

The Magical-Sophistical Delusion: Third-Wave-Feminism and Its Philosophical Roots

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The content of current third-wave feminism differs significantly from that of previous feminist movements, which sought equal human and civil rights for women. In third-wave feminism, gender is primarily understood as a social category that is linguistically constructed. The now classic work *Gender Trouble* (1990) by philosopher Judith Butler is decisive for this “linguistic turn” in the social sciences. However, Butler’s work is systematically based on two philosophical traditions that are already highly controversial in themselves: sophism and existentialism, linked to a pre-modern magical worldview. The following essay is a critique of these lines of tradition, followed by the question of the extent to which they can serve citizens of an enlightened society in naming and constructively addressing actual social grievances.

Keywords: third-wave feminism, emancipation, Judith Butler, sophistry, existentialism

Emancipation Is not the Same as Feminism: A Clarification of Terms

When we talk about third-wave feminism and its philosophical traditions in an academic and, in particular, social sciences context, it is useful to clarify the term in advance, which is rarely done: the fundamental distinction between feminism and emancipation (Haslanger, Tuana, & O’Connor, 2012). While the two terms are often used synonymously in non-academic and colloquial usage, the historical and systematic significance of both in the history of ideas is different and should be briefly explained here in advance for the sake of scientific accuracy. Emancipation (lat. “emancipare”, “e manu capere”—to escape from the hand) originally meant etymologically the liberation of a person from oppression, foreign domination and slavery (Merriam-Webster, 2024). The legal figure complementing the term was historically the pater familias, who in Roman law had almost unlimited power over the lives of family members (Agamben, 1995), but in a figurative sense also the state, which authorised the keeping of slaves. A Roman slave in classical antiquity could “emancipate” himself by buying his freedom, distinguishing himself through special merits or gaining the favour of a high-ranking lord in order to obtain personal rights by leaving slavery, which included self-determination over body, place of residence and occupation, as well as protection from arbitrariness and persecution. Emancipation in the etymological-historical sense fundamentally changed the legal situation for the individual or for the system, which was thus able to free itself from foreign domination. In this respect, it makes sense to speak of the “emancipation of slaves from tyrannical masters” or metaphorically of the “emancipation of the colonies”, as Abraham Lincoln did in his *Emancipation Proclamation* of 1863. Emancipatory movements had long before led historically and sociologically to the American Revolution of

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1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 and pointed far into the future to a worldwide society of free and equal citizens, united on the basis of personal autonomy as free subjects. In terms of legal history, the concept of emancipation is causally linked to the declaration of human and civil rights as well as to the conceptual tension between heteronomy and autonomy, whereby the emancipatory movement is generally to be understood as a gain in autonomy. For Karl Marx, in his essay “On the Jewish Question”, emancipation in this comprehensive sense meant: “equality before the law, regardless of race, identity, religion, property, or other characteristics of individual people” (Marx, 1843, p. 54). Marx did not mention gender as a characteristic that should be disregarded before equal rights are granted, possibly subsumed under “other characteristics”. Typical, however, is the aforementioned field of tension between autonomy vs. heteronomy, with emancipation as a dynamic mover in the direction of the former. In the early phase of the Enlightenment, this field was understood epistemologically, in that the place of emancipation was not only sociologically the individual against the system denying rights, but epistemologically above all the thinking of the individual as a place of liberation from external suggestions. This central idea is prefaced in Immanuel Kant’s central writing “What is Enlightenment?” in which he states: “Enlightenment is the exit from self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own mind without the help of others” (Kant, 1784, p. 481). Enlightenment was initially seen as an emancipation movement that aimed to systematically liberate people from systems of oppression through their own use of reason, later becoming increasingly political.

Emancipation can therefore be equated with a comprehensive liberation movement, which etymologically originally meant the liberation from real slavery and metaphorically stimulated thinking about the conditional relationships between the individual and the state or state and religious institutions for centuries as a legal-sociological change in legal status. Finally, emancipation in an epistemological sense has historically inspired the Enlightenment, together with humanism, as practice to theory, and systemically as the guiding understanding of Western societies (Junge, 2000). In other words, enlightenment is identified with emancipation, emancipation is identified with autonomy, and just as emancipation should promote autonomy, enlightenment should promote emancipation. Systematically, such a society of enlightenment—always a work in progress—should realise itself through equal rights, equal participation of all citizens and strategically through institutional critique and public justification as a space for debate. However, emancipation does not equal feminism and vice versa, and this is where we reach the important definitional boundary that must be crossed in order to categorise a current phenomenon such as third-wave feminism and its philosophical roots.

