This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

MULTIPLICITY IN IDENTITY:
BEYOND THE METAPHYSICS OF SUBSTANCE

presented by

Crista M. Lebens

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

___Ph.D.___ degree in _Philosophy_

Major professor

Date _October 27, 2000_

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
MAR 18 2002		
JUN 28 2002		
MAY 17 2006 051806		

MULTIPLICITY IN IDENTITY: BEYOND THE METAPHYSICS OF SUBSTANCE

By

Crista M. Lebens

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Philosophy

2000

ABSTRACT

MULTIPLICITY IN IDENTITY: BEYOND THE METAPHYSICS OF SUBSTANCE

By

Crista M. Lebens

Any theory incorporating 'identity' as a central concept must respond to the criticisms of identity posed by postmodernists. For feminist theorists, the most complete articulation of such criticisms has been developed by Judith Butler. Butler focuses on gender identity at the level of subjectivity, how the individual is constructed as a gendered being. The conception of subjectivity Butler criticizes is one that legitimates the social order by masking the power dynamics involved in the construction of subjects.

In this dissertation, I argue that the construction of subjectivity developed by María Lugones engages the criticisms of identity raised by Judith Butler. Furthermore, mestiza, or multiplicitous subjectivity, on Lugones' account, can be the basis for political action. To illustrate this, I analyze the construction of gender identity and racial identity. Finally, I show that mestiza subjectivity as a ground for politics, provides a means for constructing a sustained coalitional identity politics.

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Patricia Lebens
and to the memory of my father, Nic Lebens Jr, and Terri Jewell

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Introduction

In the fall of 1995, a woman whom I am honored to have called 'friend' took a gun and shot herself in the head. She was a well-known Black lesbian poet who once wrote, 'racism is killing me.' I believe it did. I believe that what contributed to her pain was the simultaneously precarious and wearisome phenomenon of having no 'home.' She was without a 'home' among lesbians, among Black folks, and perhaps among poets. As a white lesbian, I regret that the community in which I found a place could not offer the same support that 'home' could have given to her. Despite the resultant isolation, it was important to her to claim all of these identities: Black, Lesbian, Poet. The problem was that she could not bring all of herself, her multiple identities, to any of these communities. Each community asked her, in some way, to leave behind those identities that did not "fit." The racism, sexism, and homophobia that led to her death are, at least in part, a result of the ways in which we understand our identities. A concept of identity that allows for connection between different social identities would help to alleviate fragmentation and isolation. Philosophy can help us to imagine new possibilities for thinking about identity, and to challenge the dynamics of exclusion experienced by many, including my friend. It is my hope that new concepts of identity can provide a basis for a kind of identity politics that is inclusive of multiple identities.

In this dissertation I adopt a construction of identity that accounts for multiplicity in order to develop a new form of identity politics. I argue that any identity politics must be coalitional in order to be truly liberatory. María Lugones develops a theory of

subjectivity, mestiza subjectivity, that I use as the basis of a coalitional identity politics. My contribution in this dissertation is to defend that concept of identity against political and philosophical criticisms, and to defend a viable account of coalitional identity politics[1] that ought to be embraced by marginalized groups as well as privileged groups. I am interested in constructing a philosophical understanding of identity politics, an account that addresses the construction of identities at the social and individual levels. The philosophical issues in this politics concern the construction of social identities around axes of oppression based on race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. The purpose of this project is to displace those concepts of identity, and the group power dynamics intertwined with that concept of identity, that foster the relations of domination and exclusion that killed my friend.

The term 'identity politics' conjures up many images: people "identifying as" members of a group, separatist groups splitting off from mainstream political activity, and a politics grounded in identities that have been made socially significant and stigmatized by society. Some theorists characterize identity politics as a process of identifying with a particular marginalized group where 'identification with' means both recognizing one's self as a member of that group and taking up a political agenda articulated by that group. For example, a woman can understand herself to be female without taking up an explicit woman-identified politics. Upon identifying as a woman in a political sense, she may act on that identity politics by engaging in actions such as lobbying for reproductive rights or working to maintain separatist spaces. She may also

---

[1] This is a modification of the term 'coalitional identity' which I first encountered in the work of JeeYeun Lee, "Beyond Bean Counting" in *Listen Up! Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*, edited by Barbara Findlen, Seattle: Seal Press, 1995.

rethink what it means to be a woman, and how that meaning ought to displace current norms. Identity politics, especially in the latter sense of shaping meaning, names a process of cultural formation. Those who claim an identity as a member of a marginalized group are in the process of self-definition, individually and collectively, usually in contrast to having a definition imposed by others outside the group. For those who contest the norms of group definition, the statement 'I am a _____' is replaced with the question, 'what does it mean that I am a _____?' This process of self-definition is often empowering to those involved in making new meaning. I believe that self-definition is an important aspect of identity politics. However, critics of identity politics have pointed out, identity politics can be practiced in such a way as to set up and maintain dynamics of exclusion. Some claim an identity but are marginalized within that group, e.g., women of color marginalized as women and as persons of color. Others, for whom the identity is not political at all are also marginalized when it comes to self-definition or setting a political agenda. For marginalized persons, then, identity politics instantiates a set of norms to which one must conform in order to claim that identity. Marginalized members of the group may be excluded by the hegemony that dictates cultural practices such as dress, music, leisure or political activities, choice of sexual partners or sexual practices, etc. On this view, identity politics as a cultural practice serves to empower those who can make central their own views, but marginalizes those who don't accept the newly established norms. This criticism of identity politics centers on the power dynamics that foster domination within a group. While I recognize that this dynamic exists and is harmful, identity politics so construed is not the form of identity politics I endorse.

3

Another concept of identity politics, which I do not hold, comes from those who see it as the cause of the breakup of the New Left movement of the 1960s and more recently the fragmentation of the Democratic party. The 1960s witnessed the peak of the Civil Rights movement and the outgrowth of the anti-war movement and liberation movements for marginalized groups: Chicana/Latinos, Native Americans, Black power, women, lesbians and gay men. The New Left did not accommodate the demands of these marginalized groups. Consequently, each group pursued its own agenda. The perception of many associated with the New Left was (and is) that the identity politics of these liberation movements is responsible for fragmenting and weakening the New Left, and has prevented a unified response to the rise of right wing fundamentalism. This view of identity politics places the blame for the dissolution of the left on those who, at one time sought to be represented by it. Though the issue of responding to a right-wing coalition is crucial, this is not the line of thought I will to pursue, nor do I concur with the criticism of identity politics that marginalized groups pursuing their own agenda were responsible for the downfall of the New Left.

Two notions of 'politics' broadly construed have been introduced above, first, a cultural politics, including claims about what counts as 'political,' and second, a more standard notion of politics as activity in the public sphere, including but not limited to participation in the electoral process. I wish to argue for a conception of politics that speaks to the demarcation of what counts as political.

'Politics' conventionally understood includes actions taken to effect change in the public sphere. Advocating for or against changes in policy or laws: signing a petition, forming coalitions, marching, boycotting, or demonstrating to voice opinion; all are

political activities and all take place in the public sphere. Many of these actions center around electoral politics, but politics is not limited to these actions.

Furthermore, what counts as political is not limited to action around issues in the public sphere. Actions and circumstances that are private and seemingly individual can be political. The division of labor within the home, a "private" matter, is a political issue insofar as the definition of 'work' usually excludes work done in the home without compensation--typically work done by women. Those who wish to broaden the scope of the political, myself included, argue that actions which support and are supported by power relations are political acts.

Another way to understand this concept of 'political' is in contrast to a liberal individualist conception of politics. On the latter view, individuals are equal before the law. Any unequal treatment can be remedied in the public sphere by changes in the law. What this view does not take into account is the structural inequalities that regulate the exercise of power. For example, discrimination might be addressed by affirmative action policies. Such policies are a legislative response to a structural inequality. What this response does not and cannot account for is the ways in which the dominant construction of white women and all persons of color serves to undermine the force of legislation. The following example demonstrates that a narrow definition of what counts as political excludes an understanding of those power dynamics which undermine the effectiveness of political action.

Affirmative action policies are designed to counteract systemic discrimination which would otherwise keep people of color and white women out of jobs. The fact that these folks have benefited from affirmative action is used as evidence to argue that, since they wouldn't otherwise have gotten the job, they must not be qualified for the job. (This criticism ignores the fact that the purpose of affirmative action is to get people hired who, though they were qualified, would not otherwise have been hired.) Furthermore, anyone

who is a member of a group that is eligible to benefit from affirmative action is automatically suspected of being unqualified. The result is that we have laws that make discrimination illegal, we have policies in place to remedy the effects of past and present discrimination, but we see the effect twisted around to once again benefit those who wish to maintain the status quo. Affirmative action is stigmatized, and anti-discrimination laws can be used to support the charge of "reverse discrimination."

To understand how such policies are undermined, we need a concept of politics that includes an account of these power dynamics. A liberal individualist conception of politics does not provide such an account. Thus, we need an expanded definition of politics.

It is also important to clarify the concepts of identity at work in the term 'identity politics.' There are two levels of identity at work in my analysis: identity at the group level, or collective identity; and identity at the individual level, or subjectivity.[2] The former is most commonly associated with identity politics. As a member of a collective, one has a sense of place, of who one is in relation to others.

The understanding that a collective has of itself *as* a collective is partly determined by society and partly by the members of the group. These two understandings often conflict when the group contests the value placed on it by the dominant culture. For example, one struggle social groups may engage in is that of developing an identity that acknowledges the humanity of their members. In doing so, practitioners of identity politics reaffirm their own agency. Yet the process of self-

---

[2] One sense that will not be used in this project is identity in the logical sense, referring to a relation between two entities expressed in the proposition, 'A is identical with B'. Nor will I address the question of the persistence of personal identity over time.

definition by social groups can also serve to exclude some members. When those who hold the power to shape the group self-concept do so in ways that emphasize the sameness of the members, then differences between the members are erased, and some members are excluded or marginalized. This dynamic of exclusion leads to some of the problems with identity politics that will be discussed in this project.

The other concept of identity that is intrinsic to identity politics is that of individual subjectivity. How does one understand one's self in relation to others? How is one constituted by one's community and by cultural discourses? Two important concepts intrinsic to subjectivity are adopted here. First, the subject is constituted by, and is located in a social context. This concept stands in contrast to the concept of an individual in the Enlightenment sense, where the individual exists prior to the group to which it belongs. The situated subject does not pre-exist society and is not outside of a historical context. Second, the subject is complex in two significant ways. First, there are many social identities, acknowledged or not, which construct one's subjectivity. Second, the subject is not transparent to itself, but is driven in part by unconscious motivations. The subject is not a substance, a Cartesian thinking thing, the content of whose thoughts are transparent to itself.

It is important to connect this concept of subjectivity to the concept of identity at the collective level. One recognizes one's own subjectivity by recognizing one's membership in a social group. Collective identities are the categories in which we are placed or in which we place ourselves. The lived experience of these collective identities shapes our subjectivities. We may share a common identity, but our choices as

individuals to live out our placement in a discursive construction differ from person to person.

We cannot have only one of these levels of identity. Theories of subjectivity that account for the formation of the self as, e.g., gendered, without accounting for the larger collective structure of gender leave out the context in which one knows one's self. Theories that focus on the collective without accounting for individual subjectivity risk negating differences among members of the collective. Theories of collective identity that leave subjectivity unanalyzed may import an Enlightenment concept of self as substance.

Along with including complex, multilayered notions of identity, the construct of identity politics I develop must be coalitional. An identity politics that is largely focused on a single identity is problematic and should be rejected. To focus on one identity, 'lesbian' for example, is to exercise hegemonic power in ways that replicate power relations between, e.g., heterosexuals and lesbians. First there is a definition or concept of 'lesbian' that is implicitly understood to be the measure of what a lesbian is. Because 'lesbian' is the only salient identity recognized, other salient marginalized identities are erased. So the working-class lesbian, the lesbian of color, and, some would argue, the sex-radical lesbian are all marginalized as lesbians. To put this another way, if a politics revolves solely around one's identity as a lesbian, then one's other identities are not included.

To further complicate the matter, this dynamic works in other social groups as well, so that the lesbian of color, e.g., a Latina lesbian, works in solidarity with Latinas and Latinos who may not acknowledge their own heterosexual privilege, thus erasing her

lesbian identity. (Or they may knowingly assert their heterosexual privilege in order to suppress expression of her lesbian identity.) Both communities, lesbian and Latina, may believe that inclusion of the "other" community's interests is a watering-down of their own political power. Thus, the lesbian of color is marginalized in both (already marginalized) groups.

