GENDER AND IMITATION:

A STUDY ON THE EMBODIMENT OF HETERONORMATIVE IDENTITIES

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Gender and Imitation: A Study on the Embodiment of Heteronormative Identities

Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Taklit: Heteronormatif Kimliklerin Bedenleşmesi Üzerine Bir Çalışma

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Özet
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Bu tez, sosyal etkileşimler açısından toplumsal cinsiyetli bedenleşmeler sorununu, özellikle transgender bireylerin heteronormatif bir sosyal bağlamda tecrübe ettiklerinden yola çıkarak incelemeyi amaçlar. Buradan yola çıkarak bu araştırma/çalışma neden transgender bireylerin sosyal, kültürel ve tarihsel süreçlerde kurgulanmış heteronormatif toplumsal cinsiyet kategorilerine göre birer "taklit" olarak algılandığını göstermeyi ve sorgulamayı hedefler. Heteronormatif bir toplumda, toplumsal cinsiyetli bazı bedenleşme biçimlerinin yaygın olarak kabul edilmiş ve kurgulanmış normlara göre neden "uygunsuz" olarak görüldüğü ve toplumsal cinsiyetli habitus çerçevesinde neden bu bedenleşme biçimlerinin "doğru" olmadığı çalışmamın en temel sorunsallarını oluşturur. Görüşlerimi ve çalışmamı desteklemek amacıyla, kendini transgender olarak tanımlayan dört (4) bireyle görüşmeler gerçekleştirdim. Toplumsal cinsiyetli bedenleşmelerin sosyal, kültürel ve tarihsel alandaki inşalarını analiz etmek amacıyla analitik sonuç çıkarma yöntemini kullandım. Röportajlardan ve röportajlar sırasında karşılaştıklarımdan elde ettiğim verilere dayanarak toplumsal cinsiyetli bazı bedenleşme biçimlerinin neden taklit olarak görüldüğünü sorunsalını araştırdım.

Anahtar Sözcükler: toplumsal cinsiyet, mimesis, taklit, performativity, habitus.

Abstract
Master Thesis

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This thesis intends to examine the question of gendered modes of embodiment from the perspective of social interactions, and more particularly from that of transgender individuals' experience in a heteronormative social context. Drawing from this, this research study aims at showing and questioning why transgender individuals are perceived as "imitations" within the socially, culturally and historically established heteronormative gender categories. The core problematic of my research study is the reason why some modes of gendered embodiments which are commonly not considered as appropriate to the gendered habitus do feel not "right" in a heteronormative society. In order to nourish my reflection and study, I have conducted interviews with four individuals who identify themselves as transgender. Analytic induction has been conducted in order to analyze the social construction of gendered embodiments and why some gendered embodiments are considered to be "imitations" through the data which these interviews and encounters have provided me.

Keywords: gender, mimesis, imitation, performativity, habitus.

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Introduction

During my graduate studies, one of my professors began his lecture on how to write a term paper, and he advised us to find a problematic which literally concerned us. In the meantime, while I was searching for the subject of my term paper, I encountered with Judith Jack Halberstam's essay, *Female Masculinity.* In this book, Halberstam focuses on several issues which are highly important to Gender Studies. By analyzing scenes from various movies, s/he provides an in-depth view on various subjects such as: the bathroom problem of "gender deviant" people, Catherine Opie's displays of female masculinity and Del Grace's photos of gender ambiguous bodies. Halberstam draws examples from the nineteenth and the twentieth century such by giving an interpretation of the life of Radclyffe Hall and her book *The Well of Loneliness*, focusing on the role of clothing in the experience of Stephen Gordon- the protagonist of *The Picture of Dorian Gray;* s/he also gives an account of her own "ethnographic" research among drag kings, and his/her frequent visits to clubs; thus becoming acquainted with the performers from this subculture, Halberstam demonstrates the unacknowledged contribution of female masculinity to modern understandings of masculinity. Moreover, Halberstam states the possibility of studying masculinity without men. His/her proposition stems from the fact that gender does not follow from sex. S/he emphasizes that female masculinity is not merely a perverse addition to dominant, masculine dispositions of gender, but masculinity itself cannot be studied unless female masculinity is taken into consideration. Halberstam's essay is not merely about a theoretical view on sexual practices; it is rather conceived and built as a personal, as well critical and political, project. Halberstam acknowledges her own female masculinity both in the

introduction and in the conclusion chapters, speaking out in a confessional mode of her own gender identity and experience. S/he writes "I was a masculine girl" and continues as such:

> *and I am a masculine woman. For much of my life, my masculinity has been rendered shameful by public responses to my gender ambiguity. However, in the last ten years, I have been able to turn stigma into strength. This book is the result of a lengthy process of both self-examination and discussion with others* (xii).

In the conclusion part, there is a portrait picture of Halberstam wearing a suit and adjusting her/his tie. In this picture, Halberstam does not confront the gaze of the viewer; s/he rather seems to look towards a mirror which is located somewhere beyond the camera, off-screen. Halberstam contemplates his/her own reflection and his/her body language informs the viewer about the strength s/he feels – his/her uplifted chin, confident attitude and his/her slight smile on his/her face.

In her/his essay, Halberstam argues that models of female masculinity have been neglected or misunderstood because of a cultural intolerance towards the gender ambiguity that a masculine woman embodies. Reading his/her book, however, I felt that I had found my own subject of research, as soon as I started thinking about Halberstam's question: "Why is femininity easily impersonated or performed while masculinity seems resilient to imitation?" (28).

I assume that not only is "imitated masculinity" resilient to imitation but also that any type of gender imitation is resilient to imitation mainly, due to the fact that a large number of persons have internalized/embodied commonly accepted constructed and established gender identities that are identifiable and acknowledgeable as individuals interact with each other in daily life. The expression "resilient to imitation" refers to how compulsion towards heteronormativity produces gender binary of man and woman and how heteronormativity establishes the binary

understanding and categorizing of gender (as "man" and "woman") as supposedly "in itself" or naturally existing categories and confirming those two genders as the origin/model of their imitations, like transgender persons, drag kings and drag queens and any other non-heteronormative gender identity. I presume that it is not easy to identify everyone in accordance with the two established categories of gender (man/woman) in a heteronormative society. Hence, certain individuals do not fit in any of these established and strictly distinguished categories. During my research on "gender imitation" and more specifically on the imitation of heteronormative gender embodiments, in order to nourish my reflection with the concrete experience of individuals who are directly concerned with these situations on a daily basis, I have conducted four interviews with individuals who self-identify themselves as transgender. These interviews were structured as personal interviews and ranged between 45-90 minutes. They evolved around the personal experiences of the interviewees and on how they are perceived as transgender individuals during their social interactions in a strictly heteronormative society.

Concerned by these gender issues that regard our daily modes of embodiment, which affect our relationship and interaction with others in public place, I started my research on imitation, mimesis and gender. This study enabled me to become more aware and attentive to our reaction towards those who embody a gender ambiguity and who question normative gender roles. From time to time, it was just the gaze that spoke instead of words. For example; one day two of my acquaintances saw a young man wearing a dress in a public place during a social gathering. They started talking about how "weird" this person looked because of the contrast (if not contradiction) between his facial hair and the dress that he was wearing. They ignored his presence when he came to salute us. I could see the uncomfortable smiles on their faces and how they were trying to avoid looking at him directly. But the experience that was the most intensive

one for me has occurred while I was working as an English teacher in a bilingual preschool, when my preschool students watched for the first time Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal* live performance on stage. In class, the children had asked me questions about what a concert was in general and what people did on a concert. Since they got curious, I took them to the IQ room where we could watch videos. I thought to myself the best concert video that I could ever show them must be one of Jackson's. Yet, it had never come to my mind that this "audience" would react in a way that would be so much related to my research. In English, one of the children said: "He was born as a boy, but he is a girl on the stage" and then another one said: "he is imitating a girl, but he is normally a boy". They went on talking about Jackson's hair, his clothes and his beardless face for a time. However, what I have sensed out of their comments was that they were comforting and acknowledging/legitimating the values and the models they had already acquired through education by giving "logical" interpretations to what they were seeing on screen.

According to the sociologist Erving Goffman, experiences are meaningful when they are reconsidered through social and cultural interactions in particular places. Social interactions are part of our everyday lives to the extent of being almost impossible to avoid. We perceive others and we are perceived by others, which also means that social interaction is an interactive and intersubjective process. Social interactions mainly take place through our bodies and our bodies gain importance during social interactions. Hence, the ways in which individuals embody themselves are important to the beholder's gaze. A social interaction is not obliged to require verbalization; it will be enough to be visible to another person who not only will see that particular individual but also identify the embodied individual who carries or does not carry the characteristics of one of the established gender categories. Each embodied individual suggests how cultural or social modes of embodiment speak through us and shape our social or gender

identity. These modes are established by the means of individual actions, bodily dispositions, and habits that seem natural and taken-for-granted but are in reality, as I have argued it before, constructed and "artificial" in that sense. Consequently, this implies that a person's identity is partially established in his/her body, including physical appearance and physical behaviors or what a body is capable of doing. In such a predictable case, bodily signals, habits, ornaments, and manners are informative about the presentation of the self. Building from this, I have used in my research Erving Goffman's theorization of the "interaction order", and the "unfocused interaction" as developed in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Behavior in Public Places,* and *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* for a fundamental reason: these notions which are brought up and emphasized by Goffman have enabled me to explore the ways we tend to define one's mode of embodiment as "imitation" in relation to gender and social construction.

"An interaction order" defines the structures of the most basic elements of encounters in daily life. Every time we are involved with other people, there is a mutual presence, a co-presence. What is fundamental in Goffman's theory of "interaction order" is that "two or more individuals are physically in one another's response presence" ("The Interaction Order" 2). Goffman approaches social interactions as dramaturgical productions performed by individuals who have already taken on their social and gender roles[1] in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* Hence, social interaction is not only achieved by means of language and codifications, but also physically and through bodily negotiations. We become interrelated with one another even if we do not get involved in verbal communication. The mere physical existence in a social circumstance enables the construction of social categories and meanings. In *The Presentation of*

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[1] Social role theory refers to the social structure is the force which distinguishes genders and sex-differentiated behaviors. The division of labour is the underlying power beneath the gender binarism and sex-differentiated behaviors. From this, gender roles are produced, which in turn, produce gendered social roles.

Self in Everyday Life and in *Behavior in Public Places,* Goffman mainly indicates that bodily

actions and dispositions are related to the manifestation of the self. Moreover; Goffman's

distinction of social interaction as "focused" and "unfocused" is important for my research. "An

unfocused interaction" occurs incidentally and it is no more than becoming aware of one's

presence. This takes place in a seeing and hearing distance. In the "Preface" of *Encounters: Two*

Studies in the Sociology of Interaction, Goffman defines an "unfocused interaction" as:

> *interpersonal communications that result solely by virtue of persons by being in one*
>
> *another's presence, as when two strangers across the room from each other check*
>
> *up on each other's clothing, posture, and general manner, while each modifies his*
>
> *own demean or because he himself is under observation* (7).

Since an "unfocused interaction" does not involve a verbal communication and does not refer

to a planned occasion, I would like to emphasize that during an "unfocused interaction" bodily

dispositions gain importance, because it is the mere act of looking at someone who is co-

presently existing in a physical interaction that enables the other person to gain information

about his/her embodiment. As a result, the categorizations of age, gender, or ethnicity refer to

bodily attributes which require social and cultural competencies. Related to this, gender becomes

on a common level one of the most basic means of information regarding an individual, because

gender "touches the individual in an aspect of his/her self that is generally seen as 'pure nature':

the body" (Krais 121). One of the transgender participants of my fieldwork told me that her

friends and she preferred going to a certain hairdresser who never teased them or caused them

any other problem. They had been going to his shop for years, but somehow the neighbors did

not want them in their neighborhood and forced the hairdresser to refuse them access to his shop.

These concrete situations and discriminatory experiences create an urge to build a perspective that avoids abstract theorizations and empiricism. Indeed as Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott state it:

> *Poststructuralism, postmodernism and much recent feminist and cultural theory has shifted attention away from an engagement with action and practice, indeed away from sociologically grounded theory in general toward more philosophical conceptualizations of the body. ... It seems that the more we focus on the body, the more we lose sight of the context; when the body comes into focus, the context fades from view* ("Putting the Body's Feet on the Ground" 10).

One essential question related to my research concerns the way an individual's perception of his/her self as masculine or feminine comes about and feels "natural". I aim to explore and develop this question by referring to Bourdieu's approach to the social world and to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach and argument on how identity is embedded in the lived body through which we experience the world. Merleau-Ponty argues that:

> *...consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body, as it projects itself into a cultural world and has its habits: because it cannot be consciousness without playing upon significances given either in the absolute past of nature or in its own personal past, and because any form of lived experience tends towards a certain generality whether that of our habits or that of our 'bodily functions'* (*Phenomenology of Perception* 158).

Accordingly, "our own body is in the world" (235), and the body is how we perceive the world. What we perceive of the world is the result of our interaction with our surrounding and environment through our own bodies, because it is the body that "keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system"

(235). In addition to this, it is through our bodies that we are also perceived and acknowledged in our existence by others. Hence, what others perceive of our own bodies stems out of their own bodily experiences.

From a different yet related angle, Bourdieu's reconsideration of the social world and his conception of *habitus* provide a means of understanding, regarding the ways individuals acquire and shape their own social identity (class, gender), behave in society and achieve certain acts in relationship with other individuals. In this perspective, both Bourdieu's and Goffman's arguments about the way we construct ourselves and we are shaped by social, cultural, class, gender discourses and practices provide meaningful tools to understand and analyze the articulation between individual agency and social structure. Accordingly, Mike Featherstone says that:

> *… habitus not only operates on the level of everyday knowledgeability but is inscribed onto the body, being revealed in body size, volume, shape, posture, way of walking, sitting, ways of eating, drinking, amount of social space and time an individual feels the right to claim, degree of esteem for the body, pitch, tone of voice, accent, complexity of speech patterns, body gestures, facial expression, sense of ease with one's body* ("Lifestyle and Consumer Culture" 64).

Thus; can we conceive habitus as being performative? If these classifying features of habitus can be understood as gendered, then it can be argued that gender identity is expressed and constructed through habitus as well. If one can embody the physical gestures, postures, and the ways of talking and walking in accordance with the traditionally accepted gender roles, this formation of identity can be understood through Butler's theory of gender performativity. In this perspective, I intend to problematize gender performativity, by helping – in the case of the four

transgender individuals I have interviewed – and use it as a means to interrogate the tensions between habitus and non-heteronormative gender identities.

1. Thinking on Methodology

For the purpose of my study, I have conducted interviews in 2014 with four Turkish adults living in Antalya who self-identify as transgender. I chose to conduct personal interviews to allow participants to speak as freely as possible about their experiences as transgender individuals. This allowed me to obtain detailed information from the participants without being constrained by the need to meet required responses.

Due to the nature of these interviews, sessions took place where the participants picked, and lasted from 45-90 minutes. I began the interviews with a description of the purpose and the theme of my research study on gender "imitation".

For the structured part, participants were asked general demographic questions, how they define their own gender identities and for how long they have been defining themselves as such. Interviewees were also asked if they felt their transgender identity was an issue in public places in an *unfocused interaction.*

The names of the participants have been changed, either replaced by the pseudonyms they picked themselves or changed by me. The ages of participants are ranged between 19-50 years old.

When preparing to conduct this study, I was concerned about the difficulties I might be confronted to: first of all, I am not a transgender person and have not personally experienced "from the inside" the social discrimination a transgender person is confronted to in Turkey; I

could be considered as an "outsider" or an "intruder" by the persons I was interviewing. And the second one is that my research study might get rather disturbing for the interviewees due to the core of the study deals with gender identities which do not conform to a typical woman or a man within a heteronormative society. This might affect their confidence, their openness in their responses to my questions, as this study might also be a painful reminder of their discriminatory, demoralizing and upsetting experiences. As I was concerned with these potential problems, I began attending meetings in a small organizational group, Pembe Caretta LGBT in Antalya in January 2014. However, I was not welcomed there since it is a group that I can define as rather conservative and closed on itself, consisting mostly of a group of close friends. When I expressed my wish to find participants for my research study, the members of this group adopted a defensive attitude regarding their transgender members. Consequently, I could not have the chance to neither meet nor talk with the transgender members in the first place and had to follow several steps. I was first informed about the transgender individuals of the group by their friends who questioned my intentions, my credibility, etc. These persons also asked to see my intended questions. They told me that the members of this LBGT group had been previously asked to participate in documentaries or interviews, and they accepted to participate in those documentaries or interview, yet neither did they shoot documentaries nor did they conduct interviews. These persons did not even pay visits to Pembe Caretta LGBT to talk about their coming projects. Due to this, they were concerned about my own credibility. Then, I started taking part in their usual meetings on Sundays in order to show my willingness to conduct interviews with them. However, transgender individuals were not involving with the group that much. I was told that they did not prefer going out and making themselves visible in everyday life. Even if they go out, they are usually under the protection of their friends and family

members. I actually realized this when we were trying to decide about places where to meet. In the places they picked, we usually encountered the members of Pembe Caretta LGBT. This statement, more or less, reveals the results of my interviews.

As an investigator in this LGBT group in Antalya, I tried to take as much as possible a neutral stance throughout my interviews and our meetings. Occasionally, I provided information through the use of gender studies literary citation where needed, yet I did not feel comfortable portraying a more "know-it-all" role by providing knowledge and talking about theories on gender. My reluctance in affirming myself was also due to my outsider status, the fact that I do not identify myself as a transgender person and was not one of their friends. As a result, responses were slow as the first interview was completed; however, as the three more interviews were conducted and my credibility as a "non-threatening" researcher was established, responses got longer and more detailed.

I also would like to inform that I preferred keeping the responses of the participants in the original language, Turkish. As my research study, first of all, is aimed to be presented for Turkish-speaking jury members who have also the knowledge of English language. The second reason is that I would like to reflect the participants' brief responses and sometimes their unwillingness to respond to certain questions. I could also have written my research study in Turkish, since I have been doing my research and I have been reading the resources in English, I preferred writing it in English. Another reason is that the Turkish translations of the resources are limited and some of them have not been translated into Turkish yet. Even if they had been translated into Turkish, no matter what I would prefer writing my thesis in English. As I have mentioned previously, I have been reading the resources in English and the terms and

conceptions used in the English versions of the resources do not occasionally carry the similar connotations when they are translated into Turkish.

2. Going Back to the Roots of *Mimesis*: Gender and Imitation

Generally speaking, the basic statement of gender studies and queer theory is that the normative gender categories of man and woman are socially and culturally constructed, therefore not "naturally given". Yet, this argument does not spread out of the academic frame and is still not embodied by the "social body". Thus, we may argue that this academic undoing of gender categories has had a small influence on social life and daily experience. One may argue that the emergence of gender studies and gender related associations have provided a wider public visibility to gender ambiguity, transsexuals, transgender persons. I assume that although we are experiencing major changes with globalization, social networking, digital technology, and the rise of virtual words which allow us wider world views, we still hold on to traditional categories of gender which remain untouched. One could explain this paradox in two ways: Particularly, people do not recognize or acknowledge gender identities which are non-conform to heteronormative gender identities, because they are willing to preserve the social order to which they are committed/assigned. Whereas, one could argue that the fact that gender ambiguous individual, as "readable male or a readable female", fail to destabilize the two established major gender labels, more particularly, strengthens the position of these labels in society. In a gradually confusing and confused world of gender turmoil, as Halberstam states in his/her question, the term imitation is applied for the individuals who do not conform to compulsory gender binarism. Drawing from this, I will point out what the term imitation designates and how I associate it

within my study. In this perspective, I intend to show in my research study that it is not very easy to imitate any established gender category (male/female) in everyday life.

