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**GENDER PERFORMATIVITY OF THE PROTAGONIST IN LUCY
STEED'S *THE ARTIST***

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Abstract

This research focuses on The Artist (2025) by Lucy Steed as a modern literary text that interrogates fixed ideas of gender. The main objective of the study is to explore how gender roles are constructed, performed, and resisted within the novel, particularly through the protagonist Ettie. To achieve this, the study adopts Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity as its theoretical lens, which argues that gender is not an innate quality but something continuously produced through repeated actions, language, and social interaction. Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative textual analysis approach, closely examining selected passages from the novel to interpret patterns of dialogue, behavior, and character interaction that reveal underlying gender norms. The analysis is centered on how Ettie's language, social relationships, and subtle acts of resistance either conform to or challenge dominant expectations of femininity and masculinity, allowing the study to trace how gender is enacted rather than inherently possessed. The findings reveal that Ettie simultaneously conforms to and resists traditional gender roles, often performing conscious and unconscious acts of defiance, thereby exposing the instability of gender categories. The novel ultimately highlights the tension between societal expectations and individual identity formation. In conclusion, the study affirms Butler's argument that gender is a performative act constructed through repetition and social conditioning, that The Artist contributes significantly to contemporary literary debates on identity by revealing how gender norms are maintained and contested. For future research, it is recommended that The Artist be further analyzed through alternative theoretical frameworks such as psychoanalytic criticism, postcolonial theory, and Marxist criticism in order to gain a more layered understanding of identity, power structures, and social influence within the text.

Keywords: Identity Construction, Gender Identity, Self representation, Gender Performativity

1.0 Introduction:

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity is presented in *Gender Trouble* (1990), a work that marks a transformation in feminist and queer theory. In this theory, Butler argued that gender is entirely based on performance within social constraints rather than something one is (Butler, 1990).

Furthermore, Butler's theory explains that the repetition of gender codes is not a matter of individuals' choice but something people are compelled to do because of powerful social expectations. Through this ongoing compulsion, gender performances accumulate and begin to look natural, giving the impression that "man" or "woman" is an inherent truth rather than a socially produced effect. This perspective directly opposes essentialist ideas, by showing instead that gender identity emerges as the consequence of repeated social acts rather than their origin (Kakoliris, 2025).

Likely, Butler's theory of gender performativity explains that gender is not neutral or an identity; it is created by humans repeating the same acts, gestures, and behaviors using specific language for humans like "male" and "female." Butler emphasizes that the sexes are shaped by powerful structures and norms, especially heteronormativity; it makes a form of gender expression that will be acceptable or neglected. And specifically allow some people that they can do or express their ideas socially, and some have to express their ideas privately to the dominant humankind. (Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993).

Similarly, Butler's theory is being extended into new fields, i.e., AI, while also facing criticism. Hafner, Valdivia, and Rocher (2025) demonstrate that gender performativity is not confined to human interactions but also operates in technological systems such as artificial intelligence. As highlighted in the journal *Hypatia*

(2022), some trans and queer scholars caution that focusing too much on performativity risks undermining the lived and felt authenticity of gender identity, as it might be read to imply that gender is only an external performance rather than an embodied reality. Together, these applications and critiques show both the enduring relevance of Butler's ideas and the need to engage them critically in evolving social and technological contexts. This study explores how ideas about being a woman are shaped and lived in a rural community in northern Ghana. Using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, it shows that gender is not something we are simply born with but something we continuously "perform" through daily actions, speech, and social roles. This reflects Butler's idea that gender is created and limited by the repeated use of language and behavior in society. However, the study also points out that Butler's theory, which comes from Western contexts, doesn't fully explain everything happening in rural African society. So, while the theory of gender performativity helps us understand how gender is made through actions, we must also pay attention to cultural and local differences. This research helps "translate" Western gender theories into an African setting, showing how global ideas about gender can be rethought through local lived experiences (Entwistle, 2013).