The construct of identity politics I am developing requires a political agenda that comes from one's social identities as positions where one can claim agency. The meaning of 'politics' is expanded in ways that break down the public/private dichotomy. Identity is understood collectively and individually as multiple. One can make salient many identities in this politics. This identity politics fosters coalition that comes from a theory of subjectivity that recognizes the self as multiple, thus acknowledging the various ways in which one is privileged as well as the ways in which one is marginalized. Thus this politics can integrate gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and other socially salient differences, and can lead to connection and coalition.

Using this construct of identity politics, one can also account for the co-optation of identity politics by such right wing groups as the Christian Identity movement and white supremacist groups. Such groups lack an account of their own privilege, and thus focus on a single aspect of what they perceive to be oppression on the basis of their beliefs. A macroscopic analysis would reveal that the barrier they wish to point to does not, in fact, work structurally to constitute oppression, though individuals may suffer for their beliefs. [3]

---

[3] Frye, Marilyn. "Oppression," from *Politics of Reality*, by Marilyn Frye. Crossing Press, 1983, pp. 4-7.

Why do we need a philosophical account of identity politics? We need an account of such an identity politics in order to conceptualize a way to register rather than dissolve distinctions between social groups, and to form coalitions among social groups. It is important to acknowledge that social groups: races, sexualities, genders, classes, do in fact exist. The alternative is a "melting pot" politics aimed at assimilation. This account of identity politics can help to create a space where we can acknowledge multiple identities, both in ourselves and in others.

I take seriously the message that my friend sent with her death. The issues surrounding identity are philosophical, political, and deeply personal. We can create a transformational politics that acknowledges identities and social groups and does not support fragmentation, personal or political.

The theories of individual identity or subjectivity that will be in use in this project demonstrate that individuals have multiple salient social identities. That multiplicity must be reflected at the macroscopic level by forming a coalitional identity politics. In order to avoid single-issue politics, a politics that excluded my friend even as she lived it, identity politics must be coalitional. Multiplicity in identity forms the basis for coalition.

A Brief Overview of the Dissertation

In chapter one I address criticisms raised against identity politics, moving from the political to the philosophical. I dismiss the criticisms of biological determinism. I agree that we must not let identity politics become reduced to single-issue politics, or worse, become devoid of political analysis and activity altogether. Furthermore, I take seriously the criticism that we replicate exclusion when we rely on identities.

In chapter two I take up the issue of identity and exclusion at the philosophical level. Philosophical criticisms of identity at the individual level draw on Judith Butler's concept of gender identity formation, of bodies that are sexed. I consider criticisms of Butler that highlight her reliance on language as a totalizing system, and the underdetermination of subjectivity respectively. These criticisms show the limits of Butler's arguments.

Chapter three turns to a consideration of the construction of racial identities, centering on Lucius Outlaw's argument for the importance of an anti-racist concept of race. Outlaw argues (in contrast to Appiah and Zack) that race has an identifiable biological component. This is an account that could be useful to identity politics insofar as it provides a construction of racial identity that affirms the existence of race. While I agree with his argument that we need to assert the importance of the concept of race, I am concerned that the evidence he uses will lead him into a problematic concept of race. His reliance on a biological element to race is not necessarily essentialist, but it is misleading and unuseful. Furthermore, there is a tension between a desire to preserve social groups and a desire to rely on universal principles. This commitment to liberal individualism undermines the effectiveness of his politics.

In chapter four I articulate María Lugones' theory of mestiza subjectivity and show how it responds to the criticisms brought against Butler. I focus here on the construction of subjectivity within what Lugones calls the logic of purity and Butler (following Derrida) calls the metaphysics of substance. Lugones' system is preferable to Butler's because Lugones does not take language to be the ubiquitous and totalizing force governing all discursive constructions that Butler takes it to be. Finally, I consider an

objection to Lugones's model raised by Sue Campbell, namely that the 'world-traveling' model is not useful to those who mostly inhabit dominator identities. Campbell rightly points out the problems that may occur when privileged persons discover their own 'mestiza subjectivity.' However, Lugones accounts for this problem in her theory by directing privileged persons to examine their identities as dominators.

I conclude my analysis in chapter five where I show how Lugones's concept of identity works at the individual and collective level. Then I explain how mestiza subjectivity leads to a coalitional politics.

The complete analysis will prove that Lugones' concept of multiplicitous identity meets the criticisms, developed by Judith Butler and others, of the concept of identity. Furthermore, multiplicitous identity can be the basis of a sustainable identity politics.

Chapter One: Identity Politics and the Retreat to Idealism

Identity politics has been used by marginalized groups as a tool to fight against their own oppression. Despite its effectiveness in empowering members of these groups, it has been criticized and discounted by those who do not recognize the project of constructing an identity as a political project, and by those who consider organizing around identity to be exclusionary. "Identity" can refer to a collective social group, e.g., 'identity as' a Black woman, as a lesbian, or it can refer to one's individual identities, i.e., how those collective identities come together to make up one's subjectivity. Identity politics takes up the concept of identity at the group level. The 'identity' in question is that of a subordinated group whose members collectively forge an oppositional identity that contests the construction placed on them by dominant groups. The construction they resist is one that maintains their subordinated status. The construction articulated by the group itself promotes a vision of the members as agents acting on their own behalf and capable of struggle against oppression with the hope of overcoming it. In this respect, identity politics is *political*, in that it promotes empowerment through community building and self-definition. Theorists who make use of either level of identity, group identity or subjectivity, have been criticized for conceptualizing identity as an entity that is fixed, or unchanging over time, and unitary, meaning it is not internally multiple or divided. Such a concept of identity draws on the notion of the liberal individual, taken to be outside of and pre-existing culture, a concept that need not be invoked by an identity politics.

I understand identity politics in this sense to be one kind of liberatory activity directed to effect social change. Identity politics can take a variety of forms, such as

seeking recognition and representation as a group in the public sphere, and seeking to undermine and overthrow institutions that maintain systems of oppression. "Politics," in the sense I find most helpful includes an analysis of power dynamics, and aims at transforming social institutions. A politics of individual representation cannot account for power dynamics that support exploitation and oppression; such a politics treats individuals as equals before the law without regard to axes of oppression such as race, class, sexuality, and gender. As such, a politics of individual representation forecloses. any analysis of oppression, thus limiting its potential for progressive change.

Identity Politics in a Liberal Society

Any politics organized around identity can appear to be special interest politics within a liberal framework. I have given reasons for why one might reject a liberal political framework, but, for those who work within a liberal context, it is possible to meet this criticism within the context of liberal individualist politics.

Linda Nicholson takes up this question in the context of examining the increasing role that 'feelings' play in political decisions. Especially since the 1950s and 1960s, people more often ask the question, 'how do I feel about it?' rather than, or in addition to 'what is the right action?' According to Nicholson, the extent to which feelings influence politics has led to criticisms by political conservatives and liberals alike:

> ... even political liberals frequently attack such a view of [feeling-motivated] decision making, which they often associate with identity politics. The argument here is that these political movements rely too heavily on group-specific feelings and too little on rational consideration of the common good (Nicholson, 146).

On this view, feelings, like interests, represent a subjective dimension outside the bounds

of rationality. To include feelings in decision-making, in the eyes of critics, is to include

an element of irrationality.

Nicholson disagrees. She cites instances where the inclusion of emotion has led

to progressive change. One important example comes out of the social justice

movements of the New Left. In addition to an analysis of oppression in political and

economic terms, the growing emphasis on self-analysis led to consideration of the impact

of oppression on the psyche (Nicholson, 158). This move led to charges that such

movements focused only on their own interests:

> According to the white, male, leftist story of what supposedly went wrong
> in the 1960s, the civil rights and women's movement became too focused
> on group-specific issues and too little focused on the problems humans
> share (Nicholson, 158).

Nicholson points out that the "therapeutic turn," the inclusion of emotions in the

reasoning process led to an uncovering of various forms of oppression. Because these

types of oppression were group-specific, they were largely discounted by white male

leftists. These theories of oppression posed a direct challenge to the assumption of

common interests:

> Prevailing notions of "what humans have in common" tend often to be
> insufficient in addressing social injustice simply because prevailing
> notions of "commonality" often assume unjust social patterns (Nicholson,
> 158).

"Shared" norms often benefit the privileged at the expense of the marginalized. Thus,

the emphasis on a common human good only reinforces oppressive social patterns. For

example, women claimed in the 1960s that housework is necessary labor that deserves

compensation. Men who dismissed this claim as too narrow to fit the notion of a

common good were in fact maintaining a system of oppression from which they benefited.

Though Nicholson supports the inclusion of 'feelings' in public reasoning, she cites instances where such inclusion is detrimental. One example is the claim by some members of marginalized social groups that one must be a member of that group, e.g., must have that experience, in order to understand what it is like to be a member of that group. Nicholson criticizes this claim for relying on a reified notion of identity. She joins the call for more fluidity in defining identities (Nicholson, 159). In keeping with this move, she supports the articulation of a 'coalition politics' that includes an understanding of identities as contingent and fluid (Nicholson, 160). She does not, in this essay, develop her understanding of 'contingent.' It remains to be seen where and what kind of boundaries are drawn to mark off identities. I wish to develop the potential articulated by Nicholson in terms of a reformulated identity politics.

Though identity politics has the potential to produce an agenda for liberatory social change, it has not actualized that potential in recent years. The focus has shifted from identities of groups in coalition to single-issue politics, and from collective action to personal expression. But, I believe that identity politics can be repoliticized, especially by forming coalitions.

In this chapter I will look at a selective history of identity politics and its critics, beginning with the Combahee River Collective statement, dated 1977, as the first feminist articulation of an identity politics. I will consider the criticism of the collective raised by Patricia Hill Collins, more than a decade later. Jenny Bourne (1987) criticizes the project of building a Jewish feminist identity. Her piece is significant in that she

concludes that identity politics is not political. Diana Fuss argues for the importance of an analysis of personal identity as the basis for collective identity. The development of these criticisms leads to the topic of the next chapter, which is Judith Butler's critique of identity.

The Combahee River Collective

The Combahee River Collective was a Boston-based Black feminist group formed in 1974. Combahee members took their name from, ". . . the guerrilla action conceptualized and led by Harriet Tubman on June 2, 1863, in the Port Royal region of South Carolina. This action freed more than 750 slaves and is the only military campaign in American history planned and led by a woman" (Smith, 272). Their statement, known as the Combahee River Collective Statement, constituted a ground-breaking articulation of identity politics--a politics located in their identity as Black women, as feminists, and for many, as lesbians. The ten page document is dated April 1977, and has been repeatedly cited in many discussions of Black feminism and of identity politics. The statement covers four major topics: (1) the genesis of contemporary Black feminism; (2) the scope of their politics; (3) the problems in organizing Black feminists; and (4) Black feminist issues and practices (Smith, 272). Karen Kahn, editor of a 1995 collection of essays from the feminist periodical *Sojourner*, comments on the influence of the Combahee River Collective:

> Combahee's influence was strong. In the mid 1970's, Black women, particularly Black lesbian feminists, were the first to challenge the narrowness of the feminist agenda (as represented by both mainstream and radical feminist groups) and the exclusionary nature of the "women's community," (Kahn, 6).

17

In keeping with the radical position marked out by numerous lesbians within the women's movement, Combahee criticized the white, middle-class, heterosexual emphasis of the movement. The very formation of the collective was a response to the racism of the women's movement and the sexism of the Black liberation movement:

> It was our experience and disillusionment within these liberation movements, as well as experience on the periphery of the white male left, that led to the need to develop a politics that was anti-racist, unlike those of white women, and anti-sexist, unlike those of Black and white men (Smith, 273).

Their multi-issue approach to politics laid the groundwork for further criticisms of essentialist notions of race and gender. From the beginning, Combahee members understood the importance of recognizing multiple identities. (The concept of multiple identities cannot be accommodated by essentialist notions of identity that take identity to be unitary--i.e., one is a woman, and that is the essential characteristic making up the self.) As Black women they had pressing issues that white women could ignore or categorize as something other than women's issues. Combahee members could not afford a conception of *woman* or women's issues that segregated their identities as women from their identities as Black persons.

The effects of racism could not be ignored in 1979 when 12 Black women were murdered in Boston. In response, Combahee members produced a pamphlet in Spanish and English articulating the connections between sexual and racial violence and economic exploitation. Barbara Smith writes, in 1984, of the pamphlet and the coalition built around responses to the murders:

> It was the first published, tangible thing that came out about the murders that people could use. It was the first thing that did not dismiss the murders or imply that these women deserved to die because "they might have been prostitutes or runaways."