2.1. Plato's Rendering of *Mimesis*

The term "imitation" traces back to the ancient Greek term 'mimesis' which "derives from the root 'mimos' a noun designating both a person who imitates (compare the English word 'mime') and a specific genre of performance based on the imitation of stereotypical character traits" (Potolsky 16). The term *mimesis* is particularly referred to and theorized by the Greek philosopher Plato in various of his dialogues and writings, especially in *Republic* in relation to art, especially poetry and painting. *Mimesis* is fundamentally important to Plato's understanding of Truth and in the shaping of his theory of Ideas; generally speaking, though mimetic activity has been criticized by Plato due to the fact that mimetic activity is misleading and engenders a distanciation from the eternal, universal, transcendent Truth by producing at best mere copies of the original. Plato's *mimesis* works as "good" or as "bad" through the dialogue that stages Socrates, Plato distinguishes "good" and "bad" forms of mimesis with regards to poetry and painting, stating that "good" mimesis should have a pedagogical function, instruct the good moral virtues to the audience by being accompanied with knowledge, and serve Truth at best. Through the opposition between the activity of the philosopher and that of the poet, Plato suggests that the particular products which result from the mimetic activity are distant from; therefore inferior if not corrupted compared to their models.

For Plato, the poietic activity that we today call "art" is merely an "imitation" of the Truth that lies in the Idea, which means a distanciation and a form of degradation of the origin.

However, the root of mimesis, *mimo*s shows that mimesis is not limited to the field of *poiesis* or art and that it includes[2] common and shared human behaviors, as well as "the ways in which we know and interact with others and with our environment" (2). The term mimesis originally refers to the physical acts of miming or imitating someone or something. Plato uses the term mimesis in a specific context when considering the nature of the poetic and "artistic" activity and presenting in contrast that of the philosopher who serves the purpose of Truth. Under the guidance of Socrates' view, he argues that mimesis is manifested within the features which resemble or imitate the ideas from which these are derived; thus, the mimetic activity is inherently inferior because it consists of producing or performing mere imitations which are never equal their original. To him, the danger is that these imitations can be taken for Truth by an audience, aim at replacing the original or pretend to be the original. In this perspective, Plato's allegory of the cave presents with the help of an image the reason and the effects of the misleading nature of mimesis with regard to the access to Truth. The allegory stages chained human prisoners watching the shadow of objects that are reflected on the walls of the cave; what they see as reality is mere illusion (simulacra). Because they take these shadows for real, they don't turn their gaze towards the light of truth, and towards the "ideas" which form the original; they prefer to remain chained to mere reflections and illusions, and they depart from the Truth which is symbolized by the light outside of the cave. Metaphorically speaking, these chained individuals are therefore "blind" although they think they see. This allegory already suggests that Plato considers the mimetic activity in relation to Truth and that the poietical activities –activities

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[2] In 17th and early 18th centuries, the views on art emphasize the relationship of mimesis to artistic expression and start to embrace subjective images and representations. In that sense, we can consider that there is a turn away from the understanding of mimesis as bound to the imitation of nature, and a move towards an assertion of individual creativity. In 20th century approaches to mimesis, theoreticians and authors such as Walter Benjamin, Theodore Adorno, René Girard have defined mimetic activity as it relates to social practice and interpersonal relations rather than as just a rational process of making and producing models that emphasize the emotions, subjective images and representations.

of "production" that we today refer to as "art" or "crafts"- have to be distinguished from Truth and the search of Truth. For Plato, who uses the metaphor of the mirror, mimesis produces mere illusions, and worse simulacras, instead of real things. Plato says that:

> *... if you are willing to take a mirror and carry it around everywhere;*
>
> *quickly you will make the sun and the things in the heaven; quickly*
>
> *the earth; and quickly yourself and the other animals and implements*
>
> *and plants and everything else that was just now mentioned* (279).

Plato argues that the craftsman does not in fact "create" anything (meaning create out of nothing), since he only mirrors the objects surrounding him which are already in his presence. Like in the example of the bed that Plato gives in *Republic*, the craftsman who makes *a* bed achieves the reproduction of a model-*the* idea of bed, a particular reproduction of a universal and unchanging idea: a copy. The painter of a bed is twice distant to Truth in comparison to the craftsman, since he makes/produces the copy of a copy, the copy of the bed fabricated by the craftsman which is itself a copy of the Idea of bed.

2.2. Introductory Theoretical Framework to Gender and Imitation

According to the context[3] it addresses to, the term mimesis undertakes different meanings under the guise of varying definitions: "emulation, mimicry, dissimulation, doubling, theatricality, realism, identification, correspondence, depiction, verisimilitude, resemblance" (Potolsky 1). Indeed not only does mimesis take on the meanings mentioned previously, but also

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[3] The term mimesis has been discussed within the studies of art, psychology, anthropology, gender and race studies, and sociology.

does imply an adaptive behavior[4] that allows humans to make themselves similar to their

surrounding environments through physical and bodily acts of mimesis. Since mimesis carries

within itself this aspect of adaptive behavior which can be perceived on the physical and bodily

acts, the notion of mimesis gives way to understand gender as being constructed through the

constant stylization of the body and, hence, as the mundane way in which bodily gestures,

movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the traditionally established gender

binarism. However; all these definitions leave out the dimensions which are highly related to

gender, the idea of repetition. In this perspective, Judith Butler claims that "gender is the

repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that

congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" *(Gender*

Trouble 43-44) As a result, the continual performance of traditionally established binary

categories of gender materializes them as seemingly natural, given by birth and not socially

constructed. "*Mimesis* is inherently always and already a repetition" says Melberg (emphasis in

original). What is important is that this repetition gives way to both: "similarity and difference"

(Melberg 2). Since gender is based on the repeated performance of social norms in order to

uphold heteronormative regulations which present themselves as natural, these repeated acts

have the power to distinguish those who are conform to the acknowledged, established binary

gender categories from those who are "different" and non-conform to these gender norms.

Accordingly, Kath Weston points out that "[t]he second iteration is never the first iteration; with

repetition you may have what looks like sameness, because 'it' occurs again, but because this is

again and not for the first time, there is always a difference the second time around" (Kath

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[4] In his essay entitled as "The Mimetic Faculty", Walter Benjamin argues that human beings are highly mimetic and their ability to produce similarities is only "a rudiment of the once powerful compulsion to become similar and to behave mimetically" (160). He draws examples from children's play during which they can imitate varying range of animate objects and inanimate objects, such as the occupations of grown-ups, windmills, and trains.

Weston's *Gender in Real Time: Power and Transcience in a Visual Age* 112). Drawing from Weston's comment, alternative stylizations of bodies, such as the ones embodied by drag kings, drag queens and transgendered people, can be subversive to gender's supposedly unquestionable nature. Indeed, alternative stylizations of bodies disturb and disrupt binary gender categories when certain body parts and features (long hair, painted fingernails) and certain moves (walking and gestures) are replete with the task of meaning and predicting gender. According to this, when Butler says that "*[d]rag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself*" (*Gender Trouble* 175), gender becomes a form of drag which is a set of imitations within the system of compulsory heterosexuality. This suggests that there cannot be any "realness" and "naturalness" associated with gender. Through the "realness" of drag's productions we can see a subject repeating and imitating the very social norms that have been positioning and establishing the gender categories of man/woman. In the frame of her research with transgendered individuals, in her essay entitled "Do Clothes Make the Woman?: Gender, Performance Theory and Lesbian Eroticism", Kath Weston speaks of the transgendered individuals and their embodiments as a "double mimesis" which makes them the imitation of an imitation. Moreover, what is being imitated is the model of the binary system of difference that suggests the social roles of a man and a woman. When repetition exposes gender's performance to be socially constructed, rather than inherently legitimizes itself, gender appears to be a stylized routine rather than natural identity. This stems from the "three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance" (*Gender Trouble* 175). As my fieldwork is limited with transgender individuals, in the presence of a transgender person, these three dimensions create a sense of dissonance as much as when we are in the company of a "woman" or a "man". However, [drag] "also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered

experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence" (175). I would like to exemplify this in order to be more precise: in a Turkish newspaper, a reporter asks a MTF actress whether she could act as a heterosexual woman in the upcoming TV show or not. Ayta Sözeri responds to this question by saying that people did not recognize her as a transgender individual, and she played parts in TV shows as a heterosexual woman. This points out both the imitative aspect of gender itself and the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. First of all, the imitative aspect discloses the fact that gender is an imitation, an identity that has no natural basis. According to this, Butler asserts that "hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations" (*Bodies that Matter* 125). As a transgender woman, Sözeri is a "secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender" within the heteronormative regulations (125). There is a hesitation whether she could act or not as a heterosexual woman. The latter reason is that gender can be imitated, because one does not have to possess the anatomical characteristics to perform a certain gender (in this case, a heterosexual woman). This indicates the absence of truth in binary gender norms, because staged quality of gender in the reporter's question reveals that gender is indeed constructed and performed, both off and on stage. By the expression of "absence of truth" suggests that gender is not an essential category of an identity, moreover, the repetitious performances of masculinity and femininity in accordance with social norms makes concrete the categories, creating the appearance of a naturalized and essential binary. The truth of binary gender categories derives from "the regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through the matrix of coherent gender norms" (*Gender Trouble* 23). More precisely, this idea of truth is produced by "the heterosexualization of desire" (23) which constructs the "discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between 'feminine' and 'masculine' and "the cultural matrix through

which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of 'identities' cannot 'exist'" (23-4). This is achieved through the act of repeating what is conceived as 'natural' and presenting it by "rehearsing the repertoire of roles and types" (Halberstam 239). Through this example, the fictional nature of gender is revealed by its staged performance. On the other hand, in everyday life, gender is an ideal shaped by stereotypes that organizes the appearance of our bodies. If we consider gender as a "corporeal style", since styles have a "history, and those histories condition and limit the possibilities", alternative stylizations of bodies will not conform to heteronormative regulations (*Gender Trouble* 177). Gender is actually a "strategy of survival within compulsory systems" because those who do not perform their gender "correctly" and in a way which is conform to the expected and accepted are condemned or rejected by society (178). Hence, as I have already mentioned beforehand, the discussion of mimesis is at the core of my research study and it stems from Halberstam's questioning of the reason why masculinity is resilient to imitation. I have been claiming that when it comes to gender, femininity or masculinity, society will exclude those who do not act, behave or look according to established gender norms. During my interviews with transgender individuals, Rahşan Abla (she was one of the major contributor of my research study) has told me she had been dealing with her neighbors and their constraint against her. Because her tenant could not bear the harassment of the neighbors, he had to move out of the property. Later on, the store's windows were broken down, only not by the neighbors, but by Rahşan Abla herself instead.

2.3. The Notion of Imitation in Relation to Gender

During a mutual engagement with one another in an *unfocused interaction*, some expectations are occurring, as well as some habits and an order which has been established and internalized by large numbers of people. Gender, in particular, is one of the most appalling factors in everyday life interactions to acknowledge ourselves and others; it is a category that also regulates our mutual approaches to one another. To begin with, Butler's analysis of "sex", "gender", and "sexuality" demonstrates that individuals are driven to "perform" their sex, gender, and sexuality accordingly. Butler shows the way these three categories are intermingled and imposed upon individuals "as a regulatory fiction" and the way these categories mask "the gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality" (*Gender Trouble* 180). Concerning the intermingled categories of sex and gender, Monique Wittig who is also very much concerned in her reflection on gender by the naturalization of established norms argues that:

> *... by admitting that there is a "natural" division between women and men, we naturalize history, we assume that "men" and "women" have always existed and will always exist. Not only do we naturalize history, but also consequently we naturalize the social phenomena which express our oppression, making change impossible. For example, instead of seeing giving birth as a forced production, we see it as a "natural," "biological" process, forgetting that in our society births are planned (demography), forgetting that we ourselves are programmed to produce children* ("One is Not Born a Woman" 11).

Drawing from this, researches and studies on gender have revealed that it is difficult to challenge socially constructed gender norms even when we can see that they are all unnatural, internalized, and repeated forms of embodiments. In this sense, it seems much more accurate to state that gender is something that we "do"/ "perform". In this study, I aim to discuss how transgender individuals encounter with gender inequality in their daily social lives and how their modes of embodiments are perceived as "unnatural" in public places during an unfocused interaction. Transgender individuals show that how gender norms are constructed and how they can be challenged. However, "passing[5]" maintain as an important issue for many transgender individuals for various reasons: from violence to personal safety, education, health, public accommodations, working, and related to my research study, being publicly recognized. Yet, transgender individuals struggle with more than being publicly recognized. They also struggle with many other institutions for their own acknowledgement and recognition, as I have mentioned before. One of the reasons why transgender individuals encounter with many problems is that they put gender norms in a questionable position and make visible the social gender arrangements; for example, restrooms and sports teams, among many other things, need to be organized according to the binary gender categories. In respect to this, passing as a transgender individual as a "genuine" man or woman happens when we publicly recognize the identity of the other within an interaction. However, as Schilt and Westbrook claim it, while most people "keep the same classification in all spaces, transgender people may be given different gender classifications … depending on the type of interaction occurring in the space"

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[5] "Passing" means to appear and behave so typically as a man or as a woman, that people will have little questions about the gender of the person during a social interaction. For further reading on the topic, see the work of Patricia Gagné and Richard Tewksbury in "Rethinking Binary Conceptions and Social Constructions: Transgender Experiences of Gender and Sexuality". Related to this, Anne Herrmann says that "Passing functions as one of several terms used to designate the instability of gender identities and the ability to change sexes, even as gender is considered the only characteristic which remains totally invariant from birth" ("Passing Women, Performing Men" 60).

("Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity:'Gender Normals,' Transgender People, and the

Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality" 443).

In accordance with my opposition to Halberstam's questioning of why masculinity is resilient

to imitation, Schilt and Westbrook find out that there appears a less deal of anxiety around

transgender individuals when the person does not have a penis. This suggests that an imitation of

masculinity would create less anxiety upon the perceivers. Building from this argument, I will

refer to the notion of imitation within gender studies literature. To begin with, as I have already

mentioned about the historical background and the various meanings of the term in the

introduction to this chapter, *mimesis*, I will pass to the literature review of the meaning of

"imitation" within gender studies and I will refer to the scholary research which I find relevant

for my argument. "A sex/gender system" which is "the set of arrangements by which a society

transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity" ("The Traffic in Women: Notes

on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" 159), turns gender into a fixed and given at birth identity of an

individual. This system/process is based on the assumption that there are two and only gender

categories as gender follows from sex. However, when Simone de Beauvior said that "One is not

born a woman, but rather, becomes one" (*The Second Sex* 301), she suggested that we are not

naturally born women. Moreover, these gender identities make us perform some modes and acts

which extend far beyond our physical features and our identified/designated sexes. When one

uses expressions regarding the modes and acts we are made to perform; for example, "be a man"

or "act like a lady", one also presumes that gender is an ideal or a model to conform to that one

has to accomplish rather than a biological feature. Hence; gender identity is a kind of

performance that extends beyond biological sex and physical features and that incorporates *sign

vehicles* (a term used by Goffman) such as clothing, gestures, hairstyle, and accessories. In this

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regard, gender identity is an effect of "imitation" which stems from the need to reach an established model of a man or a woman within the regulations and cultural norms of a heteronormative society. Therefore, the manners in which we behave, the way we walk, the clothes we wear are all constantly an imitation of "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (*Gender Trouble* 43). These repeated acts become so familiar and so natural that we do not even question their origin or their validity. Regarding to Butler's definition of our culturally constructed repertoire of acts and embodiments, what seems to be so natural is basically conventional. Yet, this does not mean that one can easily change the traits of bodily dispositions and embodiments which point to the gender identity based on biological and physical characteristics. In respect to this, we may assume together with Butler that gender is a "compulsory ordering of attributes into coherent gender sequences" (32).

2.4. *Masquerade*: **Performing Femininity**

   Regarding the conception of gender given above, it seems important to point at this stage that Joan Riviere is one of the first theorists who has suggested that gender is a performance in her essay called "Womanliness as a Masquerade". Riviere mentions an intellectual woman who benefits from the culturally constructed feminine attributes in order to avoid anxiety which might stem from her knowledge. Riviere analyzes a group of intellectual women who do not conform to the typical standards of femininity established at that time. These women suffer emotionally rather than physically. The term "masquerade" that is used by Riviere designates the performance of a woman according to the perception/gaze of a man. Riviere narrates that after every speech this intellectual woman gives; she flirts with the men in the audience in "an

unconscious attempt to ward off anxiety which would ensue on an account of the reprisals she anticipated from the father-figures after her intellectual performance" (37). Riviere traces the woman's intellectual knowledge with a reference to the oedipal rivalry between her and her father. Having castrated her father in her intellectual performance, she thus seeks for protection from his probable anger, and now offers herself as in the form of a castrated woman to the men in the audience so as to seek sexual attention. Her defensive flirtatious performance does not threaten the men in the audience; she does not intimidate them. Her behavior and attempts become harmless. Thus; Riviere raises questions about the nature of femininity and says that: "The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing" (38). For Riviere, womanliness is not an imitative reflection of biological attributes; however, it is a social defensive mechanism worn as a mask.

2.5. A *Playful* Mimesis of Feminine Features

    The potentially subversive strategy within gender itself, the idea that gender could be a mask rather than an essence has been discussed and developed further by the French feminist philosopher, Luce Irigaray. Irigaray stresses "to play with mimesis", to identify with norms and regulations of femininity, "without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it" ("The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" 76). Irigaray suggests that the "playful repetition" (76) of feminine attributes and embodiments would expose the ideas on femininity,

which are majorly "elaborated in/by a masculine logic" (76), not as an essence but rather as a performance.

2.6. Imitative Aspects of *Gender Performativity*

In her book *Gender Trouble* and in an article entitled "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", Butler asserts that gender and sexuality identity are forms of imitation deprived of a model within a compulsory heterosexual society. Butler argues that non-heterosexual identities, such as those embodied by gays, lesbians, drag kings, drag queens, butch and femme, have long been depicted as the copies of heterosexual norms. In this sense, heterosexual identities become a platonic ideal-like form, they set the terms which create the original, and any other non-heterosexual identity will be an imitation of the heterosexual ideal ones. The relation between the *imitation* and the *original* in terms of gender is discussed through the notion of *drag* in both of her theoretical works. Drag is a performance which shows that "genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn, and done; it implies that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation" ("Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 127). In addition to this, drag points out the kind of "compulsory performance" we are made to perform when we are in the presence of others (130). The drag performance reminds heterosexual model of its being essentially constructed in terms of the relation between imitation and original. Accordingly, Butler affirms that "The replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames brings into relief the utterly constructed status of the so-called heterosexual original. Thus gay is to straight not a copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy" (*Gender Trouble* 41).

