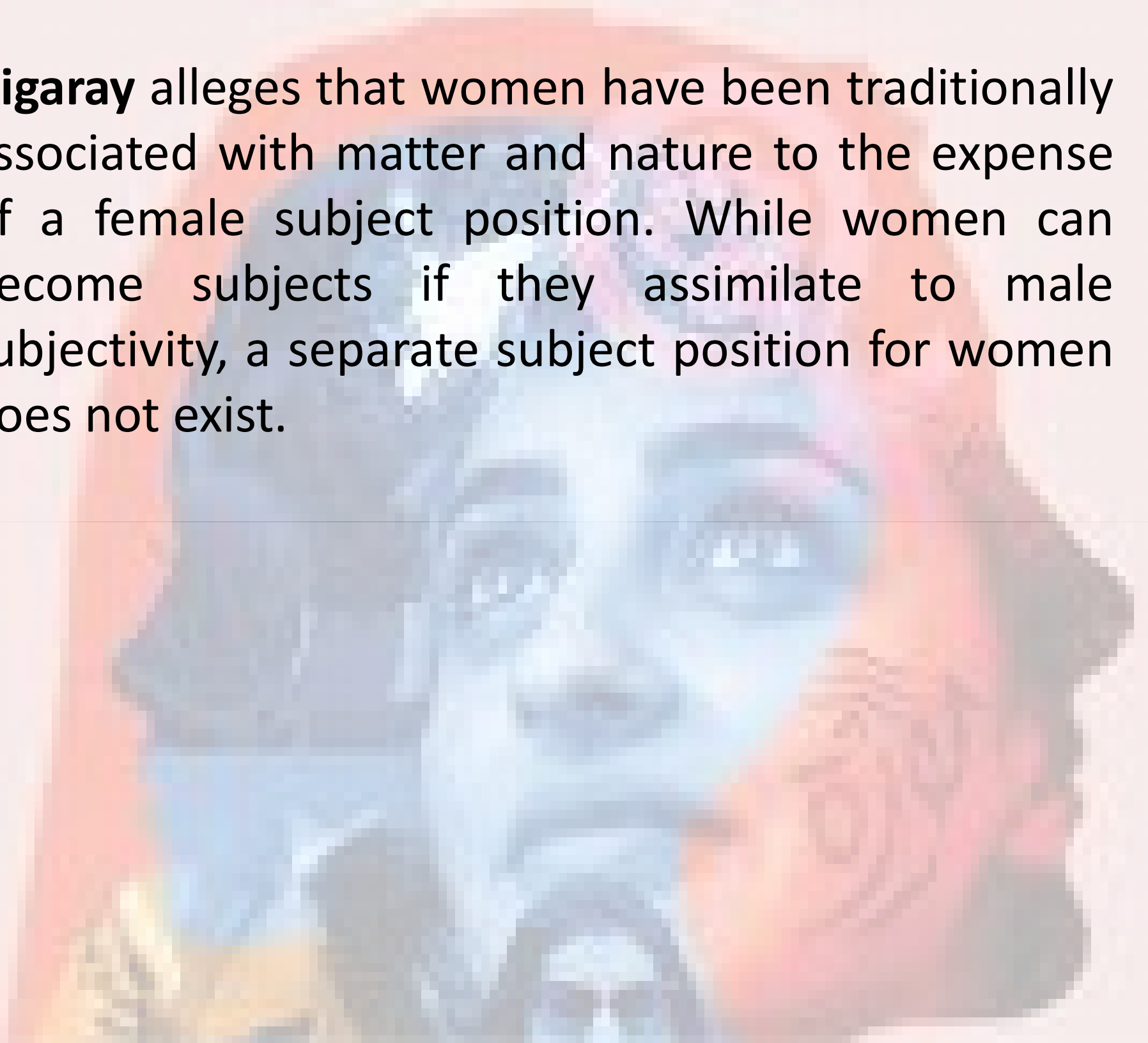
Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman- Doing Gender and Gender Display

- **Doing Gender:** The concept of "doing" gender came from conversations of gender from sociology and gender studies.
- This theory is gendered assessment of behavior.
- The concept of doing gender was later expanded by authors such as West and Fenstermaker in the book *Doing Gender, Doing Difference*.

- **Gender display** : the term "gender display" as a way to conceptualize the ways in which individuals act in a gender appropriate manner.
- **West and Zimmerman:** claiming that this masks the ways in which gender displays permeate nearly all social situations in that individuals cannot avoid being interpreted as masculine or feminine.

Gender Display /jen-der di-splā/ verb
The process whereby we perform the roles expected of us by social convention.

- **Irigaray** alleges that women have been traditionally associated with matter and nature to the expense of a female subject position. While women can become subjects if they assimilate to male subjectivity, a separate subject position for women does not exist.





Thank you