We printed 2000 of the pamphlets at first, and they were gone almost immediately. (Even some of you who were involved in that work may not know that at least 30,000 were distributed by the time we were finished: we kept going back to the printer.) The pamphlet was originally printed in both English and Spanish because we assumed, as Black feminists, that our concern was not just with Afro-American, English-speaking people, or with people who could read English. We wanted every woman to feel some kind of solidarity and some kind of protection. And there were many other activities around the murders besides the pamphlet; it was a coalition. I saw people sitting together in rooms who I didn't think would ever have anything to do with each other, although I'm not saying that there weren't whispers and looks behind people's backs-- for example, a lot of the people who showed up for the work were, of course, lesbians, white lesbians. There was an interesting mix . . . (Kahn, 25-26).

Combahee also produced cultural events:

In October 1978, the collective members joined with other women in the Boston community to sponsor "The Varied Voices of Black Women," in which West Coast musicians Mary Watkins, Gwen Avery, and Linda Tillery and poet Pat Parker demonstrated that white lesbians were not the only ones creating a new women's culture. Though the concert was first and foremost a celebration of Black lesbian feminist identity and culture, it was also an attempt to broaden the white feminist community's understanding of feminist and lesbian identity (Kahn, 7).

Though Combahee members invoked a common lesbian identity at the event, they celebrated difference as well. This was a lesbian event produced on Black lesbians' terms, *and* an opportunity for connection across races among lesbians. Nevertheless, the fact that some white women found these performers threatening demonstrates the ongoing need to address racism in the lesbian community. The Collective maintained the claim that the work of eliminating racism in the women's movement is white women's work, echoing the Black Nationalist movement and the later work of Malcolm X. They continued the call for accountability on this issue (Smith, 281).

Combahee members grounded their political analysis in their own identities. They looked to the material conditions of their own lives and developed a politics that addressed the complexity of their subjectivities and group identities. Starting from this point enabled the collective to connect identity and theory, and shape a political agenda that worked for them as whole persons. This strategy was actually a kind of sustained coalition politics. Instead of a temporary coalition around a single issue, Combahee members created an ongoing coalition that recognized and addressed multiple axes of oppression. Barbara Smith, a member of the collective, writes of Combahee:

> The concept of the simultaneity of oppression is still the crux of a Black feminist understanding of political reality . . . It has also altered the women's movement as a whole. As a result of Third World feminist organizing, the women's movement now takes much more seriously the necessity for a multi-issued strategy for changing women's oppression. . . A commitment to principled coalitions, based not upon expediency, but upon our actual need for each other is a second major contribution of Black feminist struggle (Smith, xxxii-xxxiii).

Both the members of the collective and those outside the collective recognized Combahee's desire to foster, not division and exclusion, but understanding of and acceptance across differences. Certainly the publication of the statement shaped subsequent feminist analysis to address multiple axes of oppression.

It is important to consider the historical context in which this statement of identity politics was formed. The politics came out of a need to respond to specific dynamics of racism by white women, sexism by Black men, and the homophobia in the Black community. Since this time, identity politics has moved far beyond the intent of this statement. Some of the criticisms of identity politics are aimed at these later developments, yet purport to be about the Combahee River Collective.

Patricia Hill Collins

Criticisms of identity politics often center around charges of essentialism or biological determinism. Biological determinism is the view that one's social location, and hence one's political needs, are determined by some aspect of one's make-up considered to be "biological," therefore they are deterministically caused and unchangeable. Thus if one has second class status, it is because of one's race and/or sex construed as biological givens. Or, one may attribute characteristics to persons presuming a biological basis. Biological determinism does not recognize the influence of culture and socialization on the development of such traits, to whatever extent they may actually be fairly typical traits within some group of people.

Biological determinism is a form of essentialism. One's physical nature is taken to be an essence, the core truth of what one is that remains unchanging, and determines a great deal of one's character, talents, style, and developmental possibilities. This form of essentialism assumes a unitary self that is ontologically prior to culture. That is, one's nature is determined by biology and therefore independent from the influence of culture.

In her book entitled *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins includes a brief discussion of the Combahee River Collective. Collins formulates a Black feminist standpoint, trying to negotiate the difficult issue of 'speaking for' vs. 'speaking as' a Black woman, especially a Black feminist. The fact that it matters who we are and for whom we propose to speak indicates the importance of group identities and boundaries. Patricia Hill Collins briefly discusses the Combahee River Collective on this point. Collins acknowledges the importance of the collective, but criticizes their concept of race. Specifically, she maintains that Combahee presents race as an immutable category

rooted in nature. Such a view of race would mask several important aspects of the social category, *viz.*, the historical construction of racial categories, the shifting meaning of race, and the role of politics and ideology in shaping conceptions of the self:

> The term Black feminist has also been used to describe selected African-American women who possess some version of a feminist consciousness . . . . This usage of the term yields the most restrictive notion of who can be a Black feminist. . . . by implying that only African-American women can be Black feminists they [the collective] require a biological prerequisite for race and gender consciousness (Hill Collins, 20).

Collins criticizes their "materialist" position that supposedly asserts, "that being Black and/or female generates certain experiences that automatically determine variants of a Black and/or feminist consciousness. Claims that Black feminist thought is the exclusive province of African-American women, regardless of the experiences and worldview of such women, typify this position," (Hill Collins, 21). Her criticisms of the Combahee Statement can be summed up as follows: (1) Combahee implies that only African-American women are Black feminists; (2) Combahee presents race as an ahistorical category; and (3) Combahee implies that, in virtue of being a member of a particular race or sex, one necessarily has a corresponding political consciousness, therefore *all* African-American women are Black feminists. It is worth noting that Collins does not call the collective biologically determinist with respect to gender, though if they are guilty of it with respect to race they would be guilty of it regarding gender essentialism as well. It would strengthen her analysis to include a brief discussion of gender essentialism.

My Response [Speaking in Relation to, Rather Than on Behalf of Combahee]

As I consider each criticism, I will first look to the text of the statement to discover what support there might be for each. Collins herself does not offer an analysis of the text; her criticism is presented in broad brush strokes. However, in response to Collins, I will be looking more closely at specific passages.

The first criticism that I will address is that Combahee implies that all Black women are Black feminists, since Black feminist consciousness would follow from one's identity as an African-American woman. It is not easy to find anything in the text that supports this claim, but Collins may have thought she saw support for it in the section of the statement entitled, "The Genesis of Contemporary Black Feminism." This section draws on Black feminism that existed prior to the "second wave," and the Collective members seem to name Black women as feminists who perhaps would not have accepted the label. In response to this, I will point out that Combahee does trace a legacy of strong Black women, but they do not name this a feminist legacy. Rather, they look to their foremothers to trace a history of resistance to the combined burdens of racism and sexism:

> There have always been Black women activists--some known, like
> Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frances E. W. Harper, Ida B. Wells
> Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell, and thousands upon thousands
> unknown--who have had a shared awareness of how their sexual identity
> combined with their racial identity to make their whole life situation and
> the focus of their political struggles unique. Contemporary Black
> feminism is the outgrowth of countless generations of personal sacrifice,
> militancy, and work by our mothers and sisters (Smith, 273).

One need not be a self-proclaimed feminist to have resisted one's own oppression as a woman. Combahee recognized that these women struggled against simultaneous

oppressions. They do not claim these women as Black feminists, but as inspirations for their own Black feminism, and they do not say all Black women have this consciousness.

A related criticism names the implication that *only* Black women can be Black feminists. Collins may claim support for this criticism by looking to Combahee's focus on the lives of Black women, and the fact that Combahee identifies Black feminism and its influences with the work of Black women. Combahee may have been making the claim that only Black women can be Black feminists, but this does not commit them to an essentialist notion of identity. For example, the role or "identity" of 'student activist' is one that only students (who are also activists) can claim. Presumably the phrase 'student activism' in campus conversations refers to engagements of/by/originating with members of a certain group of people, namely, students. The phrase carries the suggestion that the activities and values in question are the products of those people's situated responses to situated experiences. The phrase seems to imply that *only* students can be student activists, but this implication seems harmless enough. Faculty members can agree with the student activists' analysis and values, join student rallies in support of their causes, and contribute through dialogue to the development of student activism without themselves being students or student activists.[1] Practically, the question of excluding others from doing Black feminism was otiose--no one else was interested. Combahee chose to focus on their own experience. Collins interprets this focus as exclusionary and biologically determinist. Collins' move from "experience" to "biology" is not supported by the text of the statement. Thus, the charge of biological determinism, upon first reflection, does not hold.

---

[1] Marilyn Frye suggested this analogy in conversation, April, 2000.

Collins offers a more substantive criticism that again points to biological determinism. The criticism runs as follows: Combahee implies that, in virtue of being a member of a particular race or sex, one necessarily has corresponding political consciousness. To support this claim about Combahee, Collins could again look to Combahee's focus on the material conditions of Black women's lives. That focus is deliberate. Yet, it does not imply that living that experience necessarily generates a particular political consciousness. The following passage from the statement explains Combahee's "materialist" position:

> . . . we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practices based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives.

> We have spent a great deal of energy delving into the cultural and experiential nature of our oppression out of necessity because none of these matters has ever been looked at before. No one before has ever examined the multilayered texture of Black women's lives. . . We discovered that all of us, because we were "smart" had also been considered "ugly," i.e., "smart-ugly." "Smart-ugly" crystallized the way in which most of us had been forced to develop our intellects at great cost to our "social" lives. (Smith, 276)

There are two elements to their position: that the material conditions of their lives are shaped by multiple oppressions, and that they chose to theorize about these conditions in order to understand their own experiences. Nevertheless, they do not claim the existence of a consciousness that arises from one's specific experiences. They reject this move specifically in their claim that biological maleness, *per se*, does not lead to men oppressing women. (Smith, 277) They specifically reject the notion of a determined consciousness in the following passage:

> The psychological toll of being a Black woman and the difficulty this presents in reaching political consciousness and doing political work can never be underestimated. (Smith, 277)

It is clear that, on their view, oppressive conditions not only may not generate a political consciousness related to them, the effect of oppression can, in fact, be to block the path to such consciousness. To have a political consciousness in this context is to have an analysis of the political structures that are oppressive to a given social group. A politics articulated from the consciousness of one's identity as a member of an oppressed group is presented in the Combahee Statement as a means by which one can resist oppression. Such a consciousness is an achievement, not a determined or "natural" effect.

Though Collins is off the mark in calling the Collective biologically determinist, she does raise an important question about who may qualify as a Black feminist. In articulating her answer to the question, Collins struggles with the tension between valuing the experience of Black women and recognizing the possible contributions of other theorists. The key to her articulation is the development of a Black feminist standpoint.

Patricia Hill Collins and the Black Women's Standpoint

The Black women's standpoint, as understood by Collins, has two main elements: core themes, and the designation of who can speak as a Black feminist. A standpoint, according to Collins, is the relationship between every day and specialized thought:

> This specialized thought should aim to infuse Black women's experiences and everyday thought with new meaning by rearticulating the

26

interdependence of Black women's experiences and consciousness. (Hill Collins, 32).

The experiences of Black women form a basis of knowledge that can be rearticulated by intellectuals. This rearticulation develops a consciousness, a standpoint, which can stimulate political activism (Hill Collins, 31-32). The rearticulation centers around core themes found in the work of Black Feminists:

1. The legacy of struggle: Survival in two contradictory worlds, one white and privileged, one black and exploited; Struggle against racism and sexism.

2. The interlocking nature of race, gender, and class oppression.

3. A call to replace denigrated images of Black womanhood with self-defined images.

4. A belief in Black women's activism: mothers, teachers, community leaders.

5. Sensitivity to sexual politics. (Hill Collins, 23).

Collins addresses the question of who can speak as a Black feminist. Black feminist thought must make central the experience of Black women: ". . . the primary responsibility for defining one's own reality lies with the people who live that reality, who actually have those experiences." (Hill Collins, 34) Yet, this experience must, first and foremost, be interpreted and rearticulated by Black women intellectuals: ". . . Black women intellectuals are central in the production of Black feminist thought because we alone can create the group autonomy that must precede coalitions with other groups." (Hill Collins, 35) Thus the focus is on the lives of Black women.

Black women's experiences are to be analyzed primarily by Black women intellectuals who rearticulate a Black women's consciousness. Only then, for Collins, can Black women form a standpoint which others may engage in some way:

By advocating, refining, and disseminating Black feminist thought, other groups--such as Black men, white women, white men, and other people of color--further its development. Black women can produce an attenuated version of Black feminist thought separated from other groups. Other groups cannot produce Black feminist thought without African-American women. Such groups can, however, develop self-defined knowledge reflecting their own standpoints. But the full actualization of Black feminist thought requires a collaborative enterprise with Black women at the center of a community based on coalitions among autonomous groups (Hill Collins, 35-36).