Stating that drag performance points out the theatricality of gender, Butler argues that gender

is not something that one decides to perform. Butler puts forward that "There is no volitional

subject behind the mime who decides, as it were, which gender it will be today" ("Imitation and

Gender Insubordination" 130). This suggests, on the other hand, that one can embody different

attributes of femininity or masculinity; however, one is not free to choose his/her gender, nor can

one choose which gender to be, as well. Accordingly, Butler states that "gender is *performative*

in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express" (130).

Drawing from Butler's claim on how drag performance reveals the theatricality of gender, I

will refer to one of Michel Foucault's essays entitled as "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in

which he analyzes the method of genealogy[6] as a historical and philosophical technique and in

which he also discusses the three effective uses of history: *parodic, dissociative,* and *sacrificial*[7].

I will briefly summarize the Foucauldian method of genealogy and then related to the

assumption, which proposes that the constant repetition of certain bodily acts and dispositions

establish the binary categorizing of gender and they become so internalized that individuals do

not even question their "so-called" naturalness, I will thus bring up the effective uses of history

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[6] Genealogy is a historical and investigative method of analysis/critique, which has been previously used by the German philosopher, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. This method offers the critical skills for analyzing and uncovering the relationship between power, truth, knowledge and the human subject in a modern society and the conceptual tools to acknowledge how a human subject's being has been shaped by historical forces that he/she has been surrounded by. For Foucault, genealogy not only works on the limits of the possible human practices/thoughts, but also on the possibility of freedom people can yet experience and the changes that can still be exercised.

[7] In order not to step out of my argument concerning Butler's discussion of *drag* and Foucault's notion of *parodic* use of history, I will discuss only the *parodic* use of history in detail. I will just define what *dissociative* and *sacrificial* uses are in short. The *dissociative* use of history means to systematically destabilize and dissociate identity. This second use of history opposes itself to any ideas of a stable identity or the rediscovery of a forgotten identity by analyzing history. The third use of effective history is *sacrificial* use of history and it refers to the problem of objective truth. The *sacrificial* use of history indicates that actions are actually driven from people's intentions, feelings, passions, and interests and it also demonstrates how practices in organizations are the results of many small force relations which interact in particular ways to create the larger patterns.

(particularly the *parodic* use of the history) which provide people perspectives to change or to construct their own identities[8].

First and foremost, Michel Foucault's genealogical studies challenge the traditional practices of history, philosophical conventions, and established notions of power, truth and knowledge. Foucault's genealogical studies and analysis oppose the idea of universal truths and explanatory systems, the search for causal and essential laws, the systematic lines of human progress, and the logic of how we construct our identities. Through an examination of the histories and geographies of social institutions – asylums, clinics, hospitals, and prisons – Foucault's genealogical studies and analysis seek to point out the contingency of what we take for granted, to denaturalize what seems absolute and to denaturalize the seemingly natural categories as constructs and confines articulated by discourses. Foucault has examined historic discourses on madness, disease, normality/abnormality, crime/punishment, sexuality, and much else as well in order to question social and institutional norms and regulations, their effects, and how they limit and subject individuals in modern societies.

Regarding the "so-called" naturalness of bodily acts and dispositions which construct one's gender identity, the *parodic* use corresponds to the use of history in which the historian provides people with the chance of changing their identities by introducing them distinct historical figures as alternatives. This may seem to praise the past identities or the past events but never gives a proper interpretation of one's transformation concerning his/her identity. And Foucault adds that "No one kept them [people] from venerating these religions, from going to Bayreuth to commemorate a new afterlife; they were free, as well, to be transformed into street vendors of empty identities" (93). The *parodic* use of history aims to go beyond history by disclosing

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[8] Foucault's assertion of the *parodic* use of history coincides with Butler's discussion of *drag* and how *drag* reveals the theatricality of gender.

traditional history with its prototypes, heroes, and knights as disguises. The *parodic* use of

history encounters with distorted actions in a web of stories, legends, myths, narratives which

function to legitimize certain versions of truth and these actions have not been supported by

actual events. The type of use of history seeks to go beyond the truths constructed by these

narratives because these imagined truths do not let "access to actual intensities and creations of

life" (94). Regarding to this, Foucault mentions that the genealogist will know that the method of

the historian will only be a "disguise" which points to our own "unreality" (94). Moreover,

Foucault states that the genealogist will force limits of the "masquerade" of all those distinct,

individualized and historical identities to their breaking points and "prepare the great carnival of

time where masks are constantly reappearing" (94). Due to our own fragile identities, this push

will create a sense of detachment from the identities of the past that have been introduced by the

historian and it will also create a sense of "'unrealization' through the excessive choice of

identities" (94). By taking up these masks, we are giving new life to the history and possibly

finding a new realm of originality by parodying history through interpreting an "old" mask. To

sum up, I assume that both Butler's use of the notion of *drag* and Foucault's use of this process

of *unrealization* by taking up several identities, turning them into a masquerade point out the

revitalization and theatricality of historically established and acknowledged identities and

constantly repeated bodily acts which constitute the binary categorizing gender norms. Both drag

performances and the genealogist's presentation of excessive choice of identities re-enact

socially accepted and historically established identities, but they also openly display themselves

as a reworking of gender norms and historical identities; thus, in a way, exposing instability of an

identity or a gender identity. Building from the discussion above, what is taken to be "natural"

and "essential" of an individual's identity can thus be perceived as ephemeral and transitory.

Gender identity constitutes itself through the "repeated stylization of the body" (*Gender Trouble* 43), and rather than being the demonstration of an essential identity, gender expresses itself as a repetition of a set of imitated acts, gestures, and embodiments which come to constitute themselves as natural. There is nothing natural about having socially and culturally established feminine traits such as long hair, painted fingernails, etc. On the contrary, the seemingly naturalness of these features stems from the sense of "*compulsory* performance" (130) within a heteronormative society. Furthermore, Butler uses the concept of "psychic mimesis" which is inspired to her by Freud's essay on "Mourning and Melancholia". This concept suggests that gender is a form of melancholic introjection of heteronormative norms and regulations that we are made to perform "on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait (that array of corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation)" that describe the gender identity (134). However, gender is "a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself" (127). As gender does not correspond to an inner essence, it structures one's bodily disposition and appearance through the process of identification in accordance with a model without an original.

In this sense, transgender individuals, who display an ambiguous appearance which contrasts with their biological traits, can be labeled as "imitations" of a true woman or a man. How can a transgender person's gender identity be understood through Butler's gender performance? In her view, through its exaggerated performance of femininity or masculinity, drag queens and drag kings point out that there is no original or essential notion of "femaleness"/feminity or "maleness"/masculinity. There is no essential gender but only a stylized repetition of acts and signifiers of femininity and masculinity. Butler explains that "*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself*" (137). Since gender is performative and does not

follow from sex, then there is no original gender that one must consider as one's fixed identity. Consequently, individuals can construct their own gender identities. This may involve a biological female or male appropriating the culturally structured signifiers of femininity or masculinity. However, while a transgender person who wants to pass as a man or a woman, and do not to conform him/herself to his/her biological features, can be perceived as someone who misrepresents his/her character, identity, and lacks reliability; as a result, a transgender person can be labelled as an "imitation".

3. The Importance of Bodily Dispositions During Social Interactions

Everyday social interactions pay close attention to bodies and to bodily interactions. Hence, the ways in which bodies position themselves are significant to the beholder's gaze. As Erving Goffman underlines it, this does not require to being involved in a verbal conversation. In an everyday interaction, it will be sufficient to be visible to another person who not only will see a person but also will immediately label the embodied person. In such a predictable case; bodily signals, manners, habits, and ornaments are significant and informative about the presentations of the self.

In Goffman's theory of interaction order, the physical body gains importance as a determinant factor which influences the course of social interaction. Goffman's study deals with the controlling of the body in order to maintain encounters, social relations and social interactions. His analysis allows us as well to recognize and to acknowledge the distinction between the individual's *social identity*, *personal identity* and *ego* or *felt identity*, as I will refer to them in the following paragraph of this chapter. (*Stigma* 128).

Within Goffman's framework, social identity coincides with each individuals' everyday life means of identifications and categorizations. Goffman uses personal identity in order to point out the ways an individual is different from others and he uses "ego" or "felt identity" to define the feelings one has about their own identity (*Stigma* 11,73,128). This rather refers to and implies a "reflexive" process (128). Since my research is restricted to the position of gendered bodies in social interactions, I use Goffman's notion of social identity to acknowledge the way socially constructed categories of man and woman are felt and considered like natural attributes. Firstly, Goffman distinguishes social identity into two concepts: *virtual social identity* and *actual social identity*. An individual's *virtual social identity* defines his/her own identity, how he/she sees him/herself. The latter concept refers to how the others see him/her. Building from any possible inconsistency between one's *virtual social identity* and *actual social identity*, Goffman says that this inconsistency "spoils his [sic.] social identity; it has the effect of cutting him off from society and from himself so that he stands a discredited person facing an unaccepting world" (31). This suggests that one's *virtual social identity* is majorly governed by a desire of recognition by the co-present others who have accepted social structures and norms, and one tends to present him/herself as a "normal" member of a society. On the one hand, Goffman's approach to *virtual social identity* and to *actual social identity* within social interactions seems to allow individuals having/or acknowledge that individuals have a particular control over their bodies. Yet, Shilling indicates that "Erving Goffman's writings appear to place more emphasis on the body as integral to human *agency"* (*The Body and Social Theory* 82 emphasis in original). On the other hand, what we might conclude out of Goffman's analysis is that "embodied individuals are not autonomous" (Shilling 82). When individuals are in one another's presence in a situation/context where there is no verbal communication, they inevitably participate in one

another's communication. According to Goffman, individuals seem to be the agents of their bodies for Goffman:

> […] *significance is ascribed to certain matters that are not necessarily connected with particular verbal communications. These comprise bodily appearance and personal acts: dress, bearing, movement and position, sound level, physical gestures such as waving or saluting, facial decorations, and broad emotional expression* (*Behavior in Public Places* 33).

Bodily appearances and personal acts are "sign vehicles" (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* 1) which provide information about an individual's "general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude towards them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc." (1). These sign vehicles can be manipulated and can be used to create a certain impression on the others. However; Goffman puts emphasis on the perception of the others by means of sign vehicles, arguing that:

> *Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him. … If unacquainted with the individual, observers can glean clues from this conduct and appearance which allow them to apply their previous experience with individuals roughly similar to the one before them or, more important, to apply untested stereotypes to him* (1).

This situation creates a dilemma, because they can control their bodily appearances and act in order to create a desired impression on the others. However, this depends upon others' previous experience with individuals roughly similar to the ones who are in co-presence. Chris Shilling

summarizes this dilemma as "the 'shared vocabularies of body idiom' (or conventional forms of non-verbal language) which guide individuals' perception of bodily appearances and performances, provides a sense of the social constraints under which body management occurs" (*The Body and Social Theory* 82). Apparently, from Goffman's perspective, bodies are not socially produced modes of embodiment; they are rather reduced to sign-vehicles and body idioms which are not "necessarily connected to particular verbal communications" (*Behavior in Public Places* 33). This specific approach to the human body creates a sense of dualism on the individual's identity through the distinction between: self-identity and social identity. People have authority to manage their social identities, but their meanings are socially decided and determined, in this case, through social interactions. As certain types of bodies are established as "meaningful" in society, people become familiar with these embodiments and they tend to be or become what is expected by the body idiom. Goffman asserts that:

> *One of the most evident means by which the individual shows himself to be situationally present is through the disciplined management of personal appearance or "personal front," that is, the complex of clothing, make-up, hairdo, and or surface decorations he carries about on his person. … It should be noted that with these matters of personal appearance the obligation is not merely to possess the equipment but also exert the kind of sustained control to keep it properly arranged* (*Behavior in Public Places* 25).

This shows how the management of the body has an influence over the course of everyday life. Goffman specifies two significant features of his theorization: Yes, individuals can manage their own bodies and their sign-vehicles; but, they are perceived in accordance with the "body idiom" which "is a conventionalized discourse" (34).

Once again, we perceive others and we are perceived by others. We identify one another along with our previously acquired experiences. When we interact with each other, we communicate our experiences and judgments during this interaction process. This does not mean that the participants of an interaction have to accept every label given to them. In accordance with this, Goffman suggests that individuals may create the impressions they desire on others and may control the course of information about themselves in social interactions. However; in Goffman's project, the publicly co-presented action enables individuals to have recourse to "the only court of appeal regarding 'self' that is available to agents" (*The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire* 143). In relation to Goffman's project, Richard Sennett positions human "personality" within the historical context of nineteenth-century, questioning in which way individual personality has turned out to be a social category. Sennett associates the change that has occurred in the nineteenth-century with the rise of secularism. Sennett mentions that personality has become a means to think about "meaning implicit in human nature" (*The Fall of the Public Man* 151); that is, personality is no longer taken to be a natural category of human nature, consequently, each individual has a unique personality. Sennett states that:

> *As the gods fled, immediacy of sensation and perception grew more important; phenomena came to seem real in and of themselves as immediate experience. People in turn were disposed to make more and more of differences in the immediate impressions they made upon each other, to see these differences, indeed, as the very basis of social existence. These immediate impressions different people produced were taken to be their "personalities* (151-2).

Sennett argues that personality has become a way to think about meaning and each person has a unique personality from three aspects. The first of these aspects is the most related one to my

study; this aspect deals with the appearances which I have aforementioned. Due to the fact that individuals reflect their emotions through varying impressions, their personalities are thought to be different even if "the appearances of emotion and the inner nature of the person feeling are the same" (152). Briefly, Sennett concludes that "one is what one appears; therefore, people with different appearances are different persons. When one's own appearances change, there is a change in the self" (152).

Second, personality can be managed by "self-consciousness" (152) and this suggests that an individual can practice control over his/her personality in order to set a balance between his/her emotions and his/her natural character which refers to "not to stand out, to proclaim himself as special or unique. There was an apt 18th Century phrase to encompass both the simplicity and unexceptionality of natural desires: modesty" (96). Yet, personality can change depending upon the situations one encounters and one may not control his/her personality; consequently, this may cause instability of the self. The third and the last aspect is that any spontaneous change of impressions that may occur is considered to be "a violation of 'normal' conventional feeling" (152) and this makes the performers of spontaneous impressions similar to "deviants" (152). By deviants, Sennett refers to the ones who act out their "involuntary feeling" spontaneously and Sennett adds that: "Psychologists in the 19th century came to believe, as did their patients, that ordinary people who were involuntarily expressive were often insane people" (152). Subsequently, personality depends upon the variation in individuals' appearance and their appearance is closely tied to their self, which is itself reflected through their immediate expressions. Both Goffman and Sennett refer to individuals' appearances through differing aspects; yet it is important to notice that Sennett contextualizes his theorization within the historical context of the nineteenth-century.

Goffman's analysis provides information regarding the maintenance/preservation of routinized social interactions and their reproduction. Since I intend to focus on the failure of sign vehicles which label individuals by categories, Goffman's observations regarding social order out of his examination of daily life interactions is significant for my study. According to Goffman, "society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories" (*Stigma* 11). His approach indicates how social order is preserved and maintained/preserved[9].

First of all, Goffman defines social order as "the consequence of any set of moral norms that regulated the way in which persons pursue their objectives" (*Behavior in Public Places* 8). Social order, in other words, relates to social constraints that determine the modes, manners and behaviors which are commonly and majorly accepted. For Goffman, behaving predictably and avoiding from offending others are the most common means of preserving the social order. Social order is preserved through the setting of (gender, race, class) categories such as: male/female, white/black, upper/middle/working class, in this case, normal/stigmatized, etc. Goffman explains this as such in *Stigma*:

> *Social settings establish the categories of persons likely to be encountered there.*
> *The routines of social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with*
> *anticipated others without special attention or thought. When a stranger comes*
> *into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his*
> *category and attributes…* (11)

Thus; this shows how the unusual and the odd one can make us question the established routines of social life. On the other hand; this may lead people to cling on the established routines even more. In Goffman's analysis, one's bodily appearance and acts have to conform to the shared

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[9] In the coming chapters of my thesis, I will refer to Foucault's and Canguilhem's conception of normativity.

vocabulary of body idiom in order to be considered as a full member of a society. Otherwise, if a person is categorized as a failed (non-conform, marginal, different) member by the other members of the society, Goffman suggests that, he/she will internalize it and this will become his/her "spoiled identity" within the frame of the categories established socially. This social frame/context provides the idea of looking into a mirror, because we tend to perceive our bodies through a reflection that is shaped by social categorizations and stereotypes. Drawing from this, I would like to argue that Goffman's observations regarding body appearance/performance, construction and embodiment stems from a framework that is close to Marcel Mauss's earlier study of "body techniques" and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's conception of "intersubjectivity". This relation between body techniques, intersubjectivity and Goffman's theorization of the "interaction order" will be developed and examined in the following chapter, in order to better understand the way identities are constructed

3.1. Relations Between "Body Techniques" and "Intersubjectivity" in Goffman's Conception of "Interaction Order"

In Goffman's conception of interaction order, he suggests that mutual embodiment plays a major role in the construction of the self, through encounter and daily exchanges between individuals. Furthermore, he argues that:

> *Once individuals – for whatever reason – come into one another's immediate presence, a fundamental condition of social life becomes enormously pronounced, namely, its promissory, evidential character. It is not only that our appearance and manner provide evidence of our statuses and relationships. It is also that the*

line of our visual regard, the intensity of our involvement, and the shape of our

initial actions, allow others to glean our immediate intent and purpose, and all

this whether or not we are engaged in talk with them at the time ("The Interaction

Order" 3).

Goffman emphasizes the fact that when we are in each other's presence, we share a mutual focus

of attention, that is to say we perceive and we are perceived. Goffman also highlights the

importance of the act of "looking" and the importance of bodily dispositions and appearances

during social interactions. If one has the direct opportunity to look and observe another

individual who is co-present in the same physical environment, the person who is under the

observation is categorized by an exclusively distinctive identity through his/her bodily

dispositions, gestures, postures and physical appearances.