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To identify and examine the protagonist's sense of self under the patriarchal trait in Steed's *The Artist* through the lens of Butler's gender performativity.
2. To explore the ways through which art and creativity becomes tool of female resistance and self-expression.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender performativity was introduced by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990), where she argues that gender is not an innate or stable identity but is constructed through repeated social performances shaped by regulatory norms and cultural expectations (Butler, 1990). Rather than viewing gender as something people naturally are, Butler conceptualizes it as something people continuously do, through repeated acts, behaviors, and discourses that create the illusion of a stable identity. This theoretical position has significantly influenced feminist and queer studies by shifting attention from fixed identity categories to the processes through which identity is produced and maintained. However, when compared with broader socio-historical analyses, such as Kettering's study of early modern society, Butler's abstract theory benefits from contextual grounding. Kettering (2014) shows that gender roles operated within a wider system of class hierarchy, religion, and political authority, where women, although constrained by patriarchy, still exercised limited forms of influence within family and economic life. This comparison highlights that while Butler explains *how* gender is constructed, historical studies like Kettering explain where and under what social conditions these constructions operate.

The scholars Ullah, Ahmed, and Tariq (2025) argue that literary characters challenge and negotiate gender norms through their everyday actions and interactions, showing how gender is not a fixed identity but something socially produced and performed. However, while their study highlights the constructed nature of gender identities, it remains largely descriptive and does not deeply engage in comparative analysis with other theoretical perspectives or broader feminist debates. Nevertheless, their work contributes to the understanding that literature reflects and critiques social systems in which gender identities are constantly formed, shaped, and contested (Ullah, Ahmed, & Tariq, 2025).

In addition, Khalid (2025) examines Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello* through Butler's theory of gender performativity, focusing on Lady Macbeth and Desdemona. The study highlights how Lady Macbeth performs masculinity through ambition, authority, and manipulation, thereby challenging traditional patriarchal definitions of femininity. In contrast, Desdemona's femininity is constructed through silence, loyalty, and obedience, reflecting dominant patriarchal expectations. Compared to previous studies, Khalid provides a more comparative character-based analysis by contrasting two different modes of feminine performance within Shakespeare's tragedies. However, the study could further deepen its critical synthesis by linking these performances to broader socio-historical constructions of gender in Elizabethan society. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Shakespeare presents gender as performative and socially regulated rather than natural or fixed (Khalid, 2025).

On the other hand the article about *The Artist*, "Reimagining Historical Fiction: Narrative Innovation and Thematic Complexity in Lucy Steeds' *The Artist*" by Thakkar (2025) discusses Steeds' novel within the framework of historical fiction by examining how psychological depth and narrative experimentation expand the boundaries of the genre. Thakkar (2025) highlights the author's use of a non-linear narrative structure,

which prevents the reader from remaining focused on a single linear progression and instead encourages an understanding of identity transformation during wartime France. She also emphasizes that Steeds does not confine the narrative to a single character perspective but instead shifts across multiple viewpoints, allowing a broader representation of social and artistic realities.

Moreover, Thakkar (2025) emphasizes that *The Artist* transcends historical fiction by reflecting on memory, tradition, and cultural continuity, suggesting that the past continues to shape present identity formation. While this interpretation is valuable, it remains broad and does not critically distinguish between individual psychological memory and socially constructed gender roles. Therefore, this study builds upon her argument by focusing specifically on how such historical and cultural influences contribute to the performative construction of Ettie's gender identity.

Additionally, during World War I, the citizens of France supported and provided material resources to their country in ways that were not uniform across all regions. The author further explains that people from different regions of France reacted to the war in different ways, especially those from the southern part of France. Overall, while there was a general sense of national support during the war, this support was uneven and shaped by regional variation. The author examines regional identities, local traditions, and political conditions to analyze how people responded to the war. The study suggests that support for the war effort was strongly influenced by local history and social context rather than being solely directed by state authority. This challenges the assumption of complete national unity during World War I and highlights the political and social diversity within French society at that time (Purseigle, 2023).

Marriott (2018), in *Unity between Friends and Soldiers*, shifts attention from regional political variation to interpersonal relationships among soldiers during wartime. The researcher closely analyzes everyday life in France, including behavior, conversations, and relationships among soldiers, to understand how social unity was constructed at the micro level. The author argues that soldiers, despite coming from different regions and class backgrounds, often developed a sense of brotherhood and collective identity in the war environment. They temporarily set aside class differences, cultural habits, and regional identities, which suggests that war created a unifying social space. However, when read in relation to Purseigle's (2023) argument, this unity appears situational rather than absolute. While Purseigle emphasizes fragmentation at the national and regional level, Marriott highlights temporary solidarity at the interpersonal level. Together, these studies reveal a tension between fragmentation and unity, suggesting that French wartime identity was both divided and cohesive depending on the level of analysis. The article therefore contributes to understanding how social relationships and collective identities were reconstructed under wartime conditions rather than simply reflecting individual soldier experiences (Marriott, 2018).