The connection to groups that want to engage with Black feminism is vital, according to Collins. As Black women and other groups each develop self-defined standpoints, these groups can collaborate for further development of Black feminist thought and of their own projects. Without Black women, there would be no Black feminism. Yet without other groups, the development of Black feminism would be hindered. It seems that Black feminist theory is still primarily produced by Black women, yet other persons forming standpoints can engage in productive dialogue with Black feminists in ways that further the development of Black feminism. Ironically, Collins recognizes the importance of articulating a Black feminist standpoint, yet criticizes Combahee's work in doing exactly that. It is her view, one I do not share, that Combahee does not interact with other groups. Furthermore, if Collins' use of the term 'Black feminist' demonstrates that the term does not commit her to a biological definition of that group, then nor does the Combahee River Collective's use of that term necessarily indicate a commitment to a biological determinism.

bell hooks offers insight on the question of those who are not Black women engaging Black feminist thought. In *Talking Back,* she discusses the issue of authority in the analysis of Black women's writing. For hooks it is important that the white academic acknowledge and then disavow the racist, institutional structure that constructs her to be

the definitive authority on Black women's writing (or writing by people of color in general). On the other hand, it is equally important that she critically engage the work of women of color. To do otherwise would be to shirk the responsibility she has to bridge the gap between her own experience and that of the woman whose work she studies. Both the engagement and the recognition of limited authority depend upon an understanding of the reader/theorist's social location in relation to the author, and the power relations that perpetuate these differences (Aguilar, 492). An identity politics that is responsive to multiple identities must account for identities in relation to other identities.[2] One must understand the politics of one's own social location.

What we can draw from hooks and Collins is the importance of recognizing the salience of one's identities. Therein lies the similarity between the standpoint of Collins and the identity politics of the Combahee River Collective. In the next section I will bring out more fully the differences between Collins and Combahee.

A Comparison of Patricia Hill Collins and Combahee

Collins distinguishes herself from Combahee by rejecting their materialist radical politics. She justifies this rejection by equating materialist radical feminism with biological determinism in the following way:

> Biologically deterministic criteria for the term *black* and the accompanying assumption that being of African desccent [sic] somehow produces a certain consciousness or perspective are inherent in these definitions [of Black feminism] (Hill Collins, 20).

Combahee's definition of Black feminism, as interpreted by Collins, is both biologically determinist and said to assert that one's race (necessarily) produces a certain

---

[2] María Lugones, Midwest Society for Women in Philosophy, Spring 1994.

29

consciousness. Collins offers no argument for these claims. In the following comment

she suggests a connection between radical feminist thought and biological determinism:

> Feminists are seen as ranging from biologically determined--as is the case
> in radical feminist thought, which argues that only women can be
> feminists--to notions of feminists as individuals who have undergone
> some type of political transformation theoretically achievable by anyone
> (Hill Collins, 20).

According to Collins, one is biologically determinist if one suggests that a particular

consciousness, such as a Black feminist consciousness, is only available to those located

in the corresponding social position, namely, the social position occupied by Black

women. The exclusion of others from such a consciousness qualifies, for Collins, as

biological determinism.

But exclusion is not what constitutes biological determinism. Collins assumes

that limiting a particular political consciousness to a particular social group is equivalent

to the claim that everyone in that social group then possesses that particular

consciousness. [3] For example, the fact that *only* women bear children is not equivalent

to, nor does it imply that *all* women bear children. Collins wants to imply that exclusion

is a kind of determinism. She makes the following claim regarding any materialist

politics:

> A definition of Black feminist thought is needed that avoids the materialist
> position that being Black and/or female generates certain experiences that
> automatically determine variants of a Black or feminist consciousness.
> Claims that Black feminist thought is the exclusive province of African-
> American women, regardless of the experiences and worldview of such
> women, typify this position (Hill Collins, 21).

---

[3] One may wrongly infer from this discussion that I consider 'consciousness' to be a
unitary thing. On the contrary, I assume that there is a multiplicity of 'consciousnesses'
arising from Black women's experiences.

Collins claims that definitions asserting that *only* Black women can be Black feminists are simultaneously asserting that Black women *automatically* have a *Black feminist* consciousness. She offers no justification for this claim. Furthermore, as noted above, Combahee clearly states that a Black feminist consciousness must be struggled for, it is not "automatic."

The distinction that Collins tries to draw between herself and Combahee is the definition of who counts as a Black feminist. Collins is concerned about the problem of exclusion. Either exclusion is a problem in itself, or she avoids it because she (wrongly) equates it with biological determinism. I think both concerns play a role in her reasoning. Certainly no contemporary feminist theorist advocates biological determinism. Nevertheless, Collins' 1990 analysis of this 1977 text reads this focus on Black women as biological determinism. This view contributes to a misreading of identity politics. Beyond that, Collins equates exclusion with separatism--a position she discredits.

To solve the problem of exclusion, one possibility would be to claim that anyone can be a Black feminist, but Collins is reluctant to make that assertion. In fact, she labels such a claim idealist, because such a position completely disregards the role of material conditions in shaping one's consciousness:

> . . . a definition of Black feminist thought must also avoid the idealist
> position that ideas can be evaluated in isolation from the groups that
> create them. Definitions claiming that anyone can produce and develop
> Black feminist thought risk obscuring the special angle of vision that
> Black women bring to the knowledge production process (Hill Collins,
> 21).

Collins maintains that Black women hold a privileged place in the production and development of Black feminist thought. Their role must function in coalition with others

who do not share that 'special angle of vision.' This privileged position is fully developed in the Black women's standpoint, which is centered on Black women's experiences and articulated by Black women intellectuals.

Collins admits of the necessity of the Black women's standpoint to Black feminist thought. There seems to be no significant difference between such a 'standpoint' and the 'Black feminist consciousness' of the Combahee River Collective, except that Collins' standpoint must be mediated by intellectuals. Combahee does not make such a stipulation. At the core, then, the two positions are nearly identical.

The question of who, besides Black women, can be a Black feminist is a viable question for Collins, one to which she devotes a great deal of attention. That question motivates her dispute with Combahee. The larger question, which feminists have been struggling with since the late 1980s, is the question of identity. Many feminists have made the same move as Collins, that of equating a materialist identity politics with biological determinism. Such a move forces these theorists to give up the concept of identity--a concept that we need.

This is one of the major issues for contemporary feminist theory. The issue is framed in terms of identity: who counts as a Black feminist. The question of membership in a given social identity is a question about social construction, in this particular discussion, the construction of race, gender, class, and sexuality. In the words of María Lugones, being a member of a subordinated group can mean one is forced to animate a construction. Lugones writes:

> . . . there may be "worlds" that construct me in ways that I do not even understand or I may not accept the construction as an account of myself, a construction of myself. And yet, I may be *animating* such a construction,

even though I may not intend my moves, gestures, acts in that way (Anzaldua, 397).

Thus, by being read as a given gender and race, for example, we are placed in a construction and our words and actions are given meaning through that construction whether we like it or not. When Combahee refers to the material conditions of Black women's lives, they are referring to conditions that result from inhabiting constructions that are oppressive. A politics that articulates the analysis of this construction opens up possibilities for resistance. Regarding the question of who counts as a Black feminist, we must look at the person's connection to the material conditions of Black women's lives.

The question of whether one must inhabit a construction in order to "have" the knowledge gained from that perspective is the wrong question--one that obscures the issue. We need not ask who can be a Black feminist. The better question is to ask whether or not one who is not an African-American woman can *contribute* to Black feminism. Then the answer becomes a bit clearer: certainly for anyone engaged in Black feminist theory, proper respect for, understanding of, and, as María Lugones following Marilyn Frye maintains, a loving perception of African-American women are all definite prerequisites.

Collins makes a significant contribution to Black feminist theory when she reiterates the importance of centering it on Black women's lives, and the importance of coalitions in developing Black feminist theory. As bell hooks argues, white women and men of all races can make contributions to Black feminist thought, but this work must acknowledge the authority of Black women to speak about their own lives. Recognition of such authority and of the value of coalition can speak to the possibility of formulating

an identity politics that is politically inclusive and that truly recognizes power dynamics that maintain oppression.

Jenny Bourne and the Project of Building a Jewish Feminist Identity

Jenny Bourne is looking at developments in identity politics that took place after the first articulation of identity politics by Combahee. Rather than criticizing its materialism, she condemns identity politics for its lack of a materialist analysis. She criticizes those who would build a Jewish feminist identity politics for retreating to idealism. Later developments in identity politics did move away from the socialist/materialist roots of the Combahee River Collective. For Bourne the movement is toward idealism. I think Bourne's criticism has some merit, but I do not agree with her assessment of identity politics as a political project.

In a 1987 article entitled, "Homelands of the Mind: Jewish Feminism and Identity Politics" Bourne criticizes Jewish feminists for working to construct a uniquely *Jewish* feminist identity. She realizes from personal experience that, from the beginning, Jewish women working in the Women's Movement were often invisible *as Jews*, nevertheless, she is against the identity building meant to counteract this invisibility. Bourne contends, without justification, that such a project implicitly supports the actions of the state of Israel, most specifically the 1981-1982 bombing and invasion of Lebanon and the massacre of thousands of Palestinian refugees[4]. While most feminists

---

[4] "In July, 1981, Israeli jets bombed Beirut (killing 300 and wounding 800 more); on 9 May 1982 Israel strafed the Lebanese coastal villages; on 4 June Israel invaded Lebanon with over 100,000 troops; between 16-18 September [1982,] 2,000 Palestinian men, women, and children were systematically massacred in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

condemned this action, including Jewish feminists, Bourne contends that one cannot engage in the project of building a Jewish identity without supporting, in some way the idea of a Jewish state. And feminists, along with other progressives, cannot ignore the reality of the existing Jewish state. So Jewish feminists, according to Bourne, can only engage in the project of building a specifically Jewish feminist identity if they ignore the reality of Palestinian refugees and Israeli state policy, though such ignoring does not follow from simply favoring the existence of a Jewish state. Hence Bourne's claim that Jewish feminist identity politics is a retreat from addressing the material conditions of women's lives (specifically Palestinian, Lebanese, and other Arab women) and an escape to the idealism of a 'homeland of the mind.'

I reject Bourne's claim that, following the bombings, building a Jewish feminist identity and promoting Jewish visibility within radical movements necessarily implies support of the state of Israel and its policies toward Palestinian, Lebanese, and other Arab people. Even at that historical moment, one could have worked to build Jewish identity and supported the commitment to a Jewish State without either supporting Israel's actions or being out of touch with political realities. Indeed, as the current negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian officials demonstrate, we must be able to envision alternatives to present conditions, or we would never be able to effect political change. While Bourne raises important points regarding the depoliticization of identity politics, Bourne is not successful in showing that identity politics itself is fatally flawed. And she does not show that Jewish feminist identity politics in particular is a retreat to idealism.

The Women's Movement unhesitatingly took the side of their Palestinian sisters. Where did we stand?" (Bourne, 4).

Bourne, as a socialist, is solidly located in a materialist theory of social change that begins with Marx's criticism of Hegel's idealism, especially regarding historical change. Idealism, in brief, is the view that there is no reality independent from some conception of it. A materialist criticism of an idealist theory of historical change would attack the view that changing one's ideas (or the 'ruling ideas', the *zeitgeist*) constitutes political change.

> Marx attacked the position of the Young Hegelians, who sought change through 'mental criticism.' Change will only come about as a result of developments at the level of the mode of production . . . [i.e., capitalism collapsing in on itself in a communist revolution] (West, 50).

For Bourne to call identity politics an idealist project is to declare identity politics politically ineffective. On this view, building identities is a distraction from real political work. Furthermore, in the case of Israeli policy, it is willfully ignoring the fact that people's lives are at stake. This is a serious charge.

The crux of Bourne's argument that identity politics is a form of idealism centers on the claim that Jewish feminists, in building a specifically *Jewish* feminist identity, must, in some way, support a Jewish State, and in asserting the importance of a Jewish state, by implication they support the past and current actions and policies of the state of Israel. For Bourne there seems to be no way to both criticize Israel and support a Jewish state. She claims that Jewish feminists who do not usually align themselves with Zionism ultimately defend the idea of a Jewish state when confronted with arguments against Zionism.[5] After noting that the Jewish feminist group *Di Vilde Chayes* equates

---

[5] Zionists share the position that there should be a Jewish state. How this should be implemented is a matter for discussion. Some Israeli feminists support both a Jewish

anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, Bourne summarizes her argument:

> . . . such feminists are retreating to basic Zionist positions: Jews are
> entitled because of their history of oppression to a homeland, Zionism is a
> strategy for Jewish survival, Israel is the main defense against anti-
> Semitism. To question Israel, therefore, or the ideology that brought it
> into being is to endanger the very existence of the Jews. These feminists
> do not try to defend Israel's domestic or foreign policy (that would,
> indeed, be a hard task for any feminist to do); instead, they shift the terms
> of debate so that Israel ceases to be a material force and becomes a
> metaphor for survival (Bourne, 9).