3.2. The Use of "Body Techniques" in a Social Interaction

As I have suggested before, the fundamentals of Goffman's conception of "interaction order

seems to be in relation with Mauss's analysis of "body techniques" through the role of habitus

and Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the role played by intersubjectivity in our relation to the world

and to others. In this essay he has written in the early thirties and which has been a source of

inspiration for many further sociologists and anthropologists, Mauss defines "Body techniques"

as "the ways in which from society to society men [sic.] know how to use their bodies"

("Techniques of the Body" 70). Body techniques are consisting of particular set of movements

and forms; in a wider sense, they are rather referring to the efficient use of the (human) body for

a set of daily or common practices (such as walking, swimming, giving birth, etc..); Mauss points

that these "techniques" are learned by means of education and training and are, as such, transmitted from one generation to another. Yet, if the transmission part of these techniques enables their preservation within time, it also implies and allows their variation and changing on a historical basis. Mauss explains that his study of body techniques and his understanding of body as "technique" was inspired by his own training experience of swimming and the varying training methods at that time which were both inherited from the previous ones and different from them. ("Techniques of the Body" 71). From this example, we can understand that these particular set of movements and forms which are learned by education and training have a function or an aim. Mauss says that:

> *Previously we were taught to dive after having learnt to swim. And when we were learning to dive, we were taught to close our eyes and then to open them under water. Today the technique is the other way round. The whole training begins by getting the children used to keeping their eyes open underwater. Thus, even before they can swim, particular care is taken to get the children to control their dangerous but instinctive ocular reflexes, before all else they are familiarized with the water, their fears are suppressed, a certain confidence is created, suspensions and movements are selected* (71).

The training methods have been changed from that of Mauss' in order to create "a certain confidence" in pupils. We can assume that even the most ordinary activities of our everyday life which are based on our physical and cultural techniques vary historically and culturally and they also vary within the same cultural order. Mauss emphasizes that body techniques are acquired by education, however educative methods and, as a result, body techniques can go through changes in time. Other than changeable aspects of body techniques, Mauss begins his discussion by

leaving out the contextual situations of the body techniques. He says that "it is essential to move from the concrete to the abstract and not the other way round" (70). In contrast to Mauss's suggestion, Goffman analyses body techniques within certain situations. For example, both of them discuss the activity of walking under different circumstances. Goffman distinguishes his example of walking by inserting it in a certain social context and says that:

> *... when two pedestrians must pass each other on a narrow walk ... a mutually initiated meeting of the eyes can be employed to subtly apportion sides of the walk, or to subtly assure right-of-way to the other, or to ratify and consolidate an allocation that has been communicated* (*Behavior in Public Places* 132).

Within Goffman's theory of interaction order, the activity of walking is acknowledged and reproduced by the pedestrians in a public place. Goffman suggests that a body technique is acquired, but this means that a pedestrian can apply a body technique (in this case the activity of walking) in accordance with specific contexts. Hence, this includes the idea of human agency, because what Mauss argues about walking leaves out social and cultural circumstances, unlike Goffman. Mauss prefers giving anatomical details about the activity of walking with exact limbs of the body. As Goffman points out in the pedestrian walking example, an activity is "*other oriented*" ("Body Techniques, Agency and Intercorporeality: Goffman's relations in Public" 141 emphasis in original) and "it derives its sense or meaning from its dialogical participation in shared situations" (141).

3.3. The Intersubjective Traits of "Interaction Order"

The dialogical structure of Goffman's interaction order echoes with Merleau-Ponty's notion of intersubjectivity, due to the fact that an activity is performed with the reciprocity of perception and relation which means being perceived and perceiving, and this reciprocity of perception and relation reminds of Goffman's pedestrian walking. The notion of intersubjectivity corresponds to the relation to the body/self, and the relation to the other are both constituted through a interchangeability of seeing and being seen, perceiving and being perceived, and this involves a reciprocity and contingency for the subjects. The body/self is simultaneously both subject and object "[I]n the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 413). The subjects who are involved in one another's co-presence, they become "collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity" (413). Goffman develops this example by suggesting that when two pedestrians encounter with one another, they move from side to side reflecting one another's actions like reflected on a mirror. He adds that they have to display their intentions in a more exaggerative way in order to achieve the destination/purpose they are aiming at. In Goffman's theory, this process is called "body gloss"; it suggests that activities are performed in a way which is comprehensible by others. Moreover, the dimension that is meaningful for this study is that Goffman's notion of body gloss shows that the performance of body techniques is intersubjective and the purposes of an individual can be acknowledged by those to whom the body techniques carry similar intentions. As already mentioned before, according to Goffman, the social order in which body techniques are performed, "regulates the way in which persons pursue their objectives". Obviously, a social order is regulative and brings

a sense of "orderliness"[10] to our accustomed and ordinary experience of our behavior in the company of others.

In relation to Goffman's interaction order, which is defined as the fundamental bodily co-presence of individuals during an interaction, Merleau-Ponty's notion of intersubjectivity seems a relevant additional perspective since in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach, individuals are closely bond to each other by belonging to a shared world.[11] This bond does not cancel the possibility of differences, tensions and struggles between individuals; it rather shows that differences, tensions and struggles are relational due to that very shared world. In the "Preface" of *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty argues that "the phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other like gears" (xxii). This suggests the mutual construction of an embodied identity. Although their analysis is grounded on a different theoretical basis and field of thought, both Merleau-Ponty and Goffman emphasize that when we are in the co-presence of others, our past experiences lead us to make assumptions about an individual's identity. According to this, Goffman says that "If unacquainted with the individual, observers can glean clues from this conduct and appearance which allow them to apply their previous experience with individuals roughly similar to the one before them or, more important, to apply untested stereotypes to him" (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* 1). Related to this, Merleau-Ponty points out that "It is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which find their unity when I either take up my past

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[10] For further reading, see Nick Crossley's essay entitled "Body Techniques, Agency and Intercorporeality: Goffman's Reality in Public" and Tom Burns's book on the studies of Goffman, *Erving Goffman*.
[11] Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy traces back to Husserl and Heidegger. Since my thesis is focusing on the bodily interactions through which we experience and have access to a shared world from a cultural gendered basis, I will not develop in detail the phenomenological history of thought in general nor Merleau-Ponty's in particular in order not to step out of my field of research.

experiences in those of the present, or other people's in my own", because we intersect and engage with each other like gears (*Phenomenology of Perception* xxii).

Despite both Goffman's and Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on our past and various experiences, their different approaches and observations share theoretical differences and limitations in relation to my thesis. First of all, Goffman's theorization sets limits to what could be understood as intersubjectivity, as well. Even though Goffman emphasizes the mutual share of attention to the bodily dispositions and appearances when individuals are in one another's co-presence, he does not refer to the fact that individuals perceive and are perceived at the same time when they share a moment of reciprocal perception and relation. In Goffman's theorization, this indicates that when an individual enters the presence of others, he/she becomes an object of their perceptual field. . On the other hand, what Merleau-Ponty proposes through his notion of intersubjectivity is a rejection of the binary opposition of subject/object. Merleau-Ponty argues that:

> *... when I touch my right hand with my left, my right hand, as an object, has the strange property of being able to feel too. We have just seen that the two hands are never simultaneously in the relationship of touched and touching to each other. When I press my two hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but of an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the roles of 'touching' and being 'touched'* (*Phenomenology of Perception* 106).

Given this, the hand that we touch is not merely an object, but it is rather in the position of reversing the present condition, as *being touched.* Drawing from the example of hand, we are mutually relational to the others and to the world. By the example of hand, Merleau-Ponty shows

that we are in intersubjective relations with the others through a reciprocal perception which is constituted on the mutual act of being perceived and perceive. Therefore, one consecutively becomes the object of another individual's perception, and then one becomes the perceiving subject who has already been the object of the other's perception. Accordingly, Merleau-Ponty points out that "The body catches itself from the outside engaged in a cognitive process; it tries to touch itself while being touched, and initiates a kind of reflection" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 107).

As an individual gains information about a co-present individual, this act is achieved in an interrelated way which enable both of the co-present individuals to be perceived and to perceive in a social situation. Drawing from this, we cannot touch ourselves, or anybody else, without the acknowledgement of our tangibility and our capacity to be touched by others. Our present position can never be set either as *touching* or as *being touched*, however it can be set as in the intertwining of these two positions. The consequences of this intertwining become most obvious when Merleau-Ponty undertakes to describe the interactions of embodied flesh:

> *… my eyes which see, my hands which touch, can also be seen and touched, and touched, because, therefore, in this sense they see and touch the visible, the tangible, from within, because our flesh lines and even envelops all the visible and tangible things with which nevertheless it is surrounded, the world and I are within one another, and there is no anteriority of the percipere to the percipi, there is simultaneity or even retardation* (*The Visible and the Invisible* 123).

This non-dualistic, reciprocal relation between touching and being touched creates a sense of intersubjectivity which rejects the traditionally established binary opposition between subject/object. We are both in the position of the perceiver one and the perceived one, because

"my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment, so that we may say that the things pass into us, as well as we into the things" (123).

4. Resilience to Some Modes of Embodiment

In an unfocused interaction, the co-present individuals acknowledge their presence in social circumstances and try to make assumptions through their appearance (one another's clothing, gestures, accessorizes, etc.). In some cases, it is highly possible that people stare at each other or just glance at one another quickly. In the chapter entitled "Face Engagements" on *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on Social Organization of Gatherings,* Goffman emphasizes in detail that:

> *When persons are mutually present and not involved together in conversation or other focused interaction, it is possible for one person to stare openly and fixedly at others, gleaning about them what he can about them while frankly expressing on his face his response to what he sees – for example the "hate stare" that a Southern white sometimes gratuitously gives to Negroes walking past him* (83).

As we know, human body types have been constructed and socially categorized throughout history[12] and this influences the individual in his/her choices during social interactions. Moreover; this indicates that certain types of embodiments disturb the limit set rules and resources between what is considered as acceptable or normal and non-acceptable, labeled as

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[12] The study of human body types reached its peak during the eighteenth and the nineteenth century science and positivist thought. As scientists and ethnographers came into contact with other human societies as well as species of plant and animal life, the studies of physiognomy and the study of race and racial differences played an important part in defining the social and cultural relationship of an individual's physical body to other persons throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. See also, Michel Foucault's studies on power and norm as in the Volume I of *The History of Sexuality* in which he illustrates the emergence of the idea of sex as a norm and shows its implication in modern relations of power.

different or even "abnormal". Due to the fact that individuals are relational, they are categorized and compared according to historically constructed "ideal types" which "are interpretive schemes for the social world in general, they become part of our stock of knowledge about that world" (Schutz 185).

4.1. Normativity: The Rise of the Average

The philosopher Georges Canguilhem who grounds his thought on the evolution of modern episteme and medicine and their role in the construction of social norms, develops his framework on the "normal" and the "pathological" which are essential notions for the practice of medicine. Canguilhem challenges the idea that science can produce a standard state of being; on the other hand, challenging our common ideas about normality and abnormality, he suggests that "The normal is not a static or peaceful, but a dynamic and polemical concept" (*The Normal and the Pathological* 239). Related to this, he defines normativity as "the biological capacity to challenge the usual norms in case of critical situations" (284). For Canguilhem, in terms of biological normativity, the normal has the capability to adapt to changing circumstances and varying environments, whereas in modern medicine, he argues, there has been confusion since doctors began using statistics[13]. Canguilhem says that:

> *… in order to learn the normal rate of one regulation one will look for the average of a certain number of results obtained from individuals placed in conditions as similar as possible. But in the end the problem is to know within what range of oscillations around a purely theoretical average value individuals will be considered normal* (153-4).

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[13] Quetlet's study of statistics as divine norms (159).

The study of averages by modern medicine turns out to be regulatory, and ever since doctors started using statistics, the term "normal" has come to mean exact, healthy, and right. This "certain number of results obtained from individuals" make the average and that the average formed by a majority becomes the normal. Canguilhem points out and criticizes the fact in modern episteme the variations from statistical results that are determined by a majority of averages are interpreted as signs of pathology. In *The Normal and the Pathological,* one of the important statements is that the notion of biological normativity is partly related to social normativity. Canguilhem argues that:

> *the human body is in one sense a product of social activity, it is not absurd to assume that the constancy of certain traits, revealed by an average, depends on the conscious or unconscious fidelity to certain norms of life. Consequently, in the human species, statistical frequency expresses not only vital but also social normativity* (160).

All norms that position an average as *the normal* by the means of modern medicine and statistical regularities are determined by the preferences and the tastes of a majority. The history of science does not present itself as "a history of truth"; however it is formed as "*veridical* discourses, practices governed by the norm of a specified project for the formulation of true propositions" (Gordon 240). These discourses and practices turn out to be scientific and this is achieved "not through the actual truth-content of their propositions, but through the veridical normativity of their organization as a practice: not their truth but their relation towards a truth" (240-1).

4.2. Foucauldian Normativity

Drawing from Canguilhem's framework, I will refer to the theorization of normativity of Michel Foucault who was trained and highly influenced by Canguilhem's reflection on norms and normativity. Foucault has pursued and reflected Canguilhem's thought in his studies which emphasize the both constraining and productive aspect of biopolitics and norms.

According to Foucault, "discursive and non-discursive practices" create regulatory spaces (such as asylums, prisons, educative establishments, schools, etc.) in which identities are produced, reinforced, and reproduced. These discursive and non-discursive practices are employed as a means to maintain social control over ideas and practices. In his analysis of forms of power that constitute the biopolitical frame, Foucault reconsiders the concepts of "meaning", "truth", "subjectivity", "knowledge" and "power" itself. Foucault argues that there are no universal and objective truths; however there are forms of knowledge which are culturally embodied and naturalized throughout history in particular ways. For instance, in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault considers the notion of sex (the instinctual drive in this case) and the way "sexuality" has been produced and constructed by different discursive and non-discursive forms of power (institutions, family, medicine) in order to control and discipline individuals through their body and minds, in all aspects of daily life, by means of rules and norms that set boundaries. Furthermore, Foucault points out that the normalizing[14] practices produces otherness, ab-normality according to the degrees of difference from the norm which sets an ideal:

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[14] In *The Trouble with Normal,* Michael Warner refers to the culturally different meanings of "normal" and "normalization"; the author argues that "in English … normal means certified, approved, as meeting a set of normative standards. In French … when one speaks of normalization, one refers to the whole process of training, testing, and authorizing people as full members of society" (56).

> *[The rule] measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal* (183).

For Foucault, discourses are anything which can carry meaning such as language, images, stories, scientific narratives and cultural products. Particularly for Foucault, discourses are not reflections of an already constructed reality; they are rather through what reality is constructed. Discourses are introduced as knowledge of an independent reality, but they are rather constructive of the way reality is viewed by us.

To be more precise, both Canguilhem and Foucault point out the two different meanings of normativity. On the one hand, normativity provides guidance to our behaviors, actions, and choices. It provides a direction and a model to follow to the way we talk to the others or to the way we act. On the other hand, normativity carries within itself a normalization process and this suggests that certain forms are presented and reproduced as ideals which have control over our modes of embodiments. In terms of gendered embodiments in everyday life basis, norms provide examples for being a man or being a woman and we are governed according to the standards of coherence which determine the realness of a man and a woman. The gendered embodiments, who do not conform to the models of a man or a woman, encounter struggles within their social circumstances. For instance, four of my participants talked about their experiences when they are perceived as transgender individuals and the reactions of co-present others' in the same physical circumstances. Ali who is a thirty-eight year old and self-identified transgender man, says that:

Pembe kimlik bazen sorun oluyor, dile getirilmiyor ama bir bana, bir kimliğe bakılıyor. Henüz hormona başlamadığımdan ses ele veriyor. Hastanede kimlik ismimle çağrılınca diğer hastalar dönüp bakıyor. Özellikle süreç gereği kadın doğumda. Ulaşım yönünden de sıkıntılar var, o malum bayan yanı muhabbeti. Kimi erkek görüyor, kimi bayan yanı bilet veriyor. "Otobüste bazısı sorun değil" diyor yüzüme bakıp bazısı da "Yer varsa başka koltuğa geçeyim". Yan koltuklardan bile müdahaleler oluyor özellikle yaşlı çiftlerden "Aaa kızlı erkekli oturmuşlar. Çocuğum öyle olmaz ki." diyor kadın uzanıp uzanıp.

Deniz is a nineteen-year-old high school student, and he is a transgender man. On the same issue, Deniz mentions that:

… ben bu sene okul başkanı seçildim. Sonra Muratpaşa liseler arası ilçe başkanlığına seçildim. En son Antalya genelinde il başkanlığına aday oldum. Trans kimliğim orada da sorun çıkardı. Adaylığımı kabul bile etmediler. Çok sinirlerdim. Bu hormonların seviyesi beni çok sinirli yapıyor, tutamıyorum kendimi. Böyle şeyler hep oluyor. Yani en basiti, seninle buluşmadan önce, dershaneden arkadaşlarla oturduk bir bankta. Yaşlı teyzeler "Bu kızlar bize yer verir herhalde." dediler. İlk ben fırladım ayağa. Sonra baktılar tabii pek kızlıkla alakam yok. Suratıma baka baka "Kız mısın sen, erkek misin?" diye sorgulamaya başladılar.

Another transgender individual who is self-identified as a transwoman, Aylin tells that:

Ben en büyük zorluğu Ankara'ya üniversiteyi okumak için gittiğimde yaşadım. Yurtta kalıyordum ve hiç kimseyle en ufak bir yakınlık bile kuramadım. Zaten kimsenin de böyle bir şey istediğini düşünmüyorum. Tam olarak, transkadın

kimliğimi göstermesem de, dediğim gibi küçük takılarım, aksesuarlarım vardı. Kendime bakım yapmayı hiç ihmal etmezdim. Erkekler gibi olmadığımı belli ederdim odadakilere. Derse giderdim, orada benzer uzak, dışlayıcı tavırlar. Görmezden gelirlerdi hep. Ailemi ziyarete ne zaman gelsem "Bari şu diplomanı al." diye konuşurlardı çünkü artık dayanamıyordum. Son seneye kadar geldim ama mezun olamadım. Elimde değildi, kadın olduğumu dışavuruyordum. Gittikçe daha fazla dikkat çekmeye başladım. Dekan beni görüşmeye çağırdı. "Sorun istemiyorum. Neysen öyle davran. Erkek gibi davran biraz. Kimseyi rahatsız etme." diye beni uyardı kendince.

Rahşan Abla is fifty-year-old transgender woman and talks about what she has experienced during social interactions in public places as such:

Mahallenin, komşuların nerede, ne zaman, ne yapacakları belli olmaz. Biz Arapsuyu'nda oturmaya başladığımızda hiçbir sorunla karşılaşmazdık. Biz kimseye kötü davranmadık ama onlar bizi istemediler. O yüzden herkesten kendi kararımca uzak duruyorum. Ama bizi tanımayanlar var. Sokağa çıkınca "Aaa şuna bak. Aaa travestiye bak." Karşıdaki insanı hiç düşünmüyorlar. Bizi tanımayanlar hep cinsiyetimizle ilgileniyorlar. Toplumdan hem onlar bizi dışlıyor, hem de biz uzak kalmayı tercih ediyoruz. En azından ben öyle yapıyorum. Trans bireylere nasıl bakıldığını biliyorsun zaten. Devletten olsun, insanlardan olsun hep benzer tepkileri görüyoruz. Bir devlet dairesine gittiğim zaman, bakıyorlar görüntüde kadın, öyle davranıyor ama iş evraklara geldiği zaman, yüzüme tuhaf tuhaf bakmaları çok gücüme gidiyor. Mecbur kalmadıkça kendi muhitimden ayrılmıyorum. Kendi evimden de atacak değiller, ya?