Third-wave Feminism in Contrast to Previous Feminist Movements

By definition, “feminism” is a legal-sociological movement that aims to achieve equal human and civil rights for women and thus arises ideally from the substrate of the Enlightenment with the demand for the completion of the real state recognition of female human dignity (Brunell & Burkett, 2024). In this respect, emancipation as a liberation movement that fundamentally expands personal rights is also causally and historically fundamental to feminism, but it is not equal to it; rather, feminism is to be understood as a derivation of the generic term emancipation and, in terms of content, as a focus on the rights of a subgroup of civil society conceived as global on the path to enlightenment, namely women (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). The premise here is that women are discriminated against in many ways within social systems that realise patriarchal supremacy and that their liberation has therefore not yet been realised, even *within* enlightened societies (Engels, 1884; Gamble, 2001). However, feminism is not just, in a nutshell, emancipation for women

only, but has a broader understanding of its own goals and purposes depending on time and cultural space. The social rights movement of feminism has historically taken place in three heterogeneous waves, whose developmental history shows the complex context in which current third-wave feminism is embedded.

The first wave of feminism (ca. 1882-1945) in Europe, the USA and Australia, which was symbolised publicly by the protests of the so-called suffragettes, aimed for equal political civil rights for women, access to elections and universities (Rupp, 2011; von Bargen, 2024). Ideally supporting this, although not necessarily, was a socialist-Marxist attitude in many places, which was intended to bring to mind the “forgotten” attribute of gender in Marx’s statement on equal civil rights, for example with Clara Zetkin in Germany. The second wave of feminism (ca. 1945-1990), which was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir’s work *The Second Sex* (1949), wanted to realise full legal and professional equality for women and, in the wake of the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s, raised the slogan that the private sphere was also always political (Schulz, 2002; von Bargen, 2024). Ideally, the second wave thus grasped the systemic connection between the “public citizen” and the “private citizen” and questioned whether legal equality was sufficient to realise an emancipated and thus enlightened society if women still lived at home under the power of their father, husband or male sexual partner. Both the first and second waves of feminism therefore set themselves goals that, despite all the colouring typical of the era and spatial or time-related accents in their implementation, could be identified with the continuation of the historical idea of emancipation to the subgroup of female citizens and, in this respect, politically and sociologically with the realisation of unrestricted human and civil rights for women. This self-localisation and teleology largely corresponded exactly to the enlightened understanding of rights that has been established since the *Declaration of Human Rights*.

By contrast, the third wave of feminism (since the late 1990s), influenced to a large extent by Judith Butler’s work *Gender Trouble* (1990), is already based on the achievements of the two previous waves with regard to the participation of both sexes in the process of enlightened society and postulates the social factor “gender” as a primarily sociological-linguistic construct. Although the third-wave feminist movement still sees itself as an emancipatory protest against “masculine hegemony and heterosexist power” (Butler, 1990, p. 29) and in this respect stands in the classical justification tradition of feminism as such, it questions, as a deviation from the previous waves, the legal figure of the woman herself. Butler claims that female gender as a social construction is no longer stable and that its meaning is “troubled and unfixed” (Butler, 1990, p. 33). In a radical continuation of Friedrich Nietzsche’s statement, expressed in his *On the Genealogy of Morality* in 1887, that there is no reality of the speaker, Butler concludes that there is also no reality of gender except in the speech act itself: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (ibid.). In a discussion of Julia Kristeva’s theses on femininity in patriarchy, Butler goes so far as to claim that binary gender roles are reactionary per se (Kristeva, 1987; Butler, 1990). The addressee of Butler’s transbinary feminism, which can be understood as characterised by the speech act as reality, is consequently no longer primarily the female gender as such (Bublitz, 2010). “Intersectionality” is a key word here, which is intended to denote the fact that a citizen can experience discrimination of various kinds at the same time: not only as a woman, but also as a female person of dark skin colour, homosexual orientation and low socio-economic status (Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 2015; Michailov, 2017). Unnoticed by many, third-wave feminism has shifted political activism towards individual discrimination of the most diverse causality and thus moved away from the former focus on women’s rights as a monolithic subgroup. Historically, Marx’s demand for equal rights “regardless of race, identity, religion,