3.0 Research Methodology

This research employs an analytical design in qualitative research, which focuses on a feminist interpretation of Steed's *The Artist*. The research design is descriptive. It investigates and explores how specific things are produced in biological and natural ways. The main character, Ettie, challenges ideas through her actions. The study investigates the artistic manifestation to show how she performed her gender identification and navigated societal conventions.

3.1 Theoretical framework

The whole text of the novel *The Artist* would be analyzed with the help of Butler's theory of Gender Performativity, to expose the female suppression, resistance, self-assertion, identity, and gender creation in French society during WWI.

Butler argues that genders are human, not men or women; they are being separated by calling one man and the others women and giving them different roles in society. Saying that men talk louder than women, behave differently, and dress differently are all aspects of gender performativity. By repeating time and again the same act by a specific gender, it becomes fixed naturally and is given the name of social expectations and conventions (Meherlyoff, 2015). A perfect example is the Ettie character in the novel *The Artist* by Lucy Steed. Ettie's behavior shows the way she speaks, and the work she has done is an example of gender performativity. According to Butler's theory, Ettie builds her separate identity as a woman and as an artist; through artistry, she creates and negotiates her identity rather than being confined and restricted by social and patriarchal terminologies.

Though this research uses the theory of gender performativity of Butler and feminist literary theory to show the protagonist Ettie's role in *The Artist*. By exploring her character, she rejected all stereotypes of society and the tradition set for women, and she creatively developed her own identity. This can help us to challenge and disclose the gender stereotypes and the patriarchal mindset through literature. As stated by Judith Butler (1990) in her theory of gender performativity, she changed the idea that gender is something that is fixed and a natural identity. She argues that it is constructed by society, societal actions, behavior, and performances. She explained the idea in her theory that their gender performativity is constructed by society and traditional norms, and it is not a natural and biological process.

Additionally, Butler argues that gender is not a biological process but is formed by repeated action, behavior, and speech, making it a performance rather than a fixed identity. In literary theory, the gender performativity theory is very useful to examine how characters resist and act against traditional gender norms and societal norms. The other theories, like feminist literary criticism, also follow the same pattern, explaining prescribed roles and power dynamics. Gear theory also applies it to explore subversive gender expressions and non-binary expressions, and the post-structuralist approach also uses it to highlight how gender identities are not procedures but are formed by seeing characters' actions and dialogues as performative. Researchers can get how literature reflects destabilized social expectations of gender (Khalid, 2025; Butler, 1993).

Mambrol (2016), in her thesis, quoted the quotation of Butler about misunderstanding about gender performativity: "The misapprehension about gender performativity is this: that gender is a choice, or that gender is a role... as one puts on clothes in the morning." In this quotation, Butler defines a common misunderstanding of gender performativity. She argues that gender is not something a person can choose freely; however, they want to act, speak, or put on a dress as they want in daily life. Instead, in her theory, she refers to the idea that their gender is formed through time and again repeating social expectations and social norms that operate beyond individual choice. She explained that humans are born into a world where our gender behavior is already formed and regulated by these social norms like power, pressure, rewards, and punishment. However, gender performances are not a full act; they are habitual and socially enforced, which creates a gender field that is natural and fixed even though it is socially assembled.

Likely, "Gender is not something one is; it is something one does ... a 'doing' rather than a being." In this quote, Butler shows the definition of gender, what it is, and what society has made from it. Butler argues just gender is not fixed for people when they are born but is something that is formed from everyday actions and behaviors. However, Butler presents the idea of gender performativity as something one does, showing that gender comes into existence through the repetition of acts such as the way people speak, work, dress, and gesture. Argues that these actions are not the present location of pre-existing gender identity, but they create the appearance of a stable gender identity over time. She argues your gender is not natural or biological; it is something that social norms and culture have made by defining some as masculine and others as feminine (*Gender Trouble*, 1990).