I sought to answer this particular question: How are transgender individuals perceived by others during social interactions in public places? As the responses from the transgender participants show that they are being questioned because of their modes of embodiments and they are perceived in accordance with their self-identified gender identities. Especially, Deniz and Aylin have been teased by the others by using their previous names which indicate their gender identity following from their biological sexes. Related to the examples given by the participants, norms are kind of standards that people are expected to meet upon the idealization of them; moreover they provide us a way of disciplining individuals in order to constraint certain forms of behavior which are established as non-normal and whether you conform to the norms or not, you are regulated by them.

4.3. Constructing Heterosexual Gender Identities

Continuing Foucault's approach, Judith Butler discusses the relation between "compulsory heterosexual matrix" and discourses or institutions which normalize particular lifestyles, identities and relationships. Although they are historically and therefore culturally produced by the discourses that construct categories and differences, these particular lifestyle choices, identities and relationships seem to be natural, universal, and ahistorical. For Foucault, discourses are normative and they coincide with the norms for behavior standards of what takes in as proper and improper, desirable and undesirable. "A sex/gender system" which is "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity" ("The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" 159), turns gender into a fixed and given at birth identity of an individual. This system/process is based on the assumption

that there are two and only gender categories as gender follows from sex. However, when Simone de Beauvior said that "One is not born a woman, but rather, becomes one" (*The Second Sex* 301), she suggested that we are not naturally born women. Moreover, these gender identities make us perform some modes and acts which extend far beyond our physical features and our identified/designated sexes. When one uses expressions regarding the modes and acts we are made to perform; for example, "be a man" or "act like a lady", one also presumes that gender is an ideal or a model to conform to that one has to accomplish rather than a biological feature. Hence; gender identity is a kind of performance that extends beyond biological sex and physical features and that incorporates *sign vehicles* (a term used by Goffman) such as clothing, gestures, hairstyle, and accessories. In this regard, gender identity is an effect of "imitation" which stems from the need to reach an established model of a man or a woman within the regulations and cultural norms of a heteronormative society. Therefore, the manners in which we behave, the way we walk, the clothes we wear are all constantly an imitation of "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (*Gender Trouble* 43). These repeated acts become so familiar and so natural that we do not even question their origin or their validity. Regarding to Butler's definition of our culturally constructed repertoire of acts and embodiments, what seems to be so natural is basically conventional. Yet, this does not mean that one can easily change the traits of bodily dispositions and embodiments which point to the gender identity based on biological and physical characteristics. In respect to this, we may assume together with Butler that gender is a "compulsory ordering of attributes into coherent gender sequences" (32).

4.4. Institutionalized Heterosexuality and Heteronormativity as its Outcome

In close relation to the process of normativity, as a tool for understanding the traditionally established gender binarism, the concept of heteronormativity needs to be extended to address the statuses of transgender individuals as "imitations". To begin with, it is a fixed idea within a social structure which has internalized and has emphasized the productive aspect of biological female and male relation, heterosexuality[15] has become the universally normal assumption that men and women are naturally attracted to one another, both physically and emotionally. In relation to this, Adrienne Rich calls this assumption as "compulsory heterosexuality" in her essay entitled as "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence". Rich understands compulsory heterosexuality as an organizer of social inequality as it causes men's social and economic privilege. Beyond maintaining inequalities between genders of man and woman, compulsory heterosexuality maintains inequalities between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals, as well. Building from this, Michael Warner reconceptualizes the term, compulsory heterosexuality, as *heteronormativity* in the introduction of *Fear of a Queer Planet*. Heteronormativity is a term that is used to explain how it is that we come to expect heterosexual behavior from individuals, the terms emphasizes the notion of heterosexuality as what it is normal, and moreover, heteronormativity recognizes that the inequalities within itself are preserved in accordance with the traditionally established gender identities which follow from biological sexes and the productivity of heterosexual individuals of different gender and sex. Heteronormativity is an enforcement that is cultivated through the expectation and through the demand that most people are heterosexual. When it undertakes such a normative aspect, heteronormativity is established as

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[15] *Heterosexuality* is the sexuality between individuals of different gender and sex. It sets itself superior in contrast to non-heterosexual relations because of its productivity.

authentic, real, true, and natural, other modes of embodiments will look tainted, abnormal, and pathological, and this means that norms are productive and discriminatory at once. In their essay entitled *Sex in Public,* Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner define heteronormativity as such:

> *By heteronormativity we mean the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent-that is, organized as a sexuality-but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal and the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment* (548).

In an unfocused interaction, two (or more) individuals label one another's bodily characteristics and they compare them with their previous experiences and with ideal types that they have been exposed to in their upbringings. They may find each other "deficient" or in a less preferable state when compared to ideal types produced by normative standards. In everyday life interactions people are in the constant deed of looking to make sense of the world they are part of, to participate to social encounters and to know the participants who take place in these social encounters. The act of looking is a practice of noticing and identifying whatever is happening and whomever we are interacting with. Looking makes a difference through its engagement with the aim of obtaining information and making sense. In the book they have co-written, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture,* Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright suggest that:

> *To look is an act of choice. Through looking we negotiate social relationships and meanings. Looking is a practice much like speaking, writing, or signing. Looking involves learning to interpret and, like other practices, looking involves*

relationships of power. To willfully look or not is to exercise choice and influence

(10).

Thus; it is worth noticing that the etymology of the verb "to look" stems from an old English verb "locian" which has an additional meaning to the one of "to use the eyes for seeing"; it also means "to gaze, to behold, to spy, to stare". The term has different shades of connotations, it also means "to look fixedly, intently, and deliberately at something". Looking is not as "innocent" as it may seem. Looking has a certain power over individuals and it relates to one's understanding of their modes of embodiments. Related to this, in Jacques Lacan's conception of mirror stage, the act of looking represents a fundamental aspect in the construction of the subject[16]. For Lacan, when we look in the mirror, we "assume an image" which is a way to visualize ourselves (1286). Yet, because as infants we have not yet learned language or learned to take on the images that the rest of society has for us, it is the first image that we take on. All other self-images occur after we have learned language and started interacting with others, and thus all other self-images are products of the *other*. The act of looking is associated with the construction of the subject[17].

The subject becomes an "I" as long as it sets the limits between his own self and the others. Thus, gender identity is a problematic belonging which results from an on-going process of exclusion of non-heteronormative identities. The process of acknowledging of one's own self carries within itself the anxiety of being excluded by the society and being labelled as different from the established, and "abnormal" in that sense. For example, an individual undertakes the "heterosexual man" identity as long as he sets his limits with the woman, the effeminate, and the

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[16] Jacques Lacan reconsiders the conception of mirror stage later on (thirteen years after the publication of his essay on infants' mirror stage) and he no longer regards it as a phase in the life of an infant. Lacan further argues that the conception of mirror stage has become a crucial element "on the formation of the *I* as we experience" ("The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" 1285).

[17] Moreover, the act of looking can be reconsidered through relationships of power (law, modern medicine and educational establishments) which normalize and naturalize certain modes of embodiments. See also Michel Foucault's studies such as: *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception* and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

homosexual. The subject[18] is being normalized and s/he naturalizes himself/herself on the basis of this process. This idea of subject coincides with the embodiment of norms by individuals. Norms set regulatory standards about the individuality of a certain mode of embodiment and it positions this mode in accordance with the majority. The notion of heteronormativity indicates the naturalized and idealized heterosexual orientation of a certain cultural code; it is defined in accordance with the sexual practices, lifestyle choices and values of this heterosexual orientation. The ones who are outside this orientation are either ignored, excluded and even violated, repressed or marginalized in certain societies by the heterosexual order. This order is derived from the mainstream binary gender categories of man and woman which are conceived as strictly being distinguished from one another in terms of sex and gender, and are accepted as completing each other, or as being able to be in relationship for a productive aim: reproduction or parenting. Building from this, heteronormativity not only does mean naturalized and compulsory heterosexuality, but also it reproduces the binary oppositions of man and woman, thus; it excludes the ones who are outside of these two binary gender categories.

4.5. Performing a Man or a Woman through Transgendered Embodiments

Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman claim that gender corresponds to how an individual identifies him/herself as a woman or a man in social interaction using culturally structured

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[18] In the Foucauldian framework, the subject becomes a subject not only in relation to dominations of knowledge and power, but also in relation to the subject's internalization of "a law of truth" which is imposed on him/her. Foucault points out that [a technique, a form of power] "applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" ("The Subject and Power" 781). By using the term "subject", Foucault emphasizes both the historical "creation" of subject and the double meaning of "subject/subjected".

signifiers, or what they call "doing gender". West and Zimmerman argue that everyone is doing gender by displaying and performing gestures which are labeled as masculine or feminine and therefore signify masculinity or femininity. In their essay entitled "Doing Gender", West and Zimmerman refer to the case of a trans woman named Agnes whose story was documented by sociologist Harold Garfinkel. West and Zimmerman note that in her daily routines Agnes definitely appeared as a woman to others. From this perspective, Agnes' story provides a significant base for West and Zimmerman's idea of doing gender. Agnes' story emphasizes the traditional norms which determine the gendered behaviors, gestures, postures, clothing, as a result, gender differences and the tendency to perceive an individual either as a woman or as a man.

By attempting to criticize West and Zimmerman's idea of doing gender, Butler uses the expression of "undoing gender" in her book entitled *Undoing Gender* so as to formulate an argument for gender binary to be completely eradicated. In *Undoing Gender,* Butler aims to show through her discussions assembled in the book on gender and sexuality, to be more precise, "on the question of what it might mean to undo restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life" (1). In response to this, West and Zimmerman state that "gender is not so much undone as redone" ("Accounting for Doing Gender" 118). This suggests that social changes during interactions; for example, women entering the male dominated workplaces can reduce gender differences, yet West and Zimmerman argue that gender can never be *undone.*

Related to the arguments of "doing gender" and proposition of "undoing gender", Catherine Connell, in her essay entitled "Doing, Undoing, or Redoing Gender?: Learning From the Workplace Experiences of Transpeople", proposes that transgender people simultaneously "do/undo/redo" gender. Connell's argument is based on the analysis of the claims of the

individuals she has interviewed and how they identify their gendered dispositions in their workplaces. In her research, Connell shows that the transgender individuals do gender at their workplaces appropriating to themselves such gestures, postures, and clothing in accordance with the gender identities that they change at will. They also undo or redo their gender when they open up to others about their transgender identities and problematize their colleagues' ideals of gender identity.

In the case of my interviews with four transgender participants, as their gender identities do not follow from their biological sexes and their bodily dispositions do not correspond to the bodily dispositions determined by a strictly heteronormative society, they "undo" / "redo" gender. In order to exemplify their undoing and redoing gender, Ali says that

> En belirgin olaylar çalışmaya başladığım zaman oldu. 1998'de Konyaaltı'nda su parkında işe başladım bar ve restoran servisine bakıyordum. Yaklaşık on yıl orada sezonluk çalıştım. … [k]adın personel gibi olmadığım, yani makyaj süs bakım yapmadığım için erkeklerin yaptığı işleri yaptım. Tabii kariyer olarak da bu nedenden dolayı diğer arkadaşlarım şef pozisyona getirildiler. Benim için iş bulmak öyle kolay değildi. Razı oldum.

Ali undoes gender as a transgender man and he redoes it through his embodiment of masculine traits of a man, however; Ali does not pass[19] neither as a genuine woman nor as a genuine man within the view of the heteronormative society in which he lives. From another related perspective, as a transgender woman, Aylin tells as such:

> Tam olarak, transkadın kimliğimi göstermesem de, dediğim gibi küçük takılarım, aksesuarlarım vardı. Kendime bakım yapmayı hiç ihmal etmezdim. Erkekler gibi olmadığımı belli ederdim odadakilere. Ne kadar kendimi zorladıysam da olmadı.

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[19] You can refer to the term "passing" in the fifth footnote of Chapter 1, section 3.

Yani bir de çok kadınsı bir yapım yok benim. Yüz hatlarım serttir, boyum

uzundur. Allah'tan biraz ince yapılıyım. "Şu haline bak." gibi laflardan artık

bıkmıştım. Bölümdekilerin de çoğunluğu kız olduğu için, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı

okuyordum, sen düşün artık, nasıl sırıtıyordum araladırında. *(Gülüyor.)*

Antalya'ya dönünce benim halim daha belirgin olmaya başladı. Saçlarımı uzattım,

hormone almaya başladım. Dolabımı yeniledim. İsmimi değiştirdim, Facebook

hesabımı yeniledim. Hala eski adımı kullananlar var. Amaçlarının beni üzmek,

aşağılamak olduğunu biliyorum. "İsmini değiştirince, saçını uzatınca kadın mı

olduğunu sanıyorsun?" diye Facebook'tan yazanlar bile oldu.

"Doing gender" is primarily a social relationship. One does gender in order to be perceived by

others in a particular way, either as male, female, or as troubling those categories. When

considering gender as a "doing", we should go beyond the conventionally distinctive binarism of

sex and gender. Referring to Goffman's book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* provides

helpful observations in that sense. In this study, Goffman provides the comparative image of

theatrical performances to explain how we present ourselves in accordance with the cultural

expectations. Individuals perform these gender-related acts; however gender "is a situated doing,

carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its

production". ("Doing Gender" 126). According to West and Zimmerman, everyone is always

constructing and performing, "doing" gender by embodying behaviors which indicate either their

masculinity or their femininity (by the means of clothing, gestures, etc.). Since this is a constant

interaction, West and Zimmerman argue that gender cannot *not* be done: individuals are trying to

conform themselves to the majority/average, in order to be part of the community, thus;

reiterating the gender binary distinction and the continuous existence of gendered dispositions.

We are aware that others evaluate and characterize our behavior through many factors, including that of gender. Social constructionists would say that gender is interactional rather than individual – meaning that it is built and developed through social interactions. In short, gender identity is not only about how one identifies one's own gender, but also about how one presents one's gender to the others.

4.6. What Does a Face Do?

During my interviews with transgender individuals, three of them told me that people usually scrutinized their facial features in order to figure out their gender identity. All three of them emphasized the fact that they were having troubles mostly in public places, during long distance traveling, in governmental facilities, schools, and hospitals, especially when they were going through gynecological examinations. One of the most intense accounts was given by Ali who said that although he had been working very hard in a five-star hotel, his supervisor had not offered him any promotion. When he had decided to bring up his situation, Ali had been told that people should not see his face. In the following case, Aylin who is a transgender woman gave up her bachelor degree at the University of Ankara and she said that she could not bear the constant teasing that she encountered because of her "non-feminine" facial features. Aylin moved back to Antalya where her parents still live and she is now under the protection of a non-governmental LGBTT group in Antalya which is called Pembe Caretta LGBTT. Another interviewee, Deniz, is a transgender man who is a high school student. Deniz told me during the interview that he was being constantly teased by his teachers and that he had not been elected as a high school president in Antalya because of his gender identity. Deniz also said that he was usually openly

questioned whether he was a man or a woman in public places. What the interviewees pointed at very often were the people's questioning gazes on their faces and facial features. Drawing from this, I aim to make a brief analysis on the importance of face[20] within social structure through the results I gained from my interviewees and their own mentioning about their experiences on the issue of face. Furthermore, I will refer to Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the existence of an abstract machine of "faciality", and their criticism of the reduction of the face (physical part) to an objective expression which is carved upon it because the "machine of faciality" suggests that every single individual become their faces. Their main concern is precisely what the face, as an established discriminatory and authoritarian system, does (fix identities and exclude those who are not conform to the established acceptable models) and to become aware of this system that builds our identity.

On the matter of face and facial features in a social interaction, Deniz says that

> … seninle buluşmadan önce, dershaneden arkadaşlarla oturduk bir bankta. Yaşlı teyzeler "Bu kızlar bize yer verir herhalde." dediler. İlk ben fırladım ayağa. Sonra baktılar tabii pek kızlıkla alakam yok. Suratıma baka baka "Kız mısın sen, erkek misin?" diye sorgulamaya başladılar.

In accordance with the same matter, Aylin adds that

> … çok kadınsı bir yapım yok benim. Yüz hatlarım serttir, boyum uzundur. Allah'tan biraz ince yapılıyım. "Şu haline bak." gibi laflardan artık bıkmıştım.

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[20] Physiognomy, the art of reading personality traits from faces, traces back to the time of ancient Greece and Aristotle has been thought to have written a whole treatise on the physiognomy entitled "On the Judgment of Physiognomy". One of the highpoints of the history of physiognomy was in the eighteenth-century and the beginning of the nineteenth-century, when Johann Caspar Lavater, a Swiss theologian and mystic, published his *Essays on Physiognomy.* Lavater's success was enormous; his study of physiognomy played a significant role in the intellectual environment of his times. Cesare Lombroso studied the shape of the eyes, nose, ears, and jaw of male and female criminality in the nineteenth-century.

> Bölümdekilerin de çoğunluğu kız olduğu için, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
> okuyordum, sen düşün artık, nasıl sırıtıyordum araladırında.

Rahşan Abla also tells that

> Sokağa çıkınca "Aaa şuna bak. Aaa travestiye bak." Karşıdaki insanı hiç
> düşünmüyorlar. Bizi tanımayanlar hep cinsiyetimizle ilgileniyorlar. Bir devlet
> dairesine gittiğim zaman, bakıyorlar görüntüde kadın, öyle davranıyor ama iş
> evraklara geldiği zaman, yüzüme tuhaf tuhaf bakmaları çok gücüme gidiyor.

There are reasons to assume that the face and facial features play an important role in social cognition. First, the face is almost always seen whenever a social interaction takes place, i.e. face-to-face meetings. This means that the face which provides information about an individual has a great advantage: It is available in almost every social interaction. The second of these reasons is that, until quite recently, facial features, unlike facial (or behavioral) expressions of emotions or mimics, could not be deliberately transformed, and what we see would remain relatively stable. Unlike emotions that come and go, with their facial expressions and the mimics, the structure of the face remains relatively stable: what we see at that moment will remain the same in the next five minutes, tomorrow, and next month, unless one goes through rather damaging and harsh alterations, such as severe burning. One could as well say that nowadays people have the opportunity to change and shape their facial features thanks to the improvements in the field of cosmetic surgery. In respect to availability, stability and uncontrollability of faces lead us to think that physiognomy/physical appearance, reading from faces and facial features, is an important element of social structure.

Regarding to the importance of reading from faces and facial features within social structure, there is an indicative / "pointing to" relation between what is on a face and the feelings or

concepts it expresses – that is to say that behind the face (inner, hidden thoughts, features of personality, emotions) is what makes the expressions to appear on the face. What the face thus brings about is a representation of what is behind the face of a person. The face expresses that there is something in the appearance of a face/on the face that allows access to what is hidden beneath. Throughout history and more precisely the history of epistemology as well as the history of art, the face has been emphasized and used as an instrument to make assumptions about one's inner, hidden, feelings, thoughts and features of personality; therefore, we cannot separate the face (understood as the upper part of the body located where the head is) from the system of signs in which the marks of a face are historically coded. One's facial marks and attitude are always being interpreted and made significative according to pre-established historical codes; thus the face becomes part of a system that we can call "language". We cannot think outside of "language", language is how we relate ourselves to the worldwide, to others and a means to position ourselves in the world we are part of. This system of sign forms a "language" which is in fact not different from that which rules the activity of writing or speaking in the sense that the face "inscribes" an identity to an individual according to certain features and their codification[21]. A face is "read" and interpreted according to certain established categories, to a relationship that is established between moral characters and physical characters[22]. The way we "read" and interpret one's face is resulting from the system of signification we inherit from historically, culturally, socially. Resulting from this, most of the time, we presume that there is a meaning that is concealed and that can be revealed by the expressive surface of the face.