property” (Marx, 1843) is thus belatedly problematised, but surprisingly, gender is still treated under “other characteristics” (ibid.). Systematically, this movement seems to exhibit self-contradictions, in that femininity is no longer seen as determined, only as *linguistically constructed*, but on the other hand intersectional characteristics are understood as fixed and identitarian. However, this ontological fraction between imaginary non-substantial gender and imaginary substantial other characteristics is not the only problem emerging here.

Philosophical Roots of Third-wave Feminism: Existentialism and Sophistry

The question arises as to what extent 21st century third-wave feminism is in fact a consistent continuation of the historical emancipation idea that underpinned the first two waves of this liberation movement for the purpose of the practical promotion of an enlightened society. This logical-epistemological question is not anti-feminism and does not imply a politically extremist view (Patai, 2003; Kovács, 2017), but merely the permissible doubt as to whether the premises of thought on which neo-feminist¹ images of humanity and society are built are correct at all. What is needed here is a look from the perspective of philosophy at the justificatory traditions of “third-wave” feminism and thus the ideational precursors in Judith Butler’s central work *Gender Trouble*. Butler’s conception of the construction of social gender through language and its constitutive power of attribution could also be criticised personally through an examination of cited authors such as Julia Kristeva, Monique Wittig and Michel Foucault or methodologically through an analysis of the validity of post-structuralist approaches (Bublitz, 2010), but the criticism undertaken here instead pursues a different approach that can reveal previously neglected problems of justification. Above and beyond individual authors and poststructuralism as such, this new approach to neo-feminism shows two philosophical traditions of justification that characterise “Butlerism” in particular and are questionable in themselves: existentialism and sophistry. In the following, these two philosophical traditions of justification will be critically scrutinised to what extent they—taken individually and in combination—are at all suitable for helping to realise the goal of greater autonomy in an enlightened sociological sense.

Not to Be, but to Become: The Human Image of Existentialism

The first justifying tradition of third-wave feminism is existentialism. Existentialism is the philosophical tradition of seeing human existence as a generally indeterminate starting point of a being open to interpretation, which is defined more precisely solely by its own will: man does not “be”, he “becomes” according to his will. Intellectual opposition to existentialism is essentialism, which is deterministic and regards every being as predetermined. Historically, existentialism began its triumphal march with Jean-Paul Sartre’s 1943 essay *Being and Nothingness*, in which he coined central ideas such as that existence precedes essence (Sartre, 1943). In Sartre’s time, human existence as a being that was undirected in its origins and only defined by the will itself in later developments was a protest, above all against theological hardliners, including in philosophy, who wanted to force people into a narrow corset of concepts and definitions. Existentialism turned the history of Western ontology on its head, which since the scholastic Middle Ages had been based on an essentialism that claimed that existence was deterministically predetermined by God and could not be changed by the will of man. Sartre himself understood his existentialism explicitly as a humanism and as a necessary countermovement against

¹ The term “neo-feminism” is used here synonymously with third-wave feminism, although there may be some blurring. The equation is intended to allow for semantic variance while at the same time pointing to the possible break in tradition with the first two feminist waves, which is indicated by the prefix “neo”.

such an omnipotent God who would undermine human freedom (Sartre, 1946, p. 29)². In this, he also fully corresponded to the self-justification of modernity as understood by Hans Blumenberg: modern societies see the human being as an autonomous subject without any religious determination and, from this understanding, give rise to humanism and enlightenment (Blumenberg, 1996). In this respect, existentialism was historically significant as a movement of criticism and awakening in order to emancipate people from metaphysical rather than socio-legal heteronomy. However, in its further development, it became apparent that the moralism implicit in existentialism with its demands and even the dogmatism against which it sought to protest was never overcome.