Bourne claims that a feminist defense of the existence of the state of Israel shifts

attention away from addressing the actual practices of the nation-state to a discussion of

the metaphoric Jewish state disconnected from present politics. She dismisses the

possibility that one can envision other possibilities without denying the political reality of

the situation. This move is a political disengagement, according to Bourne. For her, one

cannot criticize the reality of Israel's practices, yet support the idea of a non-repressive

Jewish state in the hope of one day bringing the idea to fruition.

This position stands in contradiction to her position as a socialist, given the

history of this century. It seems that Bourne can advocate socialism while condemning

the totalitarianism of the former Soviet Union. Jewish feminists should be able to

support the idea of a Jewish state while condemning the policies and practices of Israel.

We must be able to criticize existent conditions while envisioning liberatory possibilities.

For Bourne, the notion of any Jewish state is indefensible given the racist,

imperialist history of Israeli foreign and domestic policy. On her view, given how

differences of race equate with power differences, any state founded on behalf of one

---

state and a Palestinian state. Most if not all Diaspora Jewish feminists do so as well
(Kaye/Kantrowitz & Klepfisz, 245-246, and 254-257 and Felman, iii-iv).

group, e.g., a religious affiliation or a racial affiliation, already sets up patterns of domination. [This distinguishes her criticism of nationalism from her support of socialism; the latter is not an idea that builds in hierarchy or domination.] But the question of nationalism is not unique to to Israel, and Israel should not be held to a higher standard than other nation-states. In this respect, perhaps a religious state is no different from any other, and all are problematic. Nevertheless, it is important to note that identity politics does not necessarily imply support of nationalism. Another consideration in the case of Israel is the issue of US support of Israeli policy. The U.S. has an interest in maintaining an 'influence' in the Middle East. It is impossible to know whether or not, without U.S. backing, Israel would have pursued the same policies in Lebanon. The role of the United States in such conflicts is something all U.S. feminists must consider. (Kaye/Kantrowitz & Klepfisz, 245-246).

What Bourne seems to be criticizing, really, is the support of nationalism implicit in the support of a Jewish state. As such, her position seems justifiable. It may be justifiable to criticize any feminist who supports nationalist goals. Nation-states, of political necessity, must employ aggressive practices to survive, and a Jewish state would incorporate these dynamics. To deny the connection between statehood and aggression is to retreat to idealism, Bourne is right in that regard. But her criticism is not directed towards any nationalist tendencies of Jewish feminists. And it is not consistent to criticize the nationalism of Jewish feminists while supporting the existence of a Palestinian state. Finally, her implicit assertion that a commitment to identity politics is a commitment to the existence of nation-states or nationalist goals is unfounded. Nationalism is not a necessary correlate to an identity politics.

I want to conclude my analysis of Bourne with the discussion of a philosophical question. Bourne interprets the project of Jewish feminist identity politics as a conflation of the political with the metaphysical:

> Politics required us [as Jews] to take a stand on the issue [of Israel], metaphysics allowed us to escape it--but feminism allowed us to conflate the political and the personal, the objective and the subjective, the material and the metaphysical, and escape into Identity Politics (Bourne, 4).

What I understand Bourne to be saying here is that identity politics allows or encourages its subjects to reduce politics to personal issues. If, as Bourne claims, identity politics draws one away from political practices such as, e.g., protesting anti-Semitic attacks, in favor of pursuing liberal political goals such as increasing visibility for mostly white, middle-class Jewish feminists, then such a politics is problematic in that it serves to extend one's privilege rather than change oppressive conditions. The same narrowing of interests can be found in lesbian/bi/gay/transgender agendas that focus exclusively on domestic partner benefits or lifting the ban on gays in the military. These issues may be significant, but do not represent the full range of issues that an identity politics might embrace, nor do they address structural issues, especially since this agenda typically does not include analyses of racism, classism or sexism. Referring specifically to the situation in the l/b/g/t communities, Suzanne Pharr calls this 'single-issue politics.' She recognizes the strength of a politics formed around identity, but stresses the importance of coalitions that extend beyond one's own identity: a multi-issue politics (Pharr, 489). To the extent that some versions of identity politics are reduced to self-aggrandizement, I condemn this phenomenon. It is an exercise of privilege to reduce politics to individual interests, and I join Bourne and Pharr in criticizing this practice.

However, these versions of identity politics do not exemplify the radical, coalitional politics put forth by the Combahee River Collective. I believe identity politics can be coalitional, and to make effective use of the concept of identity, politics must be coalitional.

Furthermore, I disagree with Bourne's assertion that building identity is taking the metaphysical to be material. I do not agree with Bourne that identity-building is solely a 'metaphysical' project, devoid of a material dimension and political value. Building an identity, for Bourne, is a purely idealist project, meaning that one changes one's thinking but there is no change in social reality. While it may be that some who engage in a sort of identity politics withdraw from material politics, and this is justifiably criticized, they do not disengage from politics entirely. The project of building an identity ought to engage with material conditions, and, I would add, must engage in sustained coalition. To do so would help prevent becoming isolated from social realities faced by marginalized people. Those who detach from material politics can do so because they fail to build coalitions that would keep their politics grounded in material conditions, for example, they work to secure class privilege rather than criticizing classism. It is fine to have an agenda that begins with the politics of the personal, but it must be linked to a broader, progressive politics. This point will be addressed at length in chapter 5.

To return to Bourne's central example, Jewish feminists are engaged in such a project. In claiming their Jewish identity, they do not deny the significance of Israeli policy, in fact, they may engage it more deeply. As a Jewish woman who takes her

Jewish identity very seriously, Jyl Lynn Felman is morally compelled to confront the actions of other Jewish people in the name of a Jewish State:

> I am a Jewish lesbian writer in mourning for a people who have lost the integrity of their vision. For the first time in my life, I am without metaphor. But because I am a Jewish lesbian writer, I must bear witness. In their terror my people have lost their minds, but what about their memories? (Felman, iv).

Felman is not retreating to a homeland of the mind, she is engaging with the realities of the victims of Israeli aggression. She is taking on the difficult task of recognizing the political implications of her multiple identities.

Diana Fuss: Complicating the Notion of Identity

Diana Fuss examines Bourne's argument in her analysis of lesbian and gay identity politics. Fuss recognizes the need oppressed groups have for a working concept of identity. At the same time, she argues for an account of identity and of politics that recognizes both as contingent, unstable, changing over time, not unitary. I want to consider Fuss's construction of identity insofar as it could lead to a re-politicization of identity politics. If identities are understood to be multiplicitous and mutable, we may be able to overcome the current tendency of identity politics to become single issue politics, or to become separated from materialist politics altogether.

Fuss begins her analysis of identity politics by asserting that it must include an account of individual identity formation, or subjectivity. This is a significant claim in that Fuss moves from a concept of identity as a group membership phenomenon to identity at the level of the individual.

> What is missing in many of the treatises on lesbian identity is a recognition of the precarious status of identity and a full awareness of the

complicated processes of identity formation, both psychical and social. What is missing is a concentrated focus upon the very terms which constitute an identity politics. . . " (Fuss, 100).

For Fuss, theories of identity must account for subjects within collectives, and do so in a way that responds to criticisms of concepts of the subject as unitary and as pre-existing society, in short, the Enlightenment notion of the individual. Fuss recognizes that some versions of identity politics have relied uncritically on the Enlightenment notion of the individual (unitary, presocial, transparent to itself) and thus were uncritically essentialist (Fuss, 102). In her analysis of the essentialism of lesbian and gay theory she claims that lesbians adhere more closely to some form of essentialism than gay men do. She reasons it is because lesbians occupy a more precarious subject-position than gay men. Thus it is not due to a lack of sophistication on the part of lesbian theorists, Fuss adds, but rather the greater degree of oppression, specifically oppression as women, perhaps as women of color, and as lesbians.

The connection of essentialism to oppression is significant. Fuss argues that to struggle against oppression may require a conception of agency that relies on the concept of the Enlightenment individual, which is a kind of essentialism. Perhaps this is because some feminist theories of agency assume the conception of subjectivity inherent in the notion of the liberal individual. Agency, on this view, presupposes the kind of self-knowledge, self-authorization and "freedom" from social construction that typifies concepts of the liberal individual. In that case, we must either form a justifiable essentialist position or reconceive agency in terms that do not presuppose this form of subjectivity. Both projects have been taken up by feminists in recent work.

If there is a justifiable essentialist position, and at first Fuss seems to believe there

is, then the concept of identity would be a key element in constructing an acceptable kind

of essentialism. Fuss examines concepts of identity and defends her own view. She

believes any account of identity must respond to Derrida's deconstruction of the unitary

subject into identity and non-identity. This is one formulation of the criticism of the

enlightenment individual. For Derrida, the problem is that identity can only be asserted

if one excludes the parts of the self that don't fit that identity. For example, on this

model if one claims an identity as, e.g., a lesbian, that forecloses the possibility of

claiming her identity as a Chicana. Or, in claiming an identity as a lesbian, one might be

measured against some community standard of what a lesbian is or should be, and

exclude the parts of the self that don't fit that standard. Certainly identity politics as

practiced has involved both forms of exclusion.

For Derrida, and for many others, the point is that identity necessarily involves

exclusion. (Chapter two looks at Judith Butler's argument for this claim.) Fuss notes

that one response to the problem of the split subject is to propose multiple identities. So

one would have a racial identity, a gender identity, an identity of sexuality, and so forth.

(This is similar to the model of subjectivity developed by María Lugones which I address

in chapter four.) Fuss claims that this model does not respond to the problem, that the

same issue of exclusion still applies to each of the multiple identities. Fuss proposes

instead a concept of identity as shifting, and unstable. She disputes the view that stable

identities are necessary to ground a politics, and she thinks that politics itself need not be

stable. (It is not clear what concept of politics Fuss disputes here. Politics changes over

time and is not unitary. The agendas are multiple, allowing for and adapting to changing

needs and interests. For example, the various movements within the lesbian/bi/gay/transgender communities, when not reduced to single issues, include Queer Nation proponents, gay marriage advocates, anti-racism and anti-classism work, and coalition building both within the community and with other marginalized groups. It could be that this community has come to embody Fuss's conception of politics.)

The question of whether or not agency exists drops out here in her discussion of politics. She follows Foucault in rejecting the notion of politics as a motor of change. Instead, politics is an *effect* (Fuss, 106). Perhaps Fuss means to say politics is an effect of power relations, rather than the cause of them. In any case, agency, as commonly understood, is not a viable concept in this picture of politics. Fuss begins by suggesting that retaining a concept of agency might be worth risking a kind of essentialism. Near the end of the chapter she criticizes such "political strategy" as a potential tool to discredit anti-essentialism (Fuss, 107). It seems she is not interested in preserving a concept of agency, which I find problematic. The elimination of agency may be connected to her call for a theory of subjectivity in identity construction. This is a serious loss for feminists and others working for liberatory change. Some form of agency should be preserved, though not one dependent upon the Enlightenment concept of the self.

To summarize: I see two useful consequences developing from Fuss's analysis of identity. First, the concept that identities are shifting could offer a way out of the temptation to construe the identity (practices) of the individual, *simpliciter,* as a politics. While a lesbian identity is a politicized identity, I agree with Fuss that simply being a lesbian is not in itself a politics. Shifting concepts of what it means to be a lesbian could

take our focus off our individual actions and instead encourage shaping a broad-based politics that accounts for the variety of lesbian lives. When a variety of experiences "count" in some way as experiences of a particular identity, there is a chance that we may challenge the hegemony of identity. There will not be the defining experience that every member must have in order to claim that identity. On the other hand, a second possible consequence could be that the adoption of an identity that self-consciously shifts continually could once again put the focus on self to the exclusion of the political, especially if one is only focused on pushing boundaries for its own sake. If one continually tracks one's shifting identity as a lesbian, for example, one can become caught up in thinking that simply *being* a lesbian constitutes one's politics. Being a lesbian is a political practice, but one's actions as a lesbian, including, e.g., trips to the laundromat, do not always constitute political actions. Thus it is important to be attentive to the ways in which identities constantly shift without losing track of how these identities connect to larger political issues.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced a selective history of identity politics and criticisms raised against it. The beginnings of identity politics held potential that has not yet been fully achieved. There are criticisms that must be taken into account, but identity politics is not fatally flawed. I believe we can respond to these criticisms and make identity politics a viable political option. Indeed, it is crucial to feminist politics and theory that we do so. We must examine constructions of personal identity and consider models of subjectivity that build in coalition. That is the task of the remainder of this project.

