

Abstract

Misgendering as a phenomenon is currently analyzed mainly from the perspective of gender studies, where it is generally considered a hostile and morally contestable practice. The aim of the presented work is the analysis of misgendering from a completely different position – misgendering as an issue of reference. This type of analysis brings novel insights both to the debates in the field of gender studies and to the debates concerning reference as such. As an interpretative framework I am using Récanati's account on mental files; I am using this conceptual base for evaluating whether given reference and/or coreference may be considered (un)successful. In this framework I examine several model situations, where misgendering takes place, and based on this inquiry I propose a two-level typology of the misgendering phenomenon. The first level takes place only at the perceptual level, where the speaker forms singular thoughts about an object she's perceiving. At the second level, which includes interpersonal reference, I distinguish between three types of misgendering – unintentional, considerate intentional, and hostile intentional misgendering. In the text I oppose the conception of misgendering as only a hostile practice, as it is inevitable or even desirable in certain situations from a reference point of view.

Keywords: misgendering, reference, mental files, philosophy of language, modes of presentation, singularism, gender studies, gender, François Récanati, Judith Butler