



Queer theory and trans studies are fields of research that extend and radicalize the critique of gender and sexuality norms carried by feminist studies and gay and lesbian studies. They emerged in the 1990s, notably with authors like Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Paul B. Preciado.

Queer theory assumes that gender identities and sexual orientations are not natural data, but social and cultural constructions. It challenges the male/female binary and heteronormativity, that is, the system that presents heterosexuality as the norm and marginalizes other sexualities. For queer theorists, identities are fluid, multiple, and performative. Judith Butler, in her book "Gender Trouble" (1990), develops the concept of gender performativity: gender is not something we are, but something we do, through our gestures, behaviors, and discourses.

Queer theory invites us to deconstruct fixed identity categories (man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual) to think about the plurality and fluidity of identities. It values identities and practices that escape dominant norms, like trans, non-binary, intersex identities, BDSM sexualities, polyamory, etc. It develops a critical approach to normalization processes that marginalize and oppress nonconforming identities.

A key concept of queer theory is heteronormativity, coined by Michael Warner. It refers to the system of norms and institutions that presents heterosexuality as the only legitimate sexuality and organizes society around the heterosexual couple. Heteronormativity permeates all areas of social life: law, medicine, education, media, etc. It produces a hierarchy between sexualities, valuing heterosexuality and stigmatizing other orientations.

Trans studies, for their part, focus on the experiences and identities of transgender and non-

binary people. They analyze the processes of gender transition, whether they are medical (hormone therapy, surgery) or social (change of first name, pronoun, clothing style). They show that the gender assigned at birth does not necessarily determine a person's gender identity. Authors like Sandy Stone or Susan Stryker criticize the medical view that presents transidentity as a "disorder" or "dysphoria" to be corrected. They defend the right of trans people to self-determine and to be recognized in their gender identity.

Trans studies denounce cisnormativity, the system that considers cisgender people (whose gender identity corresponds to the sex assigned at birth) as the norm, and trans people as an exception or anomaly. They show how trans people are discriminated against and marginalized in all areas of social life, and how they develop strategies for resistance and survival.

A central issue of trans studies is the depsychiatrization of trans identities. Until 2018, transidentity was classified as a mental disorder in the International Classification of Diseases of the WHO. Trans activists claim the end of this pathologization, which stigmatizes them and subjects them to medical control. They advocate a non-pathologizing and non-binary approach to gender, which recognizes the diversity of identities and transition paths.

Queer theory and trans studies have a strong political impact. They have contributed to the visibility and recognition of LGBTQ+ identities, presenting them not as deviances or pathologies, but as legitimate variations of identity and desire. They have inspired many activist movements, like the queer movement or the trans movement, which fight against discrimination and for equal rights. They have also influenced the practices of supporting LGBTQ+ people, promoting a non-pathologizing approach, respectful of the diversity of identities and paths.

In summary, queer theory and trans studies provide essential conceptual and critical tools to deconstruct gender and sexuality norms, and to think about the plurality of LGBTQ+ identities. They invite us to adopt a reflexive and committed posture in supporting LGBTQ+ people, being careful not to reproduce heteronormative and cisnormative biases, and valuing self-determination and diversity of paths. Their approach is indispensable for developing inclusive and emancipatory support practices.

Key Points:

- Queer theory and trans studies extend and radicalize the critique of gender and sexuality norms carried by feminist studies and gay and lesbian studies.
- They assume that gender identities and sexual orientations are social and cultural constructions, not natural data.

- Queer theory challenges the male/female binary and heteronormativity. It conceptualizes gender as performative (Judith Butler) and identities as fluid and multiple.
- Heteronormativity refers to the system that presents heterosexuality as the norm and organizes society around the heterosexual couple
- Trans studies focus on the experiences of transgender and non-binary people. They defend their right to self-determination and denounce the cisnormativity that discriminates against them.
- A central issue is the depathologization and depsychiatrization of trans identities, long considered mental disorders.
- These theories have a strong political impact and have contributed to the visibility and recognition of LGBTQ+ identities. They inspire activist movements and inclusive, non-pathologizing support practices.