In order to understand how identities can be coalitional, it is necessary to examine theories of identity formation. The following two chapters take up this focus. In chapter two I examine Judith Butler's account of gender identity formation and the challenges she poses to any construction of identity. Chapter three addresses concepts of racial formation, focusing on the work of Lucius Outlaw. Where Butler's criticisms focus largely on the metaphysics of identity, Outlaw focuses more on the politics of identity, though these two aspects overlap for both theorists. It is necessary to examine both the metaphysics and the politics of identity since they are mutually constitutive. Each influences the construction of the other. The interconnectedness of politics and metaphysics in the construction of identity and subjectivity becomes most apparent in the work of María Lugones, to be addressed in chapter four.

Chapter Two: Judith Butler's Theory of Identity Construction

Any theory incorporating 'identity' as a central concept must respond to the criticisms of identity posed by postmodernists. For feminist theorists, the most complete articulation of such criticisms has been developed by Judith Butler. Butler focuses on gender identity at the level of subjectivity, how the individual is constructed as a gendered being. The conception of subjectivity Butler criticizes is one that legitimates the social order by masking the power dynamics involved in the construction of subjects.

Subjectivity within modernity is structured by the metaphysics of substance, sometimes called the metaphysics of presence. On this view, the subject is taken to be a substance. As such, it is fixed and unchanging, unitary, and pre-cultural, or formed prior to being enculturated rather than being a product of culture. Beginning with Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, this concept of subjectivity has been criticized. Each of these three thinkers has shown how the subject is complex rather than unified, and is located in and influenced by a historical context, and so is not a substance.

Butler links this form of subjectivity to representation, both political representation and linguistic representation. Political representation of the modern subject is the representation of an individual who freely consents to be governed by the state. The concept of the modern subject is one in which the individual is taken to be precultural, or ontologically prior to the state. These assumptions about subjectivity mask the forces by which the individual is constructed by the state. Butler, following Foucault, argues that subjects are constructed by discourse, or language, which connects linguistic representation with political representation. Within the discourse, the discursively constructed individual is naturalized, or taken as given. This move

47

legitimates the social order by making the construction of the individual appear to be natural rather than cultural.

In constructing her argument, Butler looks at common theories of character formation from Freud, and Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Riviere who follow him. She takes Freud's theory of character formation to be an account of gender formation. She reconstructs these theories in her analysis of gender formation. She shows that the various processes these theorists take to be gender formation all presuppose the existence of pre-cultural dispositions. The core of her explication of gender identity construction is her argument that gender identities are discursive constructions that rely on naturalized concepts of homosexuality and bisexuality. To say that homosexuality and bisexuality are naturalized is to say they are assumed to be pre-cultural dispositions, that they are shaped by culture, but exist outside of culture. This assumption misses the fact that 'dispositions' are constructed by discourses.

Butler makes the following argument: each of the theorists she considers, Lévi-Strauss, Freud, Lacan and Riviere, rely on dispositions either explicitly or implicitly. By doing so, they reveal, according to Butler, that they do not grasp that these dispositions are not, in fact, natural, but are constructed by the discourse. Their mistake, and their subsequent reliance on dispositions, supports the fiction that masks the constructedness of the dispositions. Butler rejects any theory of subjectivity that posits a pre-cultural substance that is shaped by (and not completely constructed by) culture. She would reject any theory of subjectivity that presupposes the modern subject. Even Lacan and Riviere, on Butler's view, import the modern subject into their theories.

The discursive constructions supporting gender identities that Butler identifies in these theories serve to naturalize the division of bodies into male and female sexes, to associate masculinity with men and femininity with women, and to contrast the acceptability of heterosexuality, acknowledged by Freud *et al.* as a product of culture, with the deviance of homosexuality and bisexuality--both dispositions seen to be unfettered and pre-cultural sexuality. In fact, Butler argues that all three forms of sexuality are discursive constructions, with the former normalized in contrast to the latter two. She claims that the distinction between normalized heterosexuality and 'deviant' homo- and bi- sexuality supports the institution of compulsory heterosexuality.

Butler argues that the use of the term 'woman' as a collective or individual identity reinforces cultural constructions that naturalize sexual dispositions and normalizes heterosexuality. Such constructions support and maintain compulsory heterosexuality. Her argument rests on the Derridean position that categories are constructed only by simultaneous construction of a category that is marginalized. Thus to use the term 'woman' is to both claim an identity that is marginalized and reinforce a system of compulsory heterosexuality that supports such marginalization.

Butler's larger project builds on her arguments regarding the role of dispositions (any construct taken implicitly or explicitly to be natural) in theories of gender identity formation. By revealing the constructedness of all dispositions she reveals their contingency. Discursive constructions, unlike that which is taken to be given, can be contested, either from within the discourse or from outside it:

> If there is a sexual domain that is *excluded* from the Symbolic and can potentially expose the Symbolic as hegemonic rather than totalizing in its reach, it must then be possible to locate this excluded domain either within

or outside that economy and to strategize its intervention in terms of that placement (Butler 1990, 41).

The difference between hegemony and a totalizing system is not clear here, but I take Butler to be saying that a hegemonic system can be displaced, whereas a totalizing system cannot. Showing that discursive constructions are contingent reveals that they are hegemonic, or open to "intervention" or contestation. Such intervention can be located within the Symbolic, the dominant discourse, or outside of it. Irigaray's project, to construct a female symbolic, works outside of dominant discourse. Butler rejects the notion that one can escape the dominant discourse. She works from within, using her theory of gender performativity as a theory of resistance to established gender norms.

The criticism that Butler raises against gender identity as pre-discursive has important implications for feminists. If, as Butler claims, political representation presupposes the modern subject, then Butler's rejection of modern subjectivity holds consequences for feminist politics, namely, her criticism undercuts the basis for politics-- the agency of the subject. (Diana Fuss also raises this point, discussed in my chapter 1.) The situation is further complicated by Butler's claim that there is no escaping representational politics, only a 'critical genealogy of its own practices' (Butler 1990, 5). According to Butler, we cannot escape the subject-producing forces of linguistic representation. Any political activity on behalf of women or other oppressed groups must take place within this network of forces.

It is the latter set of claims that I wish to focus on in my criticism of Butler. While she presents a compelling account of the discursive construction of the gendered subject, her argument presupposes a role for language or discourse that is too

determining. In the final part of this chapter I will look at the effect of this concept of language on the agency of the subject. I contend that Butler conceptualizes language as totalizing and that her view of language is too deterministic. When Butler herself attempts to avoid these problems, she ends up constructing a subject that is underdetermined, which undermines any possible theory of subjectivity. In chapter four I take up a theory of subjectivity that can respond to this problem. In the first and second parts of this chapter, I will focus on her theory of gender identity formation, in which she draws extensively on Lévi-Strauss, Freud, and Lacan.

The Construction of Male Gender Identity, or Masculinity

In her analysis of theories of male gender identity formation, Butler draws on Lévi-Strauss's account of kinship relations and Irigaray's treatment of his assertion that such relations are relations between men only, and are based on the exchange of women. Butler uses these theories to support her claim that the male subjectivity depicted by Lévi-Strauss, heavily influenced by Freud, is based upon a repressed male homosexuality.

For Lévi-Strauss, as for Freud, there is a sexuality that each (wrongly) takes to be natural. This "natural" sexuality is shaped by culture. On Lévi-Strauss's account, this "natural" sexuality is shaped into a nonincestuous heterosexual (male) subject by the taboo on incest. Even though he claims that heterosexuality is a product of culture, Butler's argument demonstrates that Lévi-Strauss must be assuming an incestuous *heterosexuality* as the pre-cultural form of sexuality shaped by such a taboo. In asking the question, "How is incestuous heterosexuality constituted as the ostensibly natural and

51

pre-artificial matrix for desire . . . ?" (Butler 1990, 42), she implies that Lévi-Strauss

offers no justification for such an assumption. She goes on to state this explicitly:

> The naturalization of both heterosexuality and masculine sexual agency
> are discursive constructions nowhere accounted for but everywhere
> assumed within this founding structuralist frame (Butler 1990, 43).

Thus, Lévi-Strauss in his analysis assumes the existence of an unfettered sexuality (his

first mistake, according to Butler) that is in actuality an incestuous heterosexuality,

though he himself does not recognize it as such (his second mistake, according to Butler).

For subjectivity to be constructed solely by the incest taboo, the so-called natural

disposition that is shaped by culture is, in fact, incestuous heterosexuality, not an

"unfettered" sexuality at all. The assertion that the incest taboo is the sole process of

enculturation that shapes subjectivity is a claim that naturalizes heterosexuality. Butler

reveals that he does not justify such an assertion. Furthermore, Butler shows that the

account he gives of enculturation is not based on the incest taboo, but on an

unacknowledged taboo on male homosexuality.

Butler shows that homosexuality (again, not an "unfettered" sexuality) functions

for Lévi-Strauss as an underlying disposition that is shaped by culture into an acceptable

heterosexuality. In doing so she has challenged the assertion by Lévi-Strauss that the

incest taboo is the organizing principle of kinship relations. She asserts that kinship

relations are formed as a result of the taboo on homosexuality rather than the taboo on

incest.

To make the case that, in Lévi-Strauss' theory, kinship systems are constructed

on a repressed male homosexuality, Butler first establishes that, for Lévi-Strauss,

following Freud, the subject, the one who desires, is masculine and heterosexual. For

Freud, desire, the libido, is masculine. Women on this construction feel desire to the extent that they have not fully repressed the masculine in them: "She must find a substitute pleasure in the genitals of her husband and eventually in the having of his child. To this end, the girl's masculinity--that is, her sexuality--must be repressed . . . " (Nye, 123). This theory of female sexuality causes problems for Freud in his later work, since he cannot adequately explain character development in girls (Nye, 122-123). Nevertheless, Lévi-Strauss imports this theory and it's attendant problems into his account of kinship systems where women are objects to be exchanged and men are the exchangers. Men, being subjects and having libido, desire women. Women's desire is not acknowledged as such. Perhaps it is not acknowledged as a desire that initiates the relation of exchange, so it is discounted in Lévi-Strauss's theory. What is obvious is that for Lévi-Strauss, the subject, the one who feels desire, is masculine and heterosexual. Implicit in this claim is that there is no female sexuality. Butler will use both of these points to support her claim that kinship systems are organized around male homosexuality.

The strongest support for her argument is the connection she makes between Lévi-Strauss and Irigaray. Lévi-Strauss describes kinship relations as relations that bind men together. The relation is a kind of Hegelian reciprocity. Significantly, the relation between men and women is not salient on his account, i.e., there is no reciprocity between men and women, nor is there any acknowledged relation between women (Butler 1990, 41). Women are solely the objects of exchange in this system. Here Butler turns to Irigaray's analysis of this relation of reciprocity between men and the position of women in it.

Butler asks, "What relation instates women as the object of exchange . . . ?" (Butler 1990, 40). The answer is the relation of hom(m)osexuality, a repressed sexuality dependent upon the exchange of women (Butler 1990, 40-41). Butler is a bit too sketchy in her argument here.

In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray describes the lack of a *female* homosexual economy and the consequent effect that lack has on women left only to the male economy. Without a female homosexual economy women have only one place:

> . . . a hommo-sexuality in which women will be involved in the process of
> specularizing the phallus, begged to maintain the desire for the same that
> man has, and will ensure at the same time, elsewhere and in
> complementary and contradictory fashion, the perpetuation in the couple
> of the pole of "matter". (Irigaray, 103)

Women's "desire" is directed toward the phallus as the expression of the repressed desire men have for each other. In so doing, women maintain the construction of themselves as object, the excluded pole, the "matter" upon which the subject is constructed. Finally, Irigaray notes that female sexuality is acknowledged only insofar as it is viewed as masculine. Women's homosexuality is attributed to physical or psychical hermaphrodism--i.e., she can only become a lesbian if she resembles a man in some way. Once again desire is constructed as male and heterosexual (Irigaray, 103, note 106).