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[21] See also the importance of the face and of portrait as a genre in painting especially during Renaissance, also in photography. Along with the scientific codification of the face for juridical and medical purposes, we can also refer to the emergence of the "identification card photographs" in the end of 19th century-beginning of 20th century (by Alphonse Bertillon), which were originally meant to "identify" a person according to unchanging, permanent physical features, along with juridical purposes.

[22] The study of "physiognomy" emerged as a "science" during 18th century, under the theories and guidance of Johann Kaspar Lavater and has had an impact upon the "reading" and interpretation of the human in the following centuries.

Furthermore, we assume that what is revealed on the face allows us to acknowledge the hidden identity, character (inner self) of an individual. Thus, the face is an object that gives rise to meaning; it is an instrument, historically constructed as a "mirror" or as a "window" that indicates, reflects and reveals something that is hidden beneath.

Deleuze and Guattari intend to challenge and deconstruct any kind of sign system that is set to be stable, unchangeable, and that is naturalized; their critical view about the face and attempt to deconstruct the system of "faciality" participates, on a broader level, from their criticism regarding the structuralist system and the psychoanalytical system of interpretation that is inherited from Freud. From a wider angle, their criticism of structuralist view of face stems from their theorization of "body without organs" which is an expression borrowed from Antonin Artaud's radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God.* "Body without organs" refers to the absence of organs which means the lack of social, cultural, and historical organizations; body without organs corresponds to going beyond the restricted set of habitual actions that characterize the "organ-ized" body. By using the expression of "body without organs", Deleuze and Guattari point out to the stable and stabilizing identities which have already been constructed in accordance with race, color, body types, gender and also how face creates a discriminatory "grid". They claim that "Choices are guided by faces, elements are organized around faces: a common grammar is never separable from a facial education" (*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 180).

In their historical analysis of the face as a discriminatory dispositive[23], they argue the existence of "an abstract machine of faciality" which corresponds to the objective

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[23] The term "dispositive" has been highly discussed and used by distinctive thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. In order to distinguish the theoretical renderings of the term "dispositive" from those of used by Agamben and Foucault, I will refer to the Deleuzian use of the same term as this section has been dedicated to Deleuze and Guattari's study of face/faciality in detail. A dispositive has a role to determine what we

systematization and production of the face. The "abstract machine of faciality" is an abstract system that isolates and codes the physical part of the face, operates a systematization that engenders the standardization and readability of all faces; thus linking the particular (face/individual) to the universal (established models of faces, the face of the Christ being according to Deleuze and Guattari the original model established historically and having given birth to the model of the "average white western man"). Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the face as a historically and culturally constructed system of signification, and as a discriminatory and authoritarian "grid" which universalizes the particular resonates very much with my study and the discriminatory daily experiences that the transgender persons I have interviewed have said to be victim of: the codification and systematization of faces according to established "acceptable" "correct" models implies a hierarchical classification of all faces, an essentialism, and the naturalization of a discriminatory heteronormative system which is in reality culturally "invented" and established.

It is clear from what Deniz, Aylin and Rahşan Abla say about their non-conforming heteronormative feminine and masculine facial features characterize them as "not being a genuine woman or a man". Their identities become inseparable from their faces and facial features. When Aylin tells about her rather harsh facial features and her non-feminine parts, she points out that her face gives away her identity as a transgender woman in the perception of heteronormative gender identities. Aylin gains a non-heteronormative identity which makes her

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can see and what we can say in a certain historical formation of power. Deleuze points out the perceptual and the ontological aspects of a dispositive and he says that "dispositive has its own regime of light, manner in which it falls, becomes blurred, and spreads throughout, distributing the visible and the invisible, giving rise to or disappearing the object which would not exist without it" ("What is a *Dispositif*?" 339). Moreover, in Deleuze's rendering, the term dispositive has this ontological aspect which can be identified as a conceptual tool in order to describe what we have been and what we are not and what we are becoming in the meantime. It is necessary to distinguish each dispositive "that which we are (that which we are no longer), and that which we are in the process of becoming: *the part of the history and the part of the actual.*" (345).

not a "genuine" woman, but makes her rather "look like" a woman or "act like" a woman, in the case of research study, Aylin is imitating a woman but not received as a "natural" woman.

4.7. The (Im)possibility of Transformation

In this part, I will focus on one aspect of the gendered embodiments that occur in everyday life, that is to say, the perception people have when they encounter and are confronted to gendered embodiments that cannot be defined as strictly masculine or feminine during their unfocused interactions. In this study, I am concerned about whether different gendered embodiments can change these aspects of everyday life through the very situation of encounter on daily life basis. However, the idea that individuals can change their deeply rooted and unconscious behaviors, ideas, models, "grids" of perception and interpretation or ways of thinking by challenging their awareness and consciousness is rather conflicting with the studies on the formation and central role of habits in individuals' social and cultural life. This section aims at drawing on the social interactions of gendered embodiments in specific public spheres where gender display constitutes a highly important critical awareness, in situations when people encounter with one another in daily life basis. In this respect, discussions on the conception of habit which revolve around individuals' practical everyday life activities provide a distinctive explanation to this taken-for-grantedness of social orders. To do so, I will first concentrate my approach on the notion and role of "habit" itself by referring shortly to Aristotle's theorization of *hexis,* from which the modern term of "habit" and notion of habitus have derived. In a second part, I will move on from the ancient Greek concept of *hexis* to study the conception of *habitus* in the theories of Marcel Mauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Pierre Bourdieu.

In this section, I will go back to the source of the (modern) term *habitus,* which is *hexis*. *Hexis* is a notion which has been introduced by Aristotle, and further reconsidered and theorized by Thomas Aquinas[24] in the thirteenth century. Later, in the modern period, the notion of *habitus* has derived from *hexis* and been discussed by various nineteenth-century social theorists, such as Emile Durkheim. As we will see, *habitus* has been restored in theory by Marcel Mauss and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and become a key concept in the understanding and observation of practical embodied activities, however; it is Pierre Bourdieu who has re-introduced this concept in his theory of social practice to analyze the practical embodied bases of an action.

4.7.a. *Hexis*

Aristotle's discussion of habits takes place in the beginning of Book II of his *Nichomachean Ethics*. Habits, according to Aristotle, are at the substance of moral virtue. Aristotle begins his discussion regarding moral virtue with the statement that while intellectual virtue principally initiates in teaching, "moral virtue comes about as a result of habit" (19). This view implies that moral virtue is not something we possess naturally; on the other hand, "we are adapted by nature to receive them [excellences], and are made perfect by habit" (19). This shows that moral habits cannot be acquired by a mere intellectual commitment to act in a certain way, but rather by actually practicing these moral habits. Aristotle emphasizes the importance of exercising the moral habits and he points out that they will become internalized through a constant exercising. Drawing from this, Aristotle states that "[…] men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts,

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[24] As the rendering of Thomas Aquinas would be irrelevant to my study, because he suggests that one has the capability to act in the morally required way without any effort, and this way of acting morally becomes his second nature. I will not discuss it; however I will proceed with the theorizations of Mauss, Merleau-Ponty, and Bourdieu.

brave by doing brave acts" (19). That is to say we exercise ourselves through habits to act in certain ways. In other words, according to Aristotle, we can condition ourselves to both virtue and vice, which is why "it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference" (20). These habits turn out to be our second nature developed through exercising of them over time ; they regulate and constitute how we react in the "presence of danger" or "feelings of anger" or in the moments of "appetites". Furthermore, Aristotle formulates the concept of *hexis* as the condition of having a taught, learned disposition to participate in certain modes of embodiments when one encounters specific objects and circumstances. Aristotle says that:

> *… both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of excellence* (25).

The word *hexis* does not imply a passive state of condition; it rather manifests itself as an active condition in which one makes his/her own choices consciously, that is with the necessary knowledge, so as to access and preserve a state of equilibrium in the soul, a state that is ruled by moderation. Aristotle argues that "Excellence, then, is a state concerned with choice" (25). The meaning carried by *hexis* is never passive and rather always active; it is always at work depending on the circumstances.

4.7.b. Mauss's Conception of *Habitus*

In their essay on *Primitive Classification,* Durkheim and Mauss study the mythology of so-called "primitive" ethnic groups, and argue that the systems of categorical organizations are classified according to the social relations that are derived from the classification of persons. In respect to this, Durkheim and Mauss say that "It is thus the states of the collective mind (*âme*) which gave birth to these groupings, and these states moreover are manifestly affective. There are sentimental affinities between individuals, and they are classified according to these affinities" (85).

Building from this, Mauss develops his conception of habitus in the essay "Techniques of the Body" I have previously referred to. In this sociological and anthropological research on the way we use the body as a technique according to taught, transmitted and transformed norms, Mauss openly states that he does not use the term *habitus* neither as a translation of "habits" nor as a translation of the Aristotelian *hexis*. Mauss is rather interested in the power of socialization, of education and how social forms impose themselves not only on thoughts but also on the physical postures of the body. In order to provide his own specific theorization of habitus, as we have already underlined it, he gives examples from his own childhood experiences of swimming trainings, and also about how English and French troops could not benefit from each other's implements. He emphasizes how bodily dispositions and actions are acquired through socialization, and focuses on bodily practices which are formed through education and deliberate training[25]. Mauss proposes that his conception of *habitus* refers to the reasoning of collective practical actions. Mauss says that:

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[25] Bourdieu distinguishes his conception of *habitus* from that of Mauss's by suggesting that habitus is a durable system of perception, behaviors, experiences and dispositions which are internalized by individuals through

These 'habits' do not just vary with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, prestiges. In them we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties (73).

In the same essay, Mauss observes the differences in the techniques of the body; for example, the differences in the way people walk. These differences occur due to the facts of education and due to the "prestigious imitation" which he explains as that human beings tend to imitate actions "… which have succeeded and which he [a human being] has been successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority" (73). In the case of research study, gendered embodiments who are perceived as "imitations", neither as a natural man nor as a natural woman, they "tend to imitate" the feminine/masculine actions and techniques which are defined according to the established gender codes of a heteronormative society. Ali prefers wearing suits and he likes also wearing ties. Deniz, as a transgender man, usually wears baggy and mannish clothes. Both of their hair is cut short. Aylin and Rahşan Abla prefer wearing skirts, blouses and they carry their handbags, purses all the time. Both of them have got long hair, painted nails and wear heavy make-up. These bodily dispositions and actions do not make the essence of being a man or being a woman in short. Yet, as they are constantly repeated stylizations of body, in terms of Butler's theory of "gender performativity", they become the valid, unquestionable signifiers of being a man or being a woman. These repeated

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education, social background, family. Eventually these modes of perception and practice become habitual, in that sense "common" and we perform them as if they had been "naturally" presented to us although they are entirely culturally constructed and therefore historical.

stylizations of body and actions are internalized and they are unconsciously[26] performed that, in the case of my four transgender participants, their conscious stylizations and actions turn them into "imitations" of their gender identities which do not follow from their biology, they are rather chosen at will.

4.7.c. Merleau-Ponty's *Habitual World* in Relation to Mauss's Conception of *Habitus*

According to Merleau-Ponty, *habitus* is essentially related to bodily or corporal attachment in the physical world and habit is a certain type of capability of the body which can embody movements that are spontaneous and independent. Related to his suggestion on habit which is a "power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 166), Merleau-Ponty proposes that while one is typing, his/her fingers know where to move, which letters to press. And he adds that "If habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an involuntary action, what then it is? It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort" (166). The body creates a harmony between what is intended and what is accomplished. To a certain extent, Merleau-Ponty coincides with Mauss's definition of *habitus* and habits above. Merleau-Ponty claims that consciousness reflects itself into a "physical world" (158) through the body and it reflects itself into a "cultural world" (158) through the habits. Similar to Mauss, Merleau-Ponty states that consciousness is reflected through the habits

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[26] In Mauss's rendering as an actor "imitates actions … which he has seen successfully performed" ("Techniques of the Body 73), body techniques and actions of the others are observed by the actors and they are imitated according to their observations in the extent of imitation. Mauss does not clarify whether "prestigious imitation" happens on a conscious level or unconscious level. Whereas, Bourdieu emphasizes that imitation is not a conscious process; imitation happens below consciousness, the actor who is imitating an action is not aware of his/her mimicking. I will refer to Bourdieu's rendering of imitation in the following sections (4.7.d.The Process of *Mimesis* in Bourdieu's *Habitus*) of this chapter.

in the cultural world and it is "given either in the absolute past of nature or in its own personal

past, and because any form of lived experience tends towards a certain generality whether that of

our habits or that of our 'bodily functions'" (158).

4.7.d. Resilience to "Imitation" of Heteronormative Gendered Embodiments: Insights from Bourdieu's Theorization of *Habitus*

In my study, Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* allows me to discuss how gendered

embodiments are produced, and secondly how the majority of people are still rigid about their

capability to accept the gendered embodiments which are different from culturally established

and commonly accepted gender norms and gender habitus. In Bourdieu's rendering, *habitus*

functions as an explanatory key to understand how we behave in predictable and definite ways

that feel 'right'. *Habitus* can be observed in daily practices such as the way we dress, talk, move,

eat, and act or perform ourselves in social life. Bourdieu characterizes *habitus* as a set of

"systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as

structuring structures, that is, as principles which organize and generate practices and

representations" (*The Logic of Practice* 53) and "an acquired system of generative schemes"

(55). Bourdieu sees *habitus* as a system of structuring principles or forces, which produce social

organizations, regulations and distinctions not through pre-considered involvement of the

individuals but through a kind of circulation of the structuring principles and forces. In order to

accomplish this circulation or dispersal of the structuring and organizing principles, *habitus*

functions as a collective system for constituting common practices in a society,

institutionalization and transferring of practices and principles. *Habitus* produces a shared history

and "collective practices" (54), because it is "deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time" (54). Following Aristotle, Bourdieu defines *habitus* as such:

> *The* habitu*s – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present* (*The Logic of Practice* 56).

Although Aristotle and Bourdieu studied on different fields in different periods of time and they produced differing theories on *habits*, both of the thinkers point out the internalization of habits. For Aristotle, we can condition ourselves to act in a certain way and this "conditioning of oneself" ensures that individuals are active parts of their habits. Whereas Bourdieu claims that *habitus* comes to be internalized and forgotten as history, and turns out to be a "state of the body" (68). In his view, practices have their own autonomy in contrast to what Aristotle claims about individuals who can learn to act in a certain way "at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way".

In Bourdieu's rendering, *habitus* has three remarkable aspects. First of all, it involves the physical body, which suggests that social regulations and organizations can be observed through one's own use of the body and relationship to (his/her own and the others') the body. In this sense, *habitus* is a kind of a bodily representation and performance of habits in a society. The second aspect is that *habitus* is historical and moreover carrier and formative of history since it is the enactment of the past and the transmission of established practices, modes of perception and action to future generations. It coincides with the production and reproduction of social norms and with the regulations of a specific society. The third aspect is that this system of skills and

dispositions are reproduced unconsciously, that is to say, they are "internalized" and "forgotten as history". Related to this, *habitus* is an acquired system of schemes that allows the reproduction of everyday modes of perception, categorizations, and norms and most importantly, these schemes allow the reproduction of ordinary and common actions and decisions such as: judgments of morality, of tastes, of likehood or unlikehood, etc.[27] This suggests that *habitus* provides a sense of commonality, implying also that an action or practice is performed as if it had already been designed beforehand. As a result, *habitus* influences individuals to like or hate or to be attracted to a person, a commodity, a book, a piece of art which is 'right'/conform to the established habitus, even if this may suggest the idea of a pre-determined future over which an individual has very little power.

In short, Bourdieu emphasizes the generative[28] (meaning productive) nature of *habitus*: *habitus* produces new experiences but it also does so in relationship with its background, individuals will often confirm, reproduce, and legitimate the social norms, and the common assessments as taken for granted. In respect to this, individual actions and choices will be limited and pre-determined or they will be over-determined by *habitus*. Even if consciousness and awareness are included within Bourdieu's theorization, they essentially overcome neither the stability of *habitus* nor the individual struggle against change[29]. This stems due to the fact that

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[27] What is fundamental in Bourdieu's theorization of *habitus* is that he sees the body and bodily actions as signifiers of a social class and in relation to class, Bourdieu points more to the way we use the body, perform and practice our body. The body becomes a class indicator often relates to the social class the body is from, their way of life and life choices and at current time.

[28] Bourdieu refers to the generative aspect of habitus and argues that habitus produces bodily dispositions and actions which reproduce the objective social structures of a social context in accordance with "the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus" (*Outline of a Theory of a Practice* 78).

[29] Bourdieu points out the productive nature of the habitus which is both infinite and limited at once. He says that "the habitus is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of it unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning" (*The Logic of Practice* 55). It is infinite because it can be altered when it

habitus "structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limits defined by their power of selection" (*The Logic of Practice* 60). As a conclusion, I would like to emphasize that although change in *habitus* can be possible in the instances of crisis or in the instances of consciousness and awareness, individuals may simply ignore those instances. Even if individuals become all aware about the social distinctions, they may be incapable of changement due to their own "durably installed" (57) embodied histories – they do not prefer taking action in any kind of change. He reconsiders the practical everyday life actions and knowledge, because social organizations and regulations are largely conducted beneath the level of discourses. Primarily, our responses and practices are determined by our internalization of the social worlds in which we live and we develop our bodily dispositions in response to objective conditions we encounter.

So far, I have discussed the habitus as a generative structure of human action within Bourdieu's framework. From now on, I will discuss how bodily dispositions and bodily actions are one of the primary bases of the habitus. I intend to relate these ideas with the main problematic of my study concerned with the general approach according to which certain modes of embodiments of gendered bodies are considered as "imitations", therefore as "not natural".

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encounters and adjusts itself to new conditions. On the other hand, the habitus is limited because individuals have the capability to determine their habits between the expectations of habitus and the conditions they individually come across with.

4.7.e. The Process of *Mimesis* in Bourdieu's *Habitus*

Bourdieu argues that social institutions, norms and regulations can also be transmitted by *mimesis*, meaning that the process of unconscious imitation of other actors' actions. Through imitation, individuals unconsciously embody a social context's actions and practices and they build social context-related patterns that enable them to better adjust to the context's characteristics. Bourdieu emphasizes the process of transmission through *mimesis* and claims that the most essential elements of habitus are "transmitted through practice" (*The Logic of Practice* 73). Transmission through practice means that social institutions, norms and regulations can be directly transferred from one individual to another. This process is called *mimesis*[30] and which is defined as the imitation of others' actions, however; this imitating individual is not aware of his/her mimicking. This process happens below consciousness.