4.0 Data Analysis

The Artist by Lucy Steeds is a novel that shows the complexity of identity, power, and creativity within society, which is formed by the strong and stale rules about gender and their role in society. *The Artist* is about society, in which men and women are treated differently; it is specifically about which gender has the quality to become an artist and should be respected in society. It highlights that being a man or a woman is not something humans are born with. Instead, these qualities and identities are given to them by society and are formed by the repeated action of specific actions, gestures, and behaviors that people must follow every day. By showing characters who follow, navigate, and sometimes resist gender norms. The author exposed the performative nature of gender as theorized by Judith Butler.

Butler's concept of gender performativity, when applied to the text, reveals how femininity is constructed through repeated acts of service and care. Ettie's consistent preparation of the studio, such as laying out brushes, organizing paints, and cleaning the workspace that represents a form of invisible labor that sustains artistic production while remaining unacknowledged as creative work. From this perspective, gender is not an inherent or natural quality but is produced through daily performances that normalize certain roles and hierarchies. In this way, Ettie's supportive labor becomes positioned as secondary yet essential to Tata's artistic authority (Butler, 2011).

The text illustrates this dynamic in the following passage:

Tata has everything he needs before he knows he needs it. She lays out his brushes. She sweeps the dust that creeps in under the door.... priming the studio each day for the master to work (p. 28).

Through Butler's theoretical lens, this passage demonstrates how social roles are continuously produced and maintained through routine actions. Tata's control over the timing of sketching and the organization of the studio reflects a performance of masculinity rooted in authority, decision-making, and command over creative space. His actions appear naturalized, as if his artistic authority exists prior to any effort, reinforcing the perception of inherent mastery.

In contrast, Ettie's presence is constructed as almost automatic and invisible, as though she is expected to exist within the space without recognition of her agency. Her role is not framed as a choice but as a predetermined function within the creative environment. This contrast highlights how power is embedded in everyday routines rather than explicitly stated.

Furthermore, Ettie's repeated engagement in tasks such as cleaning brushes, handling paint rags, and organizing aprons reflects how domestic and supportive labor has historically been associated with femininity. These actions are not merely practical; they carry ideological meaning by reinforcing gendered divisions of labor. Even when Ettie closely observes the palette and silently studies the artwork, her position remains that of a facilitator rather than a creator. She is permitted proximity to artistic production but is denied full participation in it.

However, Najam (2022) illustrates that gender performativity exposes how masculinity is constructed and performed within society, where emphasis is placed not on invisible labor or collaborative effort but on the visible figure of authority who is publicly recognized. According to this perspective, society tends to acknowledge only the surface-level performance of masculinity, while the hidden labor that sustains it remains unrecognized. The person who designed the studio, the worker who made it function, and Ettie, who maintained and supported all activities within the studio, are all neglected by Tata and by the broader social gaze, which demonstrates how gender performativity operates through selective visibility and erasure. This is reflected in the text:

"He has written 'Dispatches from the studio' without mentioning the person who makes the studio turn on its axis. The person who prepares the paint and cleans the brushes, who sets up the canvas and easel, and who sweeps and scrubs and arranges and cleans. Tata can work." (p. 112).

This passage illustrates how recognition is unevenly distributed, where the visible figure (Tata) is credited with productivity, while the repetitive and essential labor of Ettie remains invisible. The text reinforces Butler's concept of gender performativity by showing that identity is not naturally given but produced through repeated acts of labor that are socially interpreted and hierarchically valued. Ettie's repeated actions of preparing paint, arranging the studio, and cleaning brushes represent a form of gendered labor that is associated with care, maintenance, and support, yet these actions are not acknowledged as creative or authoritative work. In contrast, Tata's role is socially constructed as masculine authority because his work is publicly visible and culturally celebrated, even though it depends entirely on the unseen labor that supports it. This creates a clear contrast between male and female-coded roles, where one is associated with recognition and authority while the other is associated with invisibility and service. Ultimately, this reinforces Butler's argument that gender is not a fixed identity but an ongoing performance produced through repeated social actions and reinforced through systems of recognition and exclusion.

From a gender performativity perspective, this passage also marks Ettie's emergence as a figure of resistance who attempts to construct her identity through artistic production rather than passive observation. She begins to assert her presence in the world by producing a painting that parallels Tata's artistic mastery, signaling her desire to challenge the established boundaries of artistic authority. The passage states:

"This painting, she knows, will be different. Just as the feast will be Tata's masterwork, so it will be hers. She always tried to re-enact his... She takes a steadying lungful from her cigarette, then flicks it to the ground. It is time to begin" (pp. 225–226).