Third-wave feminism is now systematically reanimating the tradition of existentialism with its primacy of the will to self-definition through language. For the pioneering thinker Judith Butler, it is clear that binary gender roles only emerged as a patriarchal construct and that male and female existences are not biologically essential, but are only configured existentially, more precisely through voluntary speech acts (Butler, 1990, p. 33). According to Butler, people are not defined as men or women, but are made so—and not only, as Sartre claimed, through their own decisions, or as Simone de Beauvoir believed in her dictum “on n’est pas née femme”, through socialisation (de Beauvoir, 1949), but largely through language. This view is a consistent continuation of existentialism in that people can rise above social conditioning as men or women through decisions that are fundamentally *linguistic*. One problem with neo-feminism according to Butler, however, is that existentialism was adopted uncritically, ignoring its shortcomings, which were described by Sartre himself as being a postulatory philosophy (Sartre, 1943). A postulatory philosophy is idealistic-utopian, like Plato’s *Republic*, Thomas More’s *Utopia*, or Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*. Of course, utopias have their place in philosophical-sociological history because they can serve as agent provocateur to creatively rethink the status quo of a society (Bloch, 1918). However, utopian-postulatory philosophies cannot actually contribute to solving current issues or even to formulating current problems, as solution-orientated thinking is based on empiricism and not on demands projected into the future. Utopias are not scientific guides to empirical emancipation, and claims such as that one’s gender is the product of a speech act and only that, systematically fall into a similar category (Lorber, 1999). What Butler and her followers overlook is that while utopian postulates of existentialist genesis are permissible in the history of ideas, they are not a solution to the problem and cannot even suffice for a factual, realistic formulation of the problem.

The Art of Being Right: Sophistry as the Imaginary Creation of Being

The second justification tradition of third-wave feminism is sophistry. In antiquity, “sophistry” originally meant the study of highly esteemed sciences and arts such as arithmetic, geometry and, above all, rhetoric, and a “sophist” was a person who was knowledgeable in these subjects (Vorlaender, 1919). In Plato’s time, the sophists were either public orators or professional itinerant teachers who, for a lot of money, promised to make every citizen’s son—daughters had not been given equal access to education—in Athens eloquent and worldly-wise with their venal lessons in supposed knowledge, as the historian Flavius Philostratus shows

² In fact, Sartre describes in his writing *L’existentialisme est un humanisme* that existentialism does not necessarily have to be atheism (Sartre, 1946). But even if God did exist, this would not change the anthropocentric perspective of morality, since every decision must be made in a human milieu. Sartre’s existentialism is thus enlightened and humanistic, but in an agnostic way it certainly includes Blaise Pascal’s famous wager with God about his possible existence, but limits that no deity would and could ever interfere with human self-responsibility.

(Philostratus & Eunapius, 1921). Sophists had a firm place in the establishment of the young democracy in Athens and thus in a process of political development, because they promised to make every citizen proficient in the art of oratory and thus lay the foundation for public office (Farrar, 1988). In practice, however, they often looked very different from their advertising promises, as many sophists did not attempt to promote political participation and thus indirectly promote an emancipatory idea, but rather only tried to prove themselves right by means of speech tricks, even though they were actually wrong. By its very nature, sophistry thus systematically contradicted the Platonic-Socratic common search for that which is, and replaced it with mere appearance, evoked by words (von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1919). For this reason, Plato wrote the critical and partly parodistic dialogue *Protagoras*, in which a phrase-monger of the same name tries to assert himself against Socrates' technique of searching for truth. Historically, especially in late antiquity, when the profession had evidently degenerated, sophists had a reputation as manipulators, and it is not surprising that sophist discourse was readily adopted for centuries by lawyers and politicians, especially those with extremist views, who were able to learn from the dubious dialectical basis how to refute every opponent with rhetorical tricks. In his 1831 work *Eristic Dialectics* or *The Art of Being Right*, Arthur Schopenhauer, the mastermind of philosophical pessimism, described precisely those sophist rhetorical tricks that enable any unscrupulous person to silence their critics (Schopenhauer, 1831). Language as a means of manipulation used rabulistically even at the expense of truth is a deeply sophistical stratagem. For sophists, language is power, and what is more, the spoken word is something material: what sophists say does not have to be true in a logical sense, but has its own existence through the quasi-magical act of speaking. In extreme cases, a sophist can believe that a set of wheels is actually travelling through his mouth when he pronounces the term "carriage", or a follower of Butler's theories can imagine that he belongs to the opposite sex when he utters this self-definition. This happens with consistency, because for the sophists, according to Michel Foucault, logos was not just a sound wave, not just a word, a suggestive rhetoric, but even, in a super-concrete materialist way, "an event that has taken place once and for all" (Foucault, 1974, p. 186). To say what is, in the sophist understanding, is also the quasi-material construction of reality and the establishment of history through the act of speech itself.