On the process of *mimesis,* Bourdieu argues that individuals do not just unconsciously imitate actions; they incorporate the social institutions, norms and regulations that produce the actions. The process of *mimesis* does not only include the imitation of others' actions, but also includes the acquisition of the codes that cause those actions. In short, for Bourdieu, *mimesis* means the unconscious reproduction of other actors' bodily practices. In addition to this, bodily actions and practices are derived from the norms and regulations of a social context and this ensures the fact that norms and regulations of a social context are embodied in an individual's bodily practices.

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[30] Bourdieu distinguishes the process of *mimesis* from that of Mauss's by saying as such: *mimesis* "has nothing in common with an imitation that would presuppose a conscious effort to reproduce a gesture, an utterance or an object explicitly constituted as a model" (*The Logic of Practice* 73). Bourdieu emphasizes the unconsciousness of this mimetic process whereas Mauss does not clarify whether "prestigious imitation" is unconscious or not. Yet, from another angle, Mauss argues that individuals observe the actions of others and imitate them. Bourdieu also points out the historicity during the process of *mimesis*; it is the transmission of the past through bodily actions and dispositions and related to this Bourdieu adds that: "it [the body] enacts the past, bringing it back to life" (73).

Relating to Bourdieu's ideas on the process of *mimesis*, which is a means of transmission of past practices into present through the unconscious imitation of other individuals' actions, I would like to emphasize that certain modes of embodiment of gendered bodies, as in the case of four transgender participants of my research study, are seen as "imitations" of a woman or a man. As I have previously mentioned about bodily dispositions of my four transgender participants (in 4.7.b. Mauss's Conception of *Habitus*) they embody such modes that are culturally and socially distinguished as feminine and masculine. And their modes of embodiments do not follow from their biology and their appearances (especially their facial features) do not correspond to that of culturally, socially, and historically established and accepted codes. What I would like to point out is that their modes of embodiments of their gendered bodies, which are chosen at will, do not coincide to the Bourdieusian process of *mimesis*. What they are doing is a conscious "imitation" of bodily dispositions and actions which are thought to be belonging to "genuinely" and "naturally" born men and women. Drawing from my four transgender participants, they are (as the imitating actors of other men/women's actions and dispositions) aware that they imitate actions and dispositions of men and women, and they are able to express why they imitate those actions and dispositions. They want to their gender identities "pass" as men or women. Their "conscious[31]" imitation of their chosen-at-will-genders do not correspond to the heteronormative models of being a man or being a woman, and they become secondary representations of a model, and this general approach positions them as

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[31] In my personal opinion, it is not essentially right to call my participants' process of disposing themselves as "conscious" imitation, yet in order to distinguish it from that of Bourdieu's argument on the process of *mimesis*, I call the way my participants embody feminine and masculine dispositions, as "conscious" imitation. Because what they are imitating are also the culturally and historically established and internalized modes of being a man and being a woman and they are performing those modes of being a man or woman at their own will. The participants are adjusting themselves to those modes (such as long hair, wearing make-up or wearing a suit and a tie) and accepting them as essence of their self-identified genders and they are imitating them unconsciously, without questioning their validity. They are accepting those modes of being as the essence of their genders; thus this ensures the unconsciousness of their imitation process.

"imitations" within the social norms and social constructions which strengthen the appearance of a transgender individual as an imitation of a naturalized gender identity.

4.7.f. Critical Approaches to Bourdieu's Conception of *Habitus*

So far, Bourdieu's approach to investigate the social context shows that it is shaped and constituted by objective social structures; thus, Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* not only reveals how gendered bodies are embodied in social context, but also how taken-for-granted social norms are fixed in everyday life practices. Bourdieu's theorization opens up ways to think about embodiment of gendered bodies in relation to his concept of *habitus*. Throughout his works[32], Bourdieu recognizes the fact that men and women use and manage their bodies in different ways and that these ways differ from culture to culture and historically. This may give a sense of Bourdieu's concern for gender norms and for the way these gender norms are embodied[33]. Building from this, Beate Krais offers a conception of *gendered habitus*, and it refers to the "social construction of masculinity and femininity that shapes the body, defines how the body is perceived, forms the bodies habits and possibilities for expression, and thus determined the individual's identity – via the body as masculine or feminine" ("Gender, Sociological Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Practice." 500). This demonstrates how social experiences are reproduced, repeated and conveyed in accordance with an individual's embodiment of masculinity or femininity.

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[32] For further reading on his arguments on ways of embodiments differing according to gender, see *Outline of Theory of Practice* and *The Logic of Practice.*

[33] As a reminder, Bourdieu defines the gendered differences in *bodily hexis* as such "the opposition between male and female is realized in posture, in gestures and movements of the body" (*The Logic of Practice* 70).

Since my study on imitation is based and shaped around Goffman's and Bourdieu's

theoretical observations and research on embodied practices in everyday life; their observations

provide me the most fruitful explanations for the relationship between structure and agency in

relation to gendered embodiments and habitus. It is nevertheless important to specify that what

Bourdieu offers as a theoretical basis has been criticized by scholars, such as Iris Marion Young,

because:

> *Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the habitus offers one interpretation of how*
> *generalized social structures are produced and reproduced in the movement and*
> *interaction of bodies. Especially in his understanding of gender structures,*
> *however, Bourdieu's understanding of the relation of social structures to actors*
> *and experience conceptualizes these structures too rigidly and ahistorically.*
> ("Lived Body vs. Gender: Reflections on Social Structure and Subjectivity" 26).

Despite Young's critical argument, I think Bourdieu's project provides an important tool and

perspective to understand the ways individuals come to embody gender relations. The concept of

habitus allows us to conceive gender as a culturally and socially determined construction, as a

performance and "practice" which is defined as a set of structured dispositions and actions that

are engendered in individuals in a social context within objective social structures. We are

obviously living in a genderly codified world, which Bourdieu outlines with a metaphor:

"Gender is a fundamental dimension of the habitus, which modifies, as do the sharp or the clef in

music, all social features connected to social factors" (cited in Krais 58). For this reason,

Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* is a key conception to describe how gendered relations are

adopted and how they become a second nature for individuals. As Bourdieu puts forward, each

individual is born into a particular society and he/she is educated within a specific social class,

and then he/she incorporates the rules, norms and cultural codes of this society through his/her

practices within the social context in which he/she lives, acts, and thinks. Every single practice is

embodied and transmitted by the individuals who preserve, vary, and change, or even subvert

these practices within their own social contexts. This argument can provide a response to the

question that is central in my research study: "Why do gendered embodiments which are not

appropriate to the gendered habitus feel so disturbing and "not right? Indeed, Bourdieu's concept

of *habitus* offers a socially comprehensive approach to better understand and analyze the

gendered practices and discourses that individuals are embodying. Thus, gendered embodiments

emerge out of the embodiment of social structures through an engagement in social contexts; as a

result, ways of being and doing become stereotypical and common.

In continuity of this approach, Judith Butler suggests the notion of "gender performativity" in

Gender Trouble and *Bodies that Matter* and through this notion she discusses how individuals

participate in social constructions of gender, and this suggests that gender is not an essence. The

repetitious performances of "male" and "female" accordingly with social norms and social

constructions reinforce and acknowledge the established gender categories, creating the

appearance of a naturalized and essential binary gender system. An individual is always

"performing" gender, performing accordingly to or deviating from the socially accepted

performance of gender categories. Performing gender is not just about acting in a particular way.

It is about embodying certain gender norms and engaging in practices that correspond to those

norms or destabilize those norms. In other words, by performing gender, we reinforce the notion

that there are only two mutually exclusive categories of gender.

Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman point out that "we conceive of gender as an emergent

feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements

and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" ("Doing

Gender" 126). In "Doing Gender", West and Zimmerman discuss gender as a master status, or

the first category, property by the means of which people are able to characterize other people.

The internalized assumption that men and women are essentially different is what makes men

and women behave in ways that appear essentially different. Gender is sustained as a category

through socially constructed embodiments of norms. In respect to this, the thought of social

constructionism proposes the idea that our common understanding of what is called *reality*

(social institutions and knowledge) is partially, not entirely, created by actors within a society.

Accordingly, Butler defines her notion of *gender performativity* as such:

> *Performativity is thus not a singular "act," for it is always a reiteration of a norm*
>
> *or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present,*
>
> *it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition. Moreover,*
>
> *this act is not primarily theatrical; indeed, its apparent theatricality is produced*
>
> *to the extent that its historicity remains dissimulated (and, conversely, its*
>
> *theatricality gains a certain inevitability given the impossibility of a full*
>
> *disclosure of its historicity)* (*Bodies that Matte*r xxi).

Butler's definition of *gender performativity* highly corresponds to Bourdieu's conception of

habitus in terms of both being a set of internalized norms and their repetitive and reproductive

aspect of the past as a present. The notion that everyday life activities and social interactions are

both regular and experienced as being natural and as being the only way of doing things may

suggest that our profoundly conventional of gendered embodiments and *habitus* might be

resistant to change. In my thesis, I am interested in one aspect of the gendered embodiments that

occur in everyday life habitus, that is to say, the perception people have of when they encounter

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with gendered embodiments that cannot be defined as strictly as masculine and feminine during their unfocused interactions. I am concerned about whether diverse gendered embodiments can change these kinds of aspects of *habitus* through their encounters.

I have argued that Bourdieu's theoretical framework allows us to make sense of our ways of embodiment. His approach highlights many of the crucial aspects when it is applied to the way individuals represent themselves and act in a profoundly gendered world. In a way, Bourdieu emphasizes social reproduction rather than social change. Yet, is it possible for us to change aspects of ourselves even though we repeat certain practices, discourses, and views? Lois McNay criticizes Bourdieu considering that he "significantly underestimates the ambiguities and dissonances that exist in the way that men and women occupy masculine and feminine positions" ("Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity" 107). McNay proposes the idea of a "lack of fit" which means that when there is a dissonance between the social structures and the individuals, there are increased possibilities for social change. McNay uses this notion of a "lack of fit" in order to explain the social transformation of women (after child rearing) entering the labor market, including the high-status and professional occupations previously coded as masculine, in late modernity. In relationship with my own claim, we might consider that the "lack of fit" between gendered embodiments and *habitus* of everyday life interactions opens up the possibility for social transformation. However, McNay does not ignore the fact that there are some aspects of gendered embodiments which cannot be easily changed. McNay refers to the bodily dispositions and embodiments which point to the gender identity based on biological and physical characteristics; she states that

> *Without having to resort to biologistic notions of maternal instinct, the*
>
> *inscription of the mothering role upon the female body is fundamental in the*

inculcation of emotional and physical predispositions that maintain gender

inequality around child rearing. It is not clear how such forms of identity, which

are over determined both physically and emotionally can be that easily dislodged

(113).

In a sense, through her idea of a "lack of it", McNay suggests that gender norms are not fixed

and enduring. She points out the possibility for social transformation in the habitus when

individuals are moving from one social context to another. However, Lisa Adkins discusses on

the other hand the notion of reflexivity and she puts forward that reflexivity is the means "to

involve reflection on the unthought and unconscious categories of thought, that is, the

uncovering of unthought categories of habit" ("Reflexivity, Freedom or Habit of Gender?" 25).

Adkins states that gender is habitually and unconsciously integrated so that it becomes a part of

the individual identity and moreover, any reflexive act can lead us to recognize the inequalities,

problems, inconsistencies within social contexts yet, a reflexive act can "leave us … unable to do

anything about our lack of freedom" (Thorpe 506).

5. Results of the interviews

For this research study, I sought to answer this particular question: How are transgender

individuals perceived by others during social interactions in public places?

To address how transgender individual are affected by the omnipresence of heteronormative

identities, I asked questions regarding how transgender people have been perceived by the others

in public places. With this concern in mind, I focused primarily on the interviewees own

experiences with their family members, friends, and neighborhood and then I passed to their interactions with other people in public places such as hospitals, schools, workplaces, etc.

To begin with the perception of their non-heteronormative gender identities by the others, I first inquired their relations with their family members.

A 38 year old, a self-identified trans man Ali says that:

Öz babam kan davası nedeniyle ben doğmadan öldürülmüş, annem de beş çocukla yine beş çocuklu bir adamla evlenmiş. Yedi yaşına kadar erkek kardeşlerimle yarı aç yarı tok büyüdüm. Şu anki ailem öğretmenlikten emekli olunca "Bir kız evlat alalım, büyütelim" diye düşünmüşler. Yetiştirme yurtlarında bulamamışlar. Babamın arkadaşı "Köyde çocuklarını yurda verecek bir aile var." deyince beni görmeye geldiler köye ve mahkeme kararıyla evlatlık alındım. İlkokuldan bu yaşıma kadar bana karşı sevgi doluydular. Yaramazlıklarıma, inatlaşmalarıma sabrettiler. Çalışmamı istemeseler de "Para kazan da harcamanın nasıl olduğunu gör. İlerde faydasını görürsün." Dediler, izin verdiler. "Kendi ayaklarının üstünde dur." diye de "Şehir dışında oku bakalım." dediler. "Babama erkek olmak istiyorum." deyince - 25 yaş civarı – "Olmaz öyle şey." dedi. "Allah'a karşı mı geliyorsun? dedi annem de. Kaç defa "Elbise alalım sana, makyaj yap, saçını kısa kestirme." dediler. Dinlemedim. "Ben erkeğim, değişemem." dedim.

A self-identified trans man who is a high school student, Deniz says that:

Biz anaerkil bir aileyiz. Evde annem ne derse, o olur. İki sene önce saçımı kısa kestirip erkek olmak istediğimi söylediğimde annem hemen doktora götürmüştü beni. Tahliller yapıldı filan. Sonuçta da kadınlık ve erkeklik hormonlarımın eşit olduğu ortaya çıktı. Ablam var, o hala beni böyle kabullenemedi. Bana hala

"Dilara" diyor, eski adım Dilara benim. Babam da öğrendiğinde hiç olumsuz tepki göstermedi. Tersine "Oğlum benim" filan demeye başladı. Aslında, var ya, benim hep erkek olacağımı düşünmüşler. Bir fotoğrafım vardı, keşke getirseydim. Her yer, her şey masmavi… Bir tek araya pembe bir yastık sıkıştırmışlar, kız olduğum anlaşılsın diye. Beni tamamen anlatan bir fotoğraf o.

Another self-identified trans-woman, Rahşan Abla tells that:

Onları hiç karıştırma. Ailemden kimse ben istemedi, kabullenemedi. Zar zor canımı kurtardım ellerinden. Senelerdir de birini bile görmedim. Annem ölmüş de cenazesine gidersem beni gebertecklermiş, diye hala tehditler geliyor kulağıma.

Aylin is also a self-identified transwoman and she tells about her family that:

Annemle aram iyidir de, babamı pek sevmem. Bir de ablam var. Onunla aram çok iyidir. Her şeyi onunla konuşabiliyorum. Annem, ablam kadar olmasa da, kadınların kullandığı küçük takıları, aksesuarları takmama, onların ortamlarına girmeme bir şey demezdi. Ama babam … Neyse işte, evdeyken rahattım. İstediğimi yapabiliyordum. Sonra üniversiteyi okumaya Ankara'ya gittim. Erkek muhabbetlerinden hiç hoşlanmazdım. Yurtta d çok zorlandım. Kısacası zamanla onlardan farklı olduğum iyice belirginleşmeye başladı. Hal ve hareketlerimden, bakışlarımdan huylanıyorlardı. Görebiliyordum. Dışlandım. Kampüste de aynı şekilde. Mecburen bölümü bırakıp ailemin yanına Antalya'ya döndüm. Onlar da beni mecburen kabullendiler.

I asked the interviewees about their relationships with their friends and neighborhood. For this, I inquired, "Do you feel that your trans identity is an issue within your neighborhood/friends?

About this subject, Ali tells that:

> Komşular "Yaşlı annesine bakıyor, hayırlı evlat" gözüyle bakarlar bana. Mahalleli de öyledir. Esnaf beni biliyor kız ama erkek gibi. Kimi de erkek olarak biliyor, bir şey demiyorum. "Kız mı, erkek mi bu?" diyenler genelde beni tanımayan pazar esnafı ama onlardan da beni tanımayan yok gibi.
>
> Bazıları "Yakışıklı, ne zaman evleneceksin?" diyor. Gülüyorum. "Annem var, olmaz." diyorum. Önceleri sokakta, özellikle, çocuklar arkamdan bağırırdı "Kız mısın, erkek misin?" diye ya da birbirlerine sorarlardı benim duyacağım şekilde. Üzülürdüm tabii. Şimdilerde kendime güvenim geldiğinden, kendimi gerçekleştirmek üzere bir yola çıktım, zira bu tür yaklaşımlar duymuyorum artık. Arkadaşlarım 1998'te birlikte çalıştıklarım, kahvedekiler ve Ankara'daki birkaç trans erkek. Kahvedekiler adımı Mehmet biliyorlar. Sorun yok orda. Kahvede çalışan adam çok eski dostum benim. Her zaman yanımdadır.

Deniz talks about his friends and says that:

> Mahalledekiler beni çocukluğumdan beri tanıdıkları için rahatım. Lisanlı tenis oynuyorum ve bir ödül filan aldığımda, mahallenin bakkalı, esnafı, taksici abiler, filan gelirler, tebrik ederler. Ama bilmeyen varsa, laf atıyorlar tabii. Yakın arkadaşlarım durumumu hep biliyorlardı zaten. İki sene önce değişmeye başlayınca okuldaki bazı arkadaşlar benimle görüşmeyi kestiler. Bir çocuk vardı, şimdi çok yakın arkadaşım oldu. Onunla çok kavga ederdik. Bir gün oturup

konuşma fırsatımız oldu. Onu çok etkilediğime inanıyorum. Mesela çok milliyetçiydi, şimdi solcu oldu. Genelde zamanım okulda geçtiği için hep oradakiler geliyor aklıma. Tuvaletin oradan geçtiğimden çok sataşırlar, onlarla da zaten hiç yakın değilim. Ama işte, hep aynı ortamdayız. Kızlarla aram çok iyidir, kendileri gelirler bana. *(Gülüyor.)* Mesela bir gün bir çocuk koridorda yolumu kesti. Hoşlandığı kız benimle görüşüyormuş. "Peşini bırak." filan dedi. Ben de "O benim peşimde." deyince kavga başladı.

Aylin tells about her friends as such:

Pembe Caretta LGBT'dekilerden başka pek arkadaşım yok. Sağolsunlar, nereye gidersem gideyim, onlar hep yanımdalar. Yani komşulardan, mahalleliden kulağıma geliyor konuştukları. "İşte erkekti, saçını uzattı, kısacık etekler giyiyor." filan diye. Bana karşı tavırların farkındayım. Ama yapacak bir şeyim yok. Ailemin yanında olduğum için de bana pek bir şey yapamıyorlar ama hallerinden belli oluyor. Ben de sokağa pek çıkmadığımdan çok da sorunla karşılaşmıyorum.

Rahşan Abla says that:

Ben herkesle çok iyi anlaşırım. Hiçbir zaman o tarz bir problemle karşılaşmadım. Ben oniki senedir Antalya'da yaşıyorum, alışveriş yaptığım, kuaföre gittiğim yerler hep aynıdır. Ama tabii, Antalya çok değişti, çok büyüdü. Hem de nasıl… Bizim mahallede eskiden bir sürü trans arkadaş otururdu. Kimse kimseye bakmazdı, laf etmezdi. Ne zaman yeni yeni insanlar taşındı, inşaatlar patladı, biz onlara batmaya başladık. En basiti bizim hep gittiğimiz kuaföre baskı yapmaya başlamışlardı "Alma onları dükkanına." diye. Diğer translar dayanamadılar baskıya gittiler, çok az kaldık. Benim bir yere gitmeye niyetim yok. Evim burası.

Aslında bu tür insanlarla ilişkilerde cinsiyet hep ön planda oluyor. Ama orada uzun süredir oturanların belli bir sure sonar aklına bile gelmiyor cinsiyet konusu. Yahu geçenlerde benim kiracıyı kaçırdılar dükkandan. Hala birini bulamadım yerine. Arkadaşlara gelince ben biraz asosyalimdir. Beni anlayabilecek, sorgulamadan kabullenebilecek insanlarla görüşürüm. Onlar da çok az zaten. Apartmandaki komşularım iyi insanlardır, onları sen de tanıyorsun. Bayramlarda B. Amca'nın elini öpmeye de giderim, hep bana kapıları açıktır.

At this point, I asked whether they had any problems in public places when they encountered with people with whom they did not have any previous contact.

Ali tells that:

Pembe kimlik bazen sorun oluyor, dile getirilmiyor ama bir bana, bir kimliğe bakılıyor. Henüz hormona başlamadığımdan ses ele veriyor. Hastanede kimlik ismimle çağrılınca diğer hastalar dönüp bakıyor. Özellikle süreç gereği kadın doğumda. Ulaşım yönünden de sıkıntılar var, o malum bayan yanı muhabbeti. Kimi erkek görüyor, kimi bayan yanı bilet veriyor. "Otobüste bazısı sorun değil" diyor yüzüme bakıp bazısı da "Yer varsa başka koltuğa geçeyim". Yan koltuklardan bile müdahaleler oluyor özellikle yaşlı çiftlerden "Aaa kızlı erkekli oturmuşlar. Çocuğum öyle olmaz ki." diyor kadın uzanıp uzanıp. Neyse ki muavinler anlayışlı da ses etmiyorlar. Mesela ortaokuldayken bir kızdan hoşlandım. Ve sözlü taciz nedeniyle şikâyet edildim. Okul müdürü babamı çağırdı. "Sizin kızınız bir kızı rahatsız ediyormuş filan." diye. Babam da tıp fakültesinde hormonlarıma baktırdı. Kadın biyolojisine uygun her şey. "Onsekiz yaşına gelince geçer." demiş doktorlar. Geçmedi haliyle… Lisede de kızlar ilgimi

çekiyordu ve bu yüzden bir sosyal hayatım olmadı. Okul ve ev… Okulun

tuvaletine girmezdim. Bu dışarıda da aynıydı. Kadın değildim, erkek de değildim

o zamanki aklımla. İçine kapanık gazetenin verdiği ansiklopedilerle büyüdüm.

Eşcinsel olduğumu düşünüyordum. Kadın bedenindeysem ve ruhum erkek ise

başka bir seçenek aklıma gelmiyordu. En belirgin olaylar çalışmaya başladığım

zaman oldu. 1998'de Konyaaltı'nda su parkında işe başladım bar ve restoran

servisine bakıyordum. Yaklaşık on yıl orada sezonluk çalıştım. İyi arkadaşlıklarım

oldu, hala görüştüğüm 4 – 5 arkadaşım var oradan. Duygu dünyamda kadınların

yeri büyüktü. Çalışma arkadaşlarım beni anlamaya çalıştılar. Genelinde anlayışla

karşıladılar. Fakat kadın personel gibi olmadığım, yani makyaj süs bakım

yapmadığım için erkeklerin yaptığı işleri yaptım. Tabii kariyer olarak da bu

nedenden dolayı diğer arkadaşlarım şef pozisyona getirildiler. Benim için iş

bulmak öyle kolay değildi. Razı oldum.

As a high school student, Deniz mentions about the discriminations and negative attitudes of his

teachers at a more personal level of social interactions in public places and Deniz adds that:

Benim zamanımın çoğu okulda geçiyor. Bazı hocalar çok zorluk çıkarıyorlar. İşte

hitap şekiller, laf sokmalar, suçlamalar, eski adımı üstüne basa basa söylemeler,

daha bir sürü olaylar. Hocaların dışında, başka olaylar da oluyor tabii. Mesela ben

bu sene okul başkanı seçildim. Sonra Muratpaşa liseler arası ilçe başkanlığına

seçildim. En son Antalya genelinde il başkanlığına aday oldum. Trans kimliğim

orada da sorun çıkardı. Adaylığımı kabul bile etmediler. Çok sinirlerdim. Bu

hormonların seviyesi beni çok sinirli yapıyor, tutamıyorum kendimi. Böyle şeyler

hep oluyor. Yani en basiti, seninle buluşmadan önce, dershaneden arkadaşlarla

oturduk bir bankta. Yaşlı teyzeler "Bu kızlar bize yer verir herhalde." dediler. İlk ben fırladım ayağa. Sonra baktılar tabii pek kızlıkla alakam yok. Suratıma baka baka "Kız mısın sen, erkek misin?" diye sorgulamaya başladılar. Bunlara rağmen çok da üzülmüyorum eskisi gibi. Yapacak pek de bir şeyim yok ama kapılı kapılar ardında da yaşanmıyor. Ben görünür olmaktan yanayım. İnsanlardan istediğimi almak için onları zorlayamam ama sorunlarımızı dile getirip destek bulabiliriz. Geçen sene sınıfta kaldım ben. Sevgilimden ayrılmıştım ailesi yüzünden. Benim gibi biriyle görüşmesini istememişler. O zaman tabii çok üzüldüm, her şeyi boşladım. Haliyle sınıfta da kaldım ama sınıfta kalmak aklımı başıma getirdi. Ne okuldakiler, ne hocalar, hiç kimse beni eskisi gibi üzmüyor. Hatta daha olumlu bir insan oldum. Bazı kızlar bana artık kendileri geliyor. Biraz popüler olmak isteyen benimle takılıyor. Ben de onları hiç geri çevirmiyorum. *(Gülüyor.)* Her zaman da olumsuzluklar olmuyor. Okulda öğrenci işlerindeki amca, benim kayıt işlemlerimdeki cinsiyetle ilgili bölümümü boş bıraktı mesela. Bu da bir ilktir herhalde.

On the same issue, Aylin tells that:

Ben en büyük zorluğu Ankara'ya üniversiteyi okumak için gittiğimde yaşadım. Yurtta kalıyordum ve hiç kimseyle en ufak bir yakınlık bile kuramadım. Zaten kimsenin de böyle bir şey istediğini düşünmüyorum. Tam olarak, transkadın kimliğimi göstermesem de, dediğim gibi küçük takılarım, aksesuarlarım vardı. Kendime bakım yapmayı hiç ihmal etmezdim. Erkekler gibi olmadığımı belli ederdim odadakilere. Derse giderdim, orada benzer uzak, dışlayıcı tavırlar. Görmezden gelirlerdi hep. Ailemi ziyarete ne zaman gelsem "Bari şu diplomanı

al." diye konuşurlardı çünkü artık dayanamıyordum. Son seneye kadar geldim

ama mezun olamadım. Elimde değildi, kadın olduğumu dışavuruyordum. Gittikçe

daha fazla dikkat çekmeye başladım. Dekan beni görüşmeye çağırdı. "Sorun

istemiyorum. Neysen öyle davran. Erkek gibi davran biraz. Kimseyi rahatsız

etme." diye beni uyardı kendince. Benim de elimde değil ki bunlar, isteyerek

yapmıyorum. Ne kadar kendimi zorladıysam da olmadı. Yani bir de çok kadınsı

bir yapım yok benim. Yüz hatlarım serttir, boyum uzundur. Allah'tan biraz ince

yapılıyım. "Şu haline bak." gibi laflardan artık bıkmıştım. Bölümdekilerin de

çoğunluğu kız olduğu için, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı okuyordum, sen düşün artık,

nasıl sırıtıyordum araladırında. *(Gülüyor.)* Antalya'ya dönünce benim halim daha

belirgin olmaya başladı. Saçlarımı uzattım, hormone almaya başladım. Dolabımı

yeniledim. İsmimi değiştirdim, Facebook hesabımı yeniledim. Hala eski adımı

kullananlar var. Amaçlarının beni üzmek, aşağılamak olduğunu biliyorum.

"İsmini değiştirince, saçını uzatınca kadın mı olduğunu sanıyorsun?" diye

Facebook'tan yazanlar bile oldu. Ben bu kararı aldım ve hala eski adımı

kullanmalarını hiç anlamıyorum. Yani, elimden geldiğince dışarı çıkmamaya

çalışıyorum. Çünkü bir kez daha o baskıları, o lafları kaldıramam gibi geliyor.

Rahşan Abla talks about what she has experienced during social interactions in public places as

such:

Ailemin yanından kaçtıktan sonra ufak tefek işlerde çalışmaya başladım.

Tezgahtarlık yaptım, gelen giden müşteriler benden rahatsız olduklarını

söylemişler patrona. O yüzden işten çıkarıldım. Garsonluk da yaptım. Çok işler

yaptım. Onları boşver sen. Ama hep yürüyüşümden, tavırlarımdan rahatsız

olmuşlar. Yine işten çıkarıldım. Bu böyle sürüp gitti. İnsanlar ikiyüzlüdür.

Mahallenin, komşuların nerede, ne zaman, ne yapacakları belli olmaz. Biz

Arapsuyu'nda oturmaya başladığımızda hiçbir sorunla karşılaşmazdık. Biz

kimseye kötü davranmadık ama onlar bizi istemediler. O yüzden herkesten kendi

kararımca uzak duruyorum. Ama bizi tanımayanlar var. Sokağa çıkınca "Aaa şuna

bak. Aaa travestiye bak." Karşıdaki insanı hiç düşünmüyorlar. Bizi tanımayanlar

hep cinsiyetimizle ilgileniyorlar. Toplumdan hem onlar bizi dışlıyor, hem de biz

uzak kalmayı tercih ediyoruz. En azından ben öyle yapıyorum. Trans bireylere

nasıl bakıldığını biliyorsun zaten. Devletten olsun, insanlardan olsun hep benzer

tepkileri görüyoruz. Bir devlet dairesine gittiğim zaman, bakıyorlar görüntüde

kadın, öyle davranıyor ama iş evraklara geldiği zaman, yüzüme tuhaf tuhaf

bakmaları çok gücüme gidiyor. Mecbur kalmadıkça kendi muhitimden

ayrılmıyorum. Kendi evimden de atacak değiller, ya?

Conclusion

In this final chapter I will summarize the argument of my thesis findings, the limitations of my

thesis, and its contributions to the literature of gender studies. Throughout my research thesis, I

have tried to figure out the relationship between transgender individuals and their interactions

with the ones who have internalized historically produced and structured gender identity

categories. I have discussed how transgender individuals are perceived through these

heteronormative gender norms. The argument that is central in my research study stems from the

assumption that not only is "imitated masculinity" resilient to imitation but also that any type of

gender imitation is resilient to imitation mainly, because of the internalization and the

embodiment of commonly accepted, constructed and established gender identities that are identifiable and acknowledgeable as individuals interact with one another in daily life. Building from this, I have asked: "Why do gendered embodiments which are not appropriate to the naturalized and essential binary gender system are considered as imitations?" Since my questioning on "imitation" is formed and based around Goffman's and Bourdieu's theoretical framework and studies on embodied practices in everyday life; their theorizations have provided me fundamental resources regarding the relationship between social constructions and individual agency in relation to gendered embodiments and habitus. Both Bourdieu's and Goffman's discussions on how one constructs his/herself and how s/he is formed by social, cultural, class, gender discourses and practices have been very meaningful tools to understand and analyze the relation between individual and social structure.

If a transgender individual embodies the habitus of a man or a woman which does not correspond to his/her biological features, what is the consequence on the habitus? By performing stylized repetition of acts, a transgender individual can demonstrate that the unconscious bodily dispositions of habitus can be consciously accomplished. A transgender individual can also demonstrate through his/her own gender performance that he/she can be masculine/feminine and can exist as a man or a woman without carrying the biological sexual features that are supposed to match with one's gender. Thereby he/she reformulates the originality or naturalness of a gender. By displaying the theatricality of masculinity and femininity, a transgender individual destabilizes the classificatory signifiers established in a heteronormative society. The individuals who conform themselves to the binary gender categories and who are in the co-presence of a transgender individual, then, lose credibility in their own gender identity formation within their strictly structured heteronormative system.

In order to develop an argument on my question above ("Why do gendered embodiments which are not appropriate to the naturalized and essential binary gender system are considered as imitations?") I have, first of all, referred to the archaic background of the notion *mimesis* and its relation to the scholarly held researches and discussions to gender studies. The lived experience of embodiment in the process of cultural and social interaction within the construction of gender has constituted the main frame of my research study. In relation to the discussions and theorizations on *mimesis,* the social construction and the expression of body in the field of Gender Studies are studied and discussed in detail in my thesis according to the results that I have found out in my conducted interviews.

From what I have observed during the meetings conducted in Pembe Caretta LGBT, transgender women (in the case of my participants only Aylin has involved in the meetings, because Rahşan Abla is not a member of neither any LGBT organizations, nor Pembe Caretta LGBT) does not actively take place within the course of everyday life, since Aylin has always been surrounded by the other members of Pembe Caretta LGBT. And I was also never left alone with her during our interview. Giving the observations, in contrast to Judith Jack Halberstam's question "Why is femininity easily impersonated or performed while masculinity seems resilient to imitation?" I assume that feminine imitations are not that easy to "imitate" in a strictly heteronormative society. This assumption does not underestimate the fact that Ali and Deniz have been facing constraints and problems during their interactions in everyday life. Their gendered embodiments are also questioned by the others, however; I suggest that they are in a less questionable position than Aylin and Rahşan Abla. Drawing from my observations, Ali and Deniz were coming to the meetings and were leaving the building where the meetings were held by themselves and when I introduced myself and my intentions on doing a research on

transgender individuals, I had the opportunity to talk with them, not in the surveillance of the other members. Rahşan Abla wanted to meet me and conduct the interview in the privacy of her own house. I met her via one of my colleagues who lives in Antalya and they have been neighbors since 2008. Aylin was interviewed in the usual café where the Sunday meetings of Pembe Caretta LGBT take place. Ali and Deniz were little more comfortable about their choice of meeting points, although the places they picked were full of their friends and members of Pembe Caretta LGBT.

To sum up, I would like to emphasize that there is no doubt that people have the capability to change the way they walk, talk, dress, and present themselves. They can even get help from or have recourse to professionals or to a personal grooming expertise in their decision to change certain aspects of themselves. But this does not mean that they will respond to the differences they encounter in a positive way. If individuals are willing to go through any change, they have to recognize the fact that the new and replacing dispositions should not be merely temporary methods. They must be durable changes, which, then again, will be internalized in replacement of the previous ones.

Scholarly research discussing the interactions between transgender individuals and those who have internalized heteronormative gender norms is under-represented, although these interactions are important to gender theory. Transgender individuals provide new arguments on theories of gender, and gender performativity. Previous literature has often theorized transgender individuals as gender resistant challengers to both heteronormativity and internalized gender norms. However, I argue that transgender individuals are most commonly perceived as "imitations" of a woman or a man due to the fact that a large number of persons have internalized commonly accepted and established the gender identities that are recognizable and acknowledgable as they

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interact with one another, that is the "strictly" feminine or the "strictly" masculine identity. Despite the studies on theories of gender and gender performativity which point out the fact that the construction of gendered dispositions are majorly achieved according to social norms and social regulations, that the unnaturalness of being a woman or being man, that one's gender does not follow from his/her biology, that the so-called naturalness of sex/gender system is the result of the productivity of the relation between male and female, we still hold onto a set of beliefs that speak to the endurance of socially structured heteronormative gender norms and the identities constructed through the same norms. This endurance suggests how difficult it will be to overcome the structured gender norms and their outcomes.

Potential limitations stem from my interview structure, a small number of interviewees[34] and also due to the fact that the interviews focus on the experiences of the participants, which they might not have wanted to refer to in detail since most are painful ones. Furthermore, all the respondents live and spend their adult life in Antalya. This means that the respondents, for the most part, reflect on the institutionalized gender norms of Antalya and the conditions of their geographically constrained region. Despite these limitations, I do think that my thesis may contribute to the scholarly research on gender and the transgender population. The study of transgender individuals should not be ignored in discussions of gender theory, gender performativity, and doing/undoing/redoing gender. When applied to transgender individuals, it may be argued that they do gender by transitioning and displaying appearances and behaviors which signify their identified-gender. It may also be argued that transgender individuals do/undo/redo gender because the flexibility of their gender and sexuality deconstruct the so-called natural differences between men and women. Rather than confirming both of the

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[34] This also shows that in Antalya transgender individuals do not want to be visible and thus, as in the meetings held in Pembe Caretta LGBT, they do not prefer being part of such LGBT organizational groups.

arguments, transgender individuals simultaneously do/undo/redo gender. Also, in doing and undoing/redoing gender, if the transgender person is out as trans, then others are made aware of his/her self-identified gender rather than following from his/her sex, thus he/she openly challenges traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity. If a transgender person is passing successfully as a man or a woman, he/she will be perceived as his/her self-identified gender; therefore, he/she will be doing gender by confirming the socially accepted embodiments and behaviors for men and women.

Another contribution to the studies based on transgender individuals is that my thesis focused on their self-identification chosen at will. In this study, interviewees were not only asked questions based on their self-identified transgender status, but the purpose of the study was aimed at allowing interviewees to self-identify their interactions with individuals who have accepted the codes of heteronormative gender identities in both their personal and social spheres. Contributing to the studies and researches on transgender individuals, my thesis informs readers of inequalities affecting the transgender population, and also emphasizes the importance of the inclusion of transgender individuals in researches on gender.

Further research might consider the how transgender individuals are affected by structural heteronormativity and whether transgender individuals challenge or reproduce heteronormativity.

Another suggestion is that transgender individuals have the perspective of having experienced heteronormativity and gender inequality as not conforming to heteronormative gender identities. Gender inequality is a long standing issue experienced, to some degree, by all people. Within the expression inequality, there are implications of power and privilege which create a hierarchal

order of gender. This hierarchy positions white, heterosexual man at the top and all others below him, and their positions are dependent on the intersections with gender, sexuality, race, and class.

The experiences of transgender individuals provide new perspectives on issues of gender inequality, performance and resistance. In that perspective, it would be meaningful to pursue this study by taking into consideration the institutions of marriage, family, systems of healthcare and education in order to provide a detailed discussion on the extent that the transgender individuals encounter with heteronormativity within social institutions. In the case of my study, the responses of the persons I have interviewed were relatively limited on the issue on heteronormativity in marriage as compared to the other institutions (education, work and family) discussed. The discussion of heteronormativity within schools and workplaces produce multi-faceted issues for transgender individuals and these multifaceted issues can be more thoroughly explored in a future study addressing transgender individuals, their education and their workplaces.

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