This moment is significant because it shows that identity formation is not spontaneous but deliberate, structured through imitation, observation, and repetition of artistic practice. However, this repetition should not be understood as mere copying; rather, it becomes a complex form of negotiation between conformity and resistance. Ettie's imitation of Tata's method through canvas size, angle, and color usage that initially appears

to reinforce his artistic authority, yet it simultaneously exposes that this authority is itself constructed through learnable and repeatable techniques. Butler's theory helps clarify that repetition does not simply reproduce norms but can also destabilize them when re-appropriated. In this sense, artistic genius is revealed not as a natural masculine essence but as a disciplined practice that can be replicated and, therefore, questioned. The symbolic collapse of uniqueness occurs when Ettie's replication challenges the myth of singular male creativity, revealing that what is perceived as originality is actually structured repetition. The emptiness associated with Tata's feast further underscores this critique, as it symbolizes abundance without emotional or relational fulfillment, suggesting that authority itself may be performative rather than substantial.

Ettie's act of preparing her materials and beginning her work after flicking her cigarette signifies a conscious transition into agency. This gesture marks not only the start of her painting but also the beginning of her redefined identity as an artist. Importantly, she does not erase Tata's influence but transforms it into a framework through which she constructs her own artistic legitimacy. In doing so, she converts imitation into a form of resistance, thereby exposing the gendered structure of artistic recognition. Her action raises a critical challenge to gender hierarchy: if artistic mastery can be performed and learned, then it cannot remain exclusively masculine or inherently superior.

From the perspective of gender performativity, Butler argues that meaning is produced through repeated social expectations, as reflected in the idea that "The anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and installed: the anticipation conjures its object" (*Gender Trouble*, 1990). This concept becomes visible when Ettie begins to resist and articulate her actions more consciously, marking a shift from silent compliance to self-awareness. Joseph's questioning of her actions reflects a masculine position of surveillance, where he observes but struggles to fully comprehend her motivations. In contrast, Ettie actively asserts her identity through action and speech:

Ettie paces back and forth a couple of times, then looks up. "I am copying Tata's work," she says. "Making a forgery."

"What do you mean?" He manages to say. "And... why? Why are you doing this?"

Ettie contemplates the paintings for a moment. "To prove... To prove that I'm as good as Tata." (p. 207)

This section of the novel illustrates how gender identity is not fixed but constructed through performance, repetition, and resistance. Ettie's declaration that she is copying Tata's work is not simply imitation but an act of self-assertion aimed at challenging established hierarchies of artistic authority. Her movement beyond domestic and passive roles marks a significant transformation, as she temporarily steps outside the socially assigned position of invisibility and obedience. While Ettie has previously performed femininity through silence and compliance, her deliberate engagement with artistic replication reconfigures her identity into one that expresses competence, ambition, and skill qualities culturally associated with masculinity in her social context.

Joseph's response further exposes how deeply gendered assumptions shape perception. He interprets femininity through restrictive norms that confine women to nurturing and domestic spaces, revealing how such expectations limit recognition of female artistic ability. This demonstrates how identity is regulated through repeated cultural assumptions rather than individual capability. Ettie's act of copying Tata's work is not mere repetition but a destabilizing performance that challenges the hierarchy between them. Butler's theory emphasizes that repetition both reinforces and disrupts norms, and Ettie's actions exemplify this dual function. By engaging in artistic production, she directly questions the assumption that artistic authority belongs exclusively to men, thereby challenging the structural hierarchy embedded in her environment.

From analyzing the text through Judith Butler's lens of gender performativity, this passage illustrates the transformation of Ettie's identity into a more visible and socially acknowledged form. Unlike her earlier condition, where she painted in secrecy and darkness, she now emerges as recognizable and accepted through her artistic expression: "*Everything inside me is on the canvas. My life is in the paint*" (p. 293). This shift is significant because it marks not just a change in activity but a reconfiguration of how her identity is publicly performed and understood within society.

This moment reflects Butler's central idea that identity is not fixed but produced through embodied practices over time. In Ettie's case, her lived experiences about her emotions, struggles, and labor that are no longer confined to private or invisible spaces but are actively translated into her artistic work. The act of painting becomes more than creative expression; it functions as a medium through which she negotiates and

reconstructs her sense of self. The canvas, therefore, operates as a site of both resistance and articulation, where previously imposed limitations begin to lose their authority.

