

# and the spectrum of gender and sexuality

Shaelyn Fritzer  
Arts and Humanities

## introduction

brings 21st century ideas on gender and sexuality to the mainstream, bringing generation z ideals to what's considered high-brow television. It argues that women's ideas on their own gender and sexuality should not center around men and male approval, but rather their own ideas on their gender identity and their sexuality. Womanhood isn't biological and not necessarily completely performative on a sociological level, but rather is what ever it is you want to be. Female sexuality is also presented as something one actively participates and enjoys or also something that is not particularly important, and anything in between.

## : a summary

is a television show on HBO, with the first season airing in 2019 and subsequent special episodes airing in December 2020 and January 2021. It follows a group of teenagers as they navigate their adolescence in the dark and cynical 21st century. Our main character is Rue Bennett (played by Zendaya), who is beginning a new year at school after having suffered a drug overdose and spent the summer in rehab. She meets new girl, Jules, and they form a strong bond as they grapple with addiction, gender identity, manipulation, and emotional issues.

## what is womanhood?

adopts a modified form of Judith Butler's gender performativity theory. It argues that yes, gender is performative (with some level of identity basis) but the performance isn't reliant on society's gender standards, but rather the i

## conclusion

's themes on gender and sexuality aren't new to academics, but to mainstream audiences, this is a game changer. A popular, critically acclaimed show centering around women and showing the importance of not centering their life on men is extremely important to achieving the equality and happiness that women deserve.

## sources

. Created by Sam Levinson. HBO Entertainment. 2019-Present.  
Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Gender & Society*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519-531.