For Butler, language, even more than socialisation for de Beauvoir, is the effective constitutive criterion that determines a being, an identity and, above all, a gender and even defines it in the first place. With reference to Monique Wittig, she formulates language as "another layer of materiality" (Butler, 1990, p. 35). According to Wittig and Butler, a person with a female biology can therefore be a man if he describes himself as such by giving language power over biological empiricism³. With regard to such imaginary, being-generating use of language, the sophists are once again exemplary with their construct of language as an exercise of power over being and as an imprint of materiality. However, this construct is not only an old eristic-dialectical trick, which historically once drove Protagoras to want to be right at all costs in the debate against Socrates, but systematically also a basic idea of the magical world view, which to the present day lives on in interreligious sources (Menninghaus, 1995). Therefore, in addition to the two traditional lines of third-wave feminism, existentialism and sophistry, there is a third occult understanding of being, which feeds both the two aforementioned traditional lines as well as Butlerism as a core idea: magic.

³ Actually, in her work *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler revises the "discursive boundaries of sex" (ibid.) and states that bodies do count in their biological materiality, but not in order to revoke the language magic that is fundamental to her theory, but to emphasise, in another poststructuralist turn, the additional layer of power as the basis of social gender constructions.

The Magic of Language as a Relic of Pre-modern Societies: Butler's Questionable Legacy

The ancient magical idea of the identity of word and signifier, of designation and signified, is similar in the religious traditions of East and West: “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with god, and god was the word”, says the Gospel of John⁴, and a classical Indian wisdom text—the *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad*—owes its name to the fact that its wording must not be spoken in enclosed spaces—its magical effect is said to be so strong that objects in the room supposedly move telekinetically if the words are merely spoken lightly (Deussen, 1980, pp. 534-544). This idea that a word actually causes tangible changes in the physical world is not only an interreligious idea, but also an intercultural basis of magic as it has been practised for thousands of years. In an everyday, profane form, even the popular “cheering” for your favourite team in the sports stadium is part of magic: here the word is not just a phonetic utterance or an expression of sympathy, but an entity in its own right, intended to increase the power of those addressed, to assist them as an invisible but effective agent. The word that becomes flesh, or the word that assists the human will and literally embodies it, is an occult tradition that remains all the more unrecognised the more Western societies separate themselves from magic, only to be all the more subject to its suggestion in everyday contexts (Leiris, 1938; Pfaller, 2008). The form of being autonomously determined by speech acts, as believed in third-wave feminism, in fact serves the old magical-sophistic delusion that words are not only instrumental, as tools, but also ontological-existential, as beings (Wittig, 1980; Butler, 1990). The spoken word is here not only the exercise of power through its inherent meaning, it is, as it were, a reality of its own that confers power, that is itself power, that *is*. Butler's basic idea that gender arises existentially through conscious self-definition, and processually through acts of linguistic magic, is in fact a sophisticated incantation.

Butler's magic of language and the feminism of the third wave thus deliberately use language as a constitutive factor of being: to say what is, is here transformed from an act of truth-seeking objectivity, which from ancient to modern times was based on dialogue and promoted debate, into an act of sophisticated manipulation, existentialist self-determination as subjective or even solipsistic definition or even evocation. Even this turn from open dialogue to apodictic monologue is problematic for democratic processes of emancipation, which in enlightened civilisations always demand a culture of open debate. But the dictum that language not only describes being, and describes it inconsistently, but creates it in the first place (Butler, 1990), is even more problematic than the traditions of existentialism and sophistication suggest. It goes far beyond the tool theories of language as they were once understood by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—concepts are merely instruments for “grasping” reality—and describes a postmodern dilemma: the independent power of language to not only describe reality, but to create it in the first place (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944; Wellmer, 1985). However, this dilemma has merely found more technical forms of expression in the 20th and 21st centuries, particularly through mass media; it was already systematically laid out in the eloquent sophistry of antiquity, and was already detached from essentialist determinisms by Sartre's existentialism. Here, mostly unnoticed by third-wave feminists, a subtle violence through language takes place in that the speaker is existentially fixated on what is said—not so much in order to avoid breaks in argumentation and self-contradictions, but because what is said is seen sophistically as a reality to which one must refer as something that exists (Foucault, 1974). The constitutively understood language that creates

