

Power and gender

1. How power works to mark, exclude, control, discipline and regulate
2. Patriarchy has figured as a central feminist concept

Patriarchal societies

1. Patriarchal societies re those in which men have more power than women and readier access than women to what is valued in the society or in any social sub-group
2. Men in such societies or groups occupy positions that permit them to shape and control many, if not most, aspects of women's lives.

Questions

1. The questions provoked by patriarchy were not limited to concerns of gender or sexual difference
2. Feminist efforts to address patriarchy would only succeed in reinstalling social hierarchies unless they addressed the assumptions of whiteness and heterosexuality underlying ideals of women's liberation
3. A definition of power that only looks at power of men over women without placing that in wider political and economic framework therefore, Leaves much out

Others

1. Alongside other Black, lesbian and working class feminist scholars, there are thinkers – who locate patriarchal power in the context of imperialism, racism, classism, heteronormativity.
2. And argue for the need to analyse power as multifaceted, co-constituted through intersections of gender, race, class, nation, sexuality.
3. Michel Foucault – examined how power disciplines and regulates embodied subjects In social institutions – prisons, asylums, schools, military
4. Modern power is distributed through complex social networks rather than possessed by any dominant group and compels subjects to internalise and hence perform, norms of social control

Disciplinary power

1. Disciplinary power is productive because it achieves subservience through increasing each individual's mastery over their own body

Power

1. Susan Bordo, discusses reproduction of femininity in the context of patriarchy.
2. Women's bodies are rendered more docile than men's

3. The anorexic is not repressed or made obedient through violent oppression or force, But through the individual's quest for self-mastery over their body
4. For Bordo this is linked to prevalent cultural and media imagery of ideal femininity, that produces a sense of self-surveillance.

Anorexia

1. Bordo – feelings of strength, control, self-mastery are for the anorexic, twinned with the reality of obedience in ways that maintain the patriarchal status quo. Resistance emerges within rather than outside of social networks of power

Challenges

1. For Butler, gender and sex are not pre-given or fixed but performative effects of power.
2. That there are two discrete and hierarchically ordered sexes – male and female – that correspond to two discrete and hierarchically ordered genders – masculinity and femininity - And in turn, that persons of one sex/gender should desire (only) person's of the opposite sex/gender
3. Butler points out our very understanding of what is possible in gendered life is determined by presumptions
4. It is through repeatedly – often unconsciously – and seen as natural.

Gendered identities

1. Power circulates through regulative discourses in which we all participate.
2. The possibility for agency, exists in practices of repeating gender norms differently.
3. Through embodied practices that trouble expectations of gender coherence, and thus expose its fictive aspects such as drag

Affirmative power

1. Giles Deleuze – sees power as distributed through multiple and fluid networks.
2. But instead of focusing on workings of power in discourse and social institutions as Foucault did, Deleuze is more interested in how power structures thought itself
3. One of his chief concerns in *Difference and Reception* 1968/2004) – and *What is Philosophy* 1994, is how we might think difference differently.
4. He aims to create a new understanding that exceeds binary forms of representation – male/female, heterosexual/homosexual etc.
5. Form this perspective, power works not through dualistic modes of differentiation, othering or exclusion but as something productive.

Power as intensity

1. Theorising power as intensity, Deleuze highlights the recognition that reality is never fully captured by representation
2. But is in flux – always becoming.
3. A dynamic interweaving of acts and relations – concerned with the possibility of being otherwise with no origin or end point

Power, purity and danger

1. In Mary Douglas's 1966 book Purity and Danger
2. She highlighted the notion of ritual cleanness and uncleanness and the role that rituals of purity and pollution play in societies
3. Pollution tends to reinforce the structures of a given society
4. And defend the boundaries of that structure when they are threatened

Food restrictions

1. So for example, the disgust with forbidden foods and food as unclean is noted
2. Douglas argues that dirt is essentially disorder
3. There is no such thing as absolute dirt – it exists in the eye of the beholder
4. Dirt offends against order
5. Ritual and ideas of purification and cleanliness hold power to impose order against threatening chaos

Disorder/order

1. Order implies restriction – disorder is unlimited
2. Disorder symbolises power and danger
3. Disgust is often directed to those on the margins – who are felt to endanger those around them
4. Those who occupy ambiguous or double roles in social structures are sometimes thought to be sources of dangerous pollution

Questions:

1. What is the relationship between a person in a ritual state of pollution
2. A person who is disgusted
3. And a person who to some is disgusting
4. There is also patriarchal demonization of the normal-functioning female body, mWhere there are specific rules surrounding women who are considered unclean at certain times.

Kristeva

1. Noted that disgust is tied up with the abject
2. This means what exists in an undecidable, liminal position.
3. So for instance, blood, sweat, vomit, faeces
4. Are both inside and outside the body
5. They transgress borderlines
6. They are objects that transition between one state and another

Defining abjection

1. The term abjection means that state of being cast off.
2. Kristeva describes subjective horror or abjection as the feeling an individual experiences, with the breakdown between what is self and what is other
3. The process, physical, biological, social or cultural from that which one considers intolerable and infringes on oneself
4. The concept of abjection is used to explain popular cultural narratives of horror and misogyny.
5. It is used to describe the state of marginalised groups

Image

1. And therefore sets up a pattern for disgust to be identified with anything that exists across the margins, or has undecidable status as both inside or outside.
2. Bodies that ones find repulsive or disgusting