Margaret Whitford's analysis of Irigaray provides the background for understanding the concept of hom(m)osexuality. She provides an overview of Irigaray's Derridean criticism of metaphysics as a set of binary oppositions:

> Derrida shows that metaphysics is constructed upon a system of
> differences. These differences are not positivities, but positions, *effects* of
> a play of difference which may be called *differance*. One of the two poles
> is always privileged at the expense of the other, the intelligible over the
> sensible, for example, or man over woman. The main point is that

metaphysics is based upon a process of exclusion and hierarchies. The practice of deconstruction then begins by privileging the subordinate term. (Whitford, 126)

Irigaray holds to a deconstructionist concept of metaphysics as a system comprised of hierarchies and exclusions. In relation to the subject, as described above, man is privileged over woman, and, as Butler claims, heterosexual is privileged over homosexual. Irigaray is a deconstructionist insofar as she intends to privilege the once excluded pole. A further investigation reveals the dependency of the privileged pole on the excluded pole. In effect, the "existence" of the masculine depends upon the feminine, specifically the *exclusion* of the feminine.

This assertion of dependence and exclusion is bound up with Irigaray's characterization of western metaphysics as a "metaphysics of the Same" (Whitford, 104). For example, Irigaray's reading of Plato describes the platonic realm of the Forms as the realm of the Same:

> The realm of the Same is the hom(m)osexual economy of men, in which women are simply objects of exchange. . . relations between men are governed by love of the same, love between men is masked, and homosexuality as a *practice* is subject to prohibition. (Whitford, 104).

There is an underlying love between men which is overtly repressed, but covertly expressed through the exchange of women. The ontology of this relation is the structure that recognizes only men as subjects--the metaphysics of the same. Only the privileged pole of the binary, in this case, men, is acknowledged in the metaphysics of the Same.

To summarize Irigaray's position, the homosocial bond between men is a bond that is structured by the metaphysics of the Same, or the symbolic order. Irigaray develops this concept from the deconstructive move of taking apart hierarchical

differences and privileging the previously subordinated pole in order to disrupt the symbolic order. There is difference in this order, but the subordinated half is unacknowledged--hence Irigaray's term, metaphysics of the same. In this respect, the economy of men is mediated by women, but women are unacknowledged. This interpretation fits with Lévi-Strauss's claim that women *carry* identity, but do not *possess* identity (Butler 1990, 39).

The underlying homosexual relations in kinship systems are bound up with reciprocity between men, mentioned above. As Butler points out, men have reciprocity with each other, but not with women. She does not articulate the significance of this claim. I understand this to mean that men have reciprocity with one another only because there is non-reciprocity with women, and because there are no (acknowledged) relations between women. Men can recognize other men as subjects without jeopardizing their own status as subjects. In fact, men *require* such recognition from other men in order to be subjects. But for men to recognize women as subjects would be to call into question the woman's role as signifier of his masculinity. Such recognition would threaten the subjectivity of men, since their subjectivity depends upon the exchange of women. To be able to exchange women is a sign of masculinity, of subjectivity. If the "goods got together," in Irigaray's terms, and were recognized as subjects, they would not signify subjectivity for men. Thus male subjectivity is the only kind of subjectivity there is, on this view, and it depends upon the construction of women as objects of exchange, i.e., depends upon the exclusion of women from subjectivity.

Furthermore, on this view, the female, the feminine, relations between women, and lesbian sexuality cannot be acknowledged in the male economy, since the feminine is

56

not a subject position and desire is constructed as masculine. These positions are inarticulable in a male economy.

Male subjectivity is dependent upon a lack of reciprocity between men and women. The relationship of exchange binds men together through women. A man's desire for men is displaced onto women. His love for another man is prohibited, but can be expressed through the exchange of women, or sublimated into the possession of women, as Butler points out in her discussion of Freud. These dynamics support Butler's claims that, according to Lévi-Strauss, kinship relations rely on an underlying male homosexuality, and that, for Lévi-Strauss, the masculine, heterosexual, desiring subject appears to be natural--pre-discursive, with only the incest taboo as a form of enculturation, but it is in fact a discursive construction.

I find Butler's account to be justified. Lévi-Strauss obviously emphasizes the role men play as subjects, as agents, and as arbiters of the exchange of women. The "lack" that defines women's roles, except in linking men, is also significant. Irigaray's argument that male subjectivity depends upon the lack of women's subjectivity fits with Lévi-Strauss's accounts of kinship, and makes sense of Lévi-Strauss's assumption of heterosexuality.

The Construction of Female Gender Identity, or Femininity

In her analysis of female gender identity, Butler draws on two theories of female sexuality developed by Lacan and Riviere respectively. These theories draw on the Freudian notion of melancholy, a type of ego formation; both use the concept of masquerade, a form of melancholy. Though each theorist rejects the notion of pre-

cultural dispositions in sexual development, Butler argues that each theory relies upon an unanalyzed "primary" sexuality. This conclusion contributes to Butler's overall argument in chapter 2 of *Gender Trouble* that so-called pre-cultural identities are in fact discursive constructions: theoretical entities produced by a discourse and whose constructedness is hidden by the discourse, naturalizing the identity or making it appear to be a given. In this section, I reconstruct Butler's argument that the structure of masquerade, as an account of female identity, in Lacan and Riviere relies on an unacknowledged discursive construction.

Central to the concept of masquerade is the concept of melancholy, a term Freud used in his theory of character development. Melancholia, or melancholy, is an ego formation that results from a series of losses where the lost object or lost Other becomes internalized as a part of the ego. Butler applies this concept to gender identity formation. As identity formation, melancholy is the process of coping with the (symbolic) loss of the parent. The child internalizes that loss by becoming the other in some way, perhaps by taking on characteristics of the loved one. These internalizations become a permanent part of the child's ego (Butler 1990, 58). This process takes place in both male and female identity formation, but the subsequent developments follow different paths. Butler first pursues the development of female identity as an example of melancholy.

Masquerade, an ambiguously used concept, is a form of melancholy. For Lacan, masquerade is an undefined "lack," characteristic of women, that is masked. He uses the concept of masquerade in conjunction with his appropriation of the Freudian Oedipal conflict, especially centering on the symbolic role of the Phallus as signifier of subjectivity. For Lacan the subject comes into being through the process of repressing

pre-individuated desires for the maternal body (Butler 1990, 45). The subject is formed

by excluding the possibility of an incestuous relationship with the mother. Women stand

in place of the maternal body. Thus women, as objects of male desire, serve to define

male identity:

> The masculine subject only *appears* to originate meanings and thereby to
> signify. His seemingly self-grounded autonomy attempts to conceal the
> repression which is both its ground and the perpetual possibility of its own
> ungrounding. But that process of meaning-constitution requires that
> women reflect that masculine power and everywhere reassure that power
> of the reality of its illusory autonomy (Butler 1990, 45).

Only men are subjects, thus men are said to, in a sense, "have" the Phallus, or have the

power of language. Women, as on Lévi-Strauss's account, signify the subjectivity of men

to whom they are attached. Thus, women are said to "be" the Phallus, the signification of

male identity, possessed by men. The apparent lack on the part of women "embodies and

affirms" the Phallus, the subjectivity of men (Butler 1990, 46). The process of

affirmation is called masquerade. Lacan does not specify what is lacking. This lack may

be the absence of the phallus symbolically or physiologically, or it may be a lack born of

the refusal of sexuality. In any case, Butler notes that for Lacan, this "lack" requires

masking and is connected with women's "need for protection," (Butler 1990, 46).

Protection is necessary for one who has no linguistic agency. I think the lack is a

construction of female sexuality as the absence that defines male subjectivity. Female

desire is not repressed, it is refused--its existence denied rather than redirected. The

"absence" of desire parallels the "absence" of female subjectivity.

The role of refusal becomes crucial in the formation of female identity:

. . . the mask is part of an incorporative strategy of melancholy, the taking on of attributes of that object/Other that is lost, where loss is the consequence of a refusal of love (Butler 1990, 48).

Butler notes that Lacan links the mask and the act of refusal to a discussion of female homosexuality. A "founding disappointment" purportedly underlies female homosexuality, according to Lacan. Butler comments on this assertion:

> . . . we can understand this conclusion to be the necessary result of a heterosexualized and masculine observational point of view that takes lesbian sexuality to be a refusal of sexuality *per se*, only because sexuality is presumed to be heterosexual, and the observer, here constructed as the heterosexual male, is clearly being refused (Butler 1990, 49).

Female sexuality is, according to Lacan, a result of refusals, presumably disappointed love. As Butler points out, Lacan reads lesbian sexuality as a consequence of a disappointed heterosexuality only because he presumes that desire is heterosexual. Heterosexual desire could also be the result of a disappointed homosexuality (Butler 1990, 49). Lacan is working on the same assumption as Freud and Lévi-Strauss: desire is heterosexual and male. This assumption has consequences for his theory, namely, such an assumption predetermines his account of the process of gender development.

> Butler summarizes the role of "refusal" in Lacan's theory of female sexuality:

> In a characteristic gliding over pronomial locations, Lacan fails to make clear who refuses whom. As readers, we are meant, however, to understand that this free-floating "refusal" is linked in a significant way to the mask. If every refusal is, finally, a loyalty to some other bond in the present or the past, refusal is simultaneously preservation as well. The mask thus conceals this loss, but preserves (and negates) this loss through its concealment. The mask has a double function which is the double function of melancholy (Butler 1990, 49-50).

The mask works to conceal the loss, but the loss is still preserved. Thus, unacknowledged loss, characterized by Freud as melancholy, is a central characteristic of female sexuality.

The second theory of masquerade Butler analyzes is developed by Joan Riviere in an essay entitled, "Womanliness and Masquerade," published in 1929. Riviere analyzes seemingly heterosexual persons who display characteristics of the opposite sex. On her account, refusal is a result of anxiety. Butler notes, "Femininity is taken on by a woman who 'wishes for masculinity,' but fears the retributive consequences of taking on the public appearance of masculinity," (Butler 1990, 51). The mask of femininity is used for protection from the dangers associated with seeking the privileges of masculinity. With respect to identifying behavior as masculine or feminine, Butler rightly criticizes Riviere's assumption that the observer can "know" the sexuality of the subject:

> This perception or observation not only assumes a correlation among characteristics, desires, and "orientations," but creates that unity through the perceptual act itself (Butler 1990, 50).

Though Riviere's reliance on observation serves to reinforce a taxonomy of sexuality in which a subject must be located, the value of her analysis is her criticism of such constructions. Rather than posit innate dispositions, Riviere argues that sexuality is, ". . . produced through the resolution of conflicts that have as their aim the suppression of anxiety," (Butler 1990, 50-51). Butler pursues the challenge Riviere presents to a theory of sexuality that relies on "tendencies." Riviere's argument supports Butler's contention that these "tendencies" are, in fact, products of culture.

A significant feature of Riviere's theory of sexuality is the absence of sexual desire in lesbian sexuality. ". . . the woman who 'wishes for masculinity' is homosexual

only in terms of sustaining a masculine identification, but not in terms of a sexual

orientation or desire," (Butler 1990, 52). Butler points out the parallel to Lacan in

positing the lesbian as one who refuses sexuality, and suggests an interpretation of this

account:

> . . . the woman in masquerade wishes for masculinity in order to engage in
> public discourse with men and as a man as part of a homoerotic exchange.
> And precisely because that male homoerotic exchange would signify
> [male] castration, she fears . . . retribution . . . ." (Butler 1990, 52)

The woman in question, rather than desiring other women, desires participation in the

male economy, as outlined by Irigaray above. But to do so, especially to do so "as a

man," would threaten other men with their own castration. I understand this to mean that

any woman who does not play the role of signifying male subjectivity is necessarily

denying his subjectivity, or, castrating him. The woman who "acts like a man" is, in

short, a castrating bitch. The lesbian, on this view, does not mask her desire for

participation in the male economy and does not don the trappings of femininity. Of

course this view conflates 'lesbian' with 'butch lesbian' and erases the existence of

femme lesbians.

Riviere claims that the mask is synonymous with womanliness or femininity. On

her account, authentic womanliness *is* a masquerade. Butler cites an interpretation by

Stephen Heath who claims that womanliness as masquerade relies, once again, upon a

concept of desire as masculine and heterosexual. Desire is the prerequisite for

subjectivity. Since desire (on this view) is masculine and heterosexual, desire is always

desire *for women*. Womanliness (or femininity) is taken on as a mask to deny/refuse

masculine desire (for women). Butler responds to Heath's interpretation:

> Femininity [or womanliness] becomes a mask that dominates/resolves a masculine identification, for a masculine identification would, within the presumed heterosexual matrix of desire, produce a desire for a female object, the [woman as] Phallus, hence the donning of femininity as mask may reveal a refusal of female homosexuality and, at the same time, the hyperbolic incorporation of that female Other who is refused--an odd form of protecting that love within the circle of the melancholic and negative narcissism that results from the psychic inculcation of compulsory heterosexuality, (Butler 1990, 53).

Since subjectivity is masculine, desire for subjectivity implies a masculine identification. For a woman to have a masculine identification would mean she desires women. Her masculine identification manifests as desire directed toward other women who can signify her "masculinity". Under compulsory heterosexuality, she is penalized unless she refuses this so-called lesbian desire. The refusal takes the form of donning the mask of femininity, which is both rejection of the desire for women and incorporation into the ego of the Other (the woman) who is lost as a consequence of refusal. She becomes feminine. Thus Riviere's account provides information about that which is masked in masquerade: "lesbian" desire resulting from a desire for subjectivity where subjectivity is construed as a primary masculine identification.

Butler rejects the reliance on any primary disposition (here masculine identification), yet she does not offer a conclusive assessment of Riviere's account. Butler's reconstruction of Riviere's theory highlights useful aspects of the theory, yet a theory dependent upon dispositions, however veiled, is a theory Butler would reject. She does not help us determine the ultimate value of Riviere's theory, she merely uses it as an example of a theory of sexuality that eschews dispositions yet relies on them. She returns to Lacan in order to make a similar point regarding the reliance on unanalyzed assumptions.

Though Lacan does not posit a pre-cultural disposition in his account, Butler argues that his theory implicitly relies on structures that condition his account of gender development. Lacan's theory centers on the notion of a divide, a "fall into twoness," the purpose of which Butler questions (Butler 1990, 54-55). To answer her own question, Butler turns to Jacqueline Rose's criticism of Lacan. Rose points out that the necessary identificatory failure of both sexes, i.e., the failure to fully identify with one's appropriate gender, ". . . suggests the duplicity which undermines its fundamental divide," (Butler 1990, 55). The failure to identify with one's gender reveals that the split into two genders and the univocality of each gender is a structural element of the theory which relies, yet again, on an unacknowledged inherent bisexuality, which, in resisting the split, reveals the division as artificial (Butler 1990, 55). The split is artificial because the division into two genders is never fully achieved. Rose attributes this "resistance" to splitting to an inherent bisexuality.

Butler interprets Rose's criticism of Lacan:

> If prohibition creates the "fundamental divide" of sexuality, and if this "divide" is shown to be duplicitous precisely because of the artificiality of its division, then there must be a division that *resists* division, a psychic doubleness or inherent bisexuality that comes to undermine every effort of severing. To consider this psychic doubleness as the *effect* of the Law is Lacan's stated purpose, but the point of resistance within his theory as well (Butler 1990, 55).

Resistance to the division into two genders is the support Butler gives for the claim that there is an *inherent* bisexuality as an element of Lacan's theory. I contend that her argument that Lacan relies on an inherent psychic bisexuality needs further support. Resistance to division into two genders could be explained in other ways not explored by Butler. One need not resort to the positing of an inherent bisexuality. If we accept

Butler's interpretation, we need further information. What is the nature of this bisexuality? Is it better named "polysexuality," a sexuality not predetermined by cultural associations attached to the 'bi' prefix? Or is it an example of the "twoness" that Lacan adopts and Butler criticizes? If it is another instance of a binary, Butler needs to make this explicit.

In the paragraph following Rose's criticism of Lacan, Butler refers to the divide between the Real and the Symbolic:

> Any psychoanalytic theory that prescribes a developmental process that
> presupposes the accomplishment of a given father-son or mother-daughter
> identification mistakenly conflates the Symbolic with the real and misses
> the critical point of incommensurability that exposes "identification" and
> the drama of "being" and "having" the Phallus as invariably phantasmatic
> (Butler 1990, 55).

Butler does not explain the connection between her discussion of binary gender and the move to a discussion of the Real and the Symbolic. I interpret the connection in the following way: For Lacan, there is a divide between the real and the Symbolic. This divide is insurmountable, though all desire is directed toward bridging it and returning to the real, the feeling of oneness with the mother experienced by the prelinguistic child. The process of separation from the real is the process of gender formation. The insurmountability of the gap between the real and the Symbolic is connected to the failure of identification--the failure to be fully feminine or fully masculine.

Though Butler does not fully articulate this connection, she reads the gap between the real and the Symbolic as indicative of a Law (the Symbolic) that is simultaneously prohibitive and generative, that is, repression serves to produce the very constructs it limits:

>That the language of physiology or disposition does not appear here is
>welcome news, but binary restrictions nevertheless still operate to frame
>and formulate sexuality and delimit in advance the forms of its resistance
>to the "real," (Butler 1990, 55).

Lacan does not make reference to a pre-cultural disposition, but he does frame his theory in binaries such as the divide between the Symbolic and the real (the role of the imaginary is omitted from Butler's reading), and the divide between masculinity and femininity. These binaries act as dispositions insofar as they are presupposed and unanalyzed, yet serve to condition sexuality. Binaries are constructions of the Symbolic, yet their constructedness is masked by the Symbolic.

Butler needs to clarify the connection between gender and the division between the real and the Symbolic. Are these two instances of Lacan's falling into binary oppositions, or are they mutually constitutive binaries? Either way, Butler leaves the reader to draw her own conclusions.

Butler concludes this section of chapter two with a final assessment of Lacan and Riviere. Theories of sexuality read through the lens of gender, when constructed as rooted in melancholic refusal/domination of homosexuality, depend upon the implicit positing of a primary sexuality. For Lacan this primary sexuality is bisexuality, for Riviere it is masculine desire. These primacies, in the process of socialization, are shaped by culture. Repression of these primacies results in the production of gender. Butler criticizes this model of sexuality:

>From the start, however, the binary restriction on sexuality shows clearly
>that culture in no way postdates the bisexuality that it purports to repress:
>It constitutes the matrix of intelligibility through which primary
>bisexuality itself becomes thinkable (Butler 1990, 54).

Sex

with

stru

be l

ass

culi

"di

trea

the

hon

sup

the

app

het

giv

to c

wor

exc

othe

the t

Sexuality is constructed as a binary: masculine or feminine. It is posited or it functions within the Symbolic as if it were pre-cultural. Butler rightly points out that the binary structure reveals that it cannot predate culture, since, to be understood as a binary, it must be located within culture.

Butler's analysis of Lacan and Riviere is useful insofar as it reveals hidden assumptions masked as "givens" which are in fact discursive constructions produced by culture. This indicates that theorists who eschew recourse to such entities as "dispositions" may, nevertheless, import them into their theories.

In the last two sections of chapter two of *Gender Trouble* Butler argues that treating homosexuality and bisexuality as dispositions supports the construction, in these theories, of heterosexuality as a product of culture. She demonstrates that both homosexuality and bisexuality are constructed to be marginal and perverse in order to support the naturalization and normalization of heterosexuality. Her argument returns to the original problem of the use of the term 'women'. On Butler's view, any feminist re-appropriation of the term is problematic in that it supports the normalization of heterosexuality. The goal of articulating or achieving a subjectivity for women takes as a given the entire discourse that constructs subjectivity as male. This discourse also serves to depict heterosexuality as natural and homosexuality and bisexuality as deviant. Thus working for female subjectivity is supporting the very discourse that constructs us to be excluded from subjectivity, and supports the discourse that marginalizes any sexuality other than heterosexuality.

Butler's argument poses a serious challenge to an identity politics that relies on the term 'women'. The force of Butler's argument relies on the role of language, or the

symbolic. In the next section I will consider challenges to Butler's assumptions regarding language and its role in identity formation.

My Response to Butler

Butler argues that sexual identity is discursively constructed. We assume a sex within a context of compulsory heterosexuality (Butler 1993, 12). As subjects, we are formed through 'subjection' to the norm of sex. The process of becoming a subject requires the (compelled) assumption of this norm (Butler, 1993, 13). The norm is reinforced through repetition or "citation":

> The norm of sex takes hold to the extent that it is "cited" as such a norm, but it also derives power through the citations that it compels (Butler 1993, 13).

Compulsory "assumption of sexual identity is a kind of citation that reinforces the norm. Another kind of citation is resistance to the norm. By contesting the norm, attempts to resist it actually demonstrate and reiterate its power," (Butler 1990, 77). Instead of resistance, Butler advocates a different production of the norm, or law; this alternative production would co-opt the power of the law, expose the heterosexual matrix, and displace the effect of its necessity (Butler 1993, 15). There are two consequences of this theory for identity politics, the first has to do with identity, the second pertains to agency.

As a result of her argument regarding sexual identity, Butler claims that, ". . . 'identity,' as a point of departure, can never hold as the solidifying ground of a feminist movement." (Butler 1995, 49). She contends that any identity formulation is necessarily exclusionary. But she can only hold this view if she takes 'identity' to be synonymous with 'subjectivity' where the latter signifies the liberal subject or the *male* subject.

68

Returning to her analysis of Lacan and Irigaray, subjectivity in that system is solely the province of males. Female subjectivity is nonexistent. If an attempt to gain subjectivity for women is an attempt to gain the kind of subjectivity men have, then it would be exclusionary. Male subjectivity is predicated on exclusion--specifically the exclusion of women. Butler admits of the existence only of this form of subjectivity. Hence, any attempt to gain subjectivity for women, either within the "system" or from outside of it, necessarily entails exclusion.

An analogous problem exists with respect to agency. The concept of agency that Butler discusses, a "voluntarist" agency, again presupposes the liberal subject. There is some justification for this assumption. To the extent we function in a liberal society it is as liberal subjects. But if we reject that kind of subjectivity, we must reject that notion of agency. Butler is consistent in this respect.

Butler does not admit of the possibility of alternative subjectivities with corresponding powers of agency. She acknowledges the existence of the dominant world of meaning, operating roughly as postmodernists/poststructuralists say it operates, and no other. Any attempt to articulate other worlds of meaning is discounted as an attempt to escape to a precultural "originary" subjectivity. One who makes such an attempt has been taken in by the discursive fiction. Allison Weir criticizes Butler for this move.

Weir takes issue with Butler's account of the construction of (gender) identity. According to Butler, gender is constructed through a series of repetitions, only deviating from the norm by accidental variations. These deviations reveal the "given-ness" of gender to be an illusion. The performance of gender, or the failure to perform according to the norm, is not an 'act' attributable to an 'agent' on Butler's view. In rejecting the

notion of the pre-discursive subject, Butler rejects any account of an abiding subject that persists over time. That is where Weir focuses her criticism of Butler. Weir points out the contradiction between the claim that gender is a performance according to norms, and the denial of a subject to which we attribute agency and intention. Weir asks, if gender can be exposed as an illusion, the illusion is revealed to whom? There must be some knowing subject to whom the illusion is exposed (Weir, 126).

Furthermore, the denial of a prediscursive subject is right, according to Weir, yet Butler goes too far in rejecting any account of experience of a self persisting over time. Weir points out that this view has consequences Butler may not want to accept. Specifically, the rejection of the "doer behind the deed" is a Nietzchean argument. Nietzsche himself used it to justify a kind of essentialism that allowed for the denial of moral culpability. Since the strong were acting out their nature, it was not wrong that they dominate the weak; it is simply their nature. Even if Butler does not accept this argument, she opens herself up to this critique, according to Weir. Butler's move from the rejection of a pre-discursive subject to the claim that any account of subjective, reflective experience necessarily invokes the pre-discursive subject is an unjustified leap, according to Weir. Butler loses an account of agency, reflection, and intention. Weir suggests a view that allows for the subject partially constituting herself. That would acknowledge the role of discourse as well as personal agency in the constitution of the subject.

Weir is correct to criticize Butler's narrow view of subjectivity. Butler assumes that such a subjectivity is the only one available to women. Butler does not admit of the possibility that the ability of women (and marginalized people in general) to gain

subjectivity at all must change the nature of subjectivity. Even if women aspire to subjectivity on the male model, to do so is to shift the meaning of subjectivity.

Kathy Weeks develops a slightly different criticism of Butler on agency. The criticism raised by Weeks is that Butler, in trying to construct a subject that is indeterminate--neither "free" nor completely "determined"--ends up constructing a subject that is *underdetermined*. Butler claims that the subject is a result of a series of 'truth-effects' which I think are produced by practices. Weeks asks, what is the ontological status of a truth effect? (Weeks, 130). In rejecting any account of subjectivity that posits a "doer" behind the deed, Butler rejects any ground for subjectivity. If we are constituted by our actions, there is no persisting "I" that continues on through time. Weir, as noted above, points out the problems this raises for agency and accountability. Weeks pursues a different line of criticism. She looks at the dichotomy Butler poses between contingency and necessity in the construction of the subject.

For Butler, according to Weeks, a constructed subject implies contingency (Weeks, 132). This is Butler's great contribution to feminist theory according to Weeks. Nevertheless, we need an account of a constructed subject (rather than a subject which acts from its essence as a woman, for example), and we need an account of social construction that does not eliminate the possibility of agency (rather than a subject wholly determined by social forces).

Butler's rejection of necessity does not, according to Weeks, capture the "baggage