⁴ John 1;1,14 (NKJV).

identity in Butler's sense is thus founded in a radical existentialism as the immanent ground of being, which defines itself in order to then "materialise" its own being purely linguistically in a sophisticated power of the word and, moreover, to transfigure it magically, as it were, in a hypostasis of sophistry. In this way, however, neo-feminism not only ironically creates its own "fetishes" (Butler, 1990, p. 161), but also immunises itself against criticism, because a magically hypostasised construct of being through speech acts is not objective, not even intersubjective, and naturally not very rational, moreover, its apodictic nature cannot be questioned through the very procedures that the Enlightenment requires in terms of process: institutional critique and public justification. Not only is public justification limited by the inherent solipsism of speech acts that generate self-determination, but institutional critique is also weakened, because the external mechanisms of discrimination, which feminists refer to as the "matrix of domination" (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2013, pp. 204-207), are effectively internalised in an egocentric turnaround and annihilated, as it were, by a magical speech act, although they remain sociologically in place.

Reactionary Modernity: Language Magic in the Service of Reaction

The historical-sociological concept of modernity as a continuous development of the Enlightenment and, with it, the political-legal liberation movement of emancipation—and thus also of feminism as a derivative of this generic term—was already strongly questioned decades ago. Universities in particular were criticised as "bastions of anti-modernity", where agenda-programming would be taught instead of critical thinking (Bollenbeck, 1999, p. 293). At the outset, it could be stated that the philosophy of the Enlightenment regarded emancipation as the political arm of its epistemological liberation from intellectual paternalism and thus logically wanted to promote personal-legal autonomy in alliance with the discursive abilities of citizens. Now consider third-wave feminism under this historical reference, Butler's gender theory, with its philosophical traditions of justification, namely existentialism and sophistry, exaggerated by magical thinking, is a deep break with this enlightened self-understanding, a break that is primarily based on the rejection of objectivity. While existentialism rejects an objectivity of being as essentialist, but at the same time absolutely recognises a debt to postulatory utopia (Sartre, 1946), sophistry strategically rejects such objectivity in order to gain power through subjective suggestion, but also to have a material effect in a quasi-magical act of speech, since the logos is considered a fact. Butler's mystification, the magical-sophistic identification of concept and meaning, goes beyond Foucault's sociological discourses based on Nietzsche's "will to power" and removes the public justification of objectivity, allows maximum subjectivity and mystifies real relations of dominance (Poster, 1984; Demirovic, 2008; Schulman, 2024). Without the epistemological prospect of an objective truth, or at least the possibility of one, liberation narratives fall into a crisis of justification between solipsism and reaction. Butlerism in no way leads to more social autonomy, but rather to an apodictic monologue culture that denies the dialectical motive of the Enlightenment with its inherent possibility of finding objective truth (Lobo, 2016). Freeing people from religious determinisms in order to assign them self-determination by means of an act of speech that fixes them—and to expect the world around them to support this solitary act of linguistic magic—while at the same time ignoring factual injustices between the sexes can hardly be a continuation of the philosophical-political idea of autonomy (Landweer, 1994; Lorber, 1999). In Butler's neo-feminist ontology, a pre-modern-magical essentialism of the word apparently comes through the back door, where a postmodern-materialist existentialism stands at the front of the academy.

Conclusions

Third-wave feminism, inspired by Judith Butler's work *Gender Trouble* (1990), with its apodictic postulate of the construction of social gender through speech acts, feeds ideologically on the philosophical traditions of existentialism and sophistry and also apparently borrows from a pre-modern, magical-occult delusion of the word as material reality. Due to these problematic lines of tradition, which deny the possibility of objective truth in a pre- or counter-enlightened way, it is doubtful whether the neo-feminist movement of today has the right to be considered an enlightened construct that still has the same emancipatory-sociological goals that inspired the first two historical waves of feminism.

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