Earlier in her life, Ettie's gender identity was shaped through repetitive structures of domestic labor, subordination, and silence, which reinforced her marginal position. However, the analysis here moves beyond simply restating repetition as a mechanism and instead shows how these same patterns are redirected. Through sustained artistic practice, Ettie transforms repetition from a tool of constraint into a strategy of self-definition. Her engagement with painting is not accidental; it is a deliberate and continuous act that gradually builds an alternative identity grounded in visibility and agency.

Butler's framework helps clarify that repetition does not only reproduce norms, it can also destabilize and rework them when performed differently. Ettie's artistic process demonstrates this shift, as each brushstroke becomes an assertion of presence rather than compliance. Her actions no longer reinforce invisibility but actively challenge it, turning the performance of gender into an act of self-creation. In this sense, her work resists the earlier conditions that defined her and instead produces a new narrative of identity.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, The first major finding of this research is that Ettie's early identity is shaped through the repetition of patriarchal norms. Living under the authority of her uncle Tartuffe, she is expected to embody silence, obedience, modesty, and emotional restraint. These behaviors are not merely personal traits but socially imposed acts that she performs repeatedly. According to Butler's theory, such repetition creates the illusion of a fixed feminine identity. The study finds that Ettie initially internalizes these expectations, perceiving them as natural aspects of her character. However, textual analysis shows that these traits are consistently reinforced by external authority, proving that her identity is socially regulated rather than biologically determined.

The other significant finding is that Ettie experiences a deep internal conflict between her imposed gender role and her creative self. While she outwardly performs submissive femininity, her artistic inclination reveals an alternative identity struggling for expression. The research finds that her artistic impulse destabilizes the rigid gender roles imposed upon her, highlighting the performative and fragile nature of gender identity.

Another key finding of the study is that art functions as a performative act of resistance. Ettie's engagement with creativity is not merely personal expression but a deliberate reperformance of identity. This supports Butler's claim that since gender is constructed through repetition, it can be reconstructed through alternative performances. The findings demonstrate that Ettie gradually shifts from performing patriarchal femininity to performing agency and authorship.

The research further reveals that Ettie's transformation is gradual rather than sudden. Butler emphasizes that identity is continuously produced through repeated acts, and this is evident in Ettie's journey. These disruptions accumulate over time, enabling her to construct a new self-understanding. The findings show that her transformation is not a discovery of an authentic inner self but a reconstitution of identity through altered performance.

Additionally, the study finds that patriarchal power in the novel operates not only through direct control but also through psychological conditioning. However, as Ettie becomes conscious of this conditioning, she begins to resist it. Her awareness marks the beginning of a performative shift toward autonomy.

Finally, the research concludes that Ettie's identity evolves from relational dependency to creative independence. At the start of the narrative, she identifies primarily in relation to the male author, particularly as Tartuffe's niece. By the end, her identity becomes centered on her artistic voice and personal agency. This shift illustrates the fluid and constructed nature of gender identity. Through repeated acts of creative self-expression, Ettie reconstructs herself beyond patriarchal limitations.

In conclusion, the findings of this study confirm that Ettie's gender identity in *The Artist* is performative, socially constructed, and capable of transformation. Through the application of Butler's theory, the research demonstrates that Ettie's journey from silence to self-expression reflects the instability of gender norms and the possibility of resistance through alternative performances. Her artistic voice becomes the central mechanism through which she challenges patriarchal authority and redefines her identity, ultimately transforming from a performer of imposed femininity into an active creator of her own subjectivity.

Future scholars can expand the study by probing other theoretical perspectives in the analysis of *The Artist*. While this research focuses on Butler's theory of gender performativity, future scholars can examine the novel through different theoretical frameworks such as psychoanalytic criticism, post-colonial theory, or

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Marxist criticism. Scholars may also compare the novel *The Artist* with other contemporary novels to explore how female identity and gender roles are represented across different literary works. Furthermore, further studies may investigate themes such as identity, power, and artistic expression in detail to examine the broader cultural and social issues reflected in the novel. Such study would contribute to a larger understanding of gender representation and cultural dynamics in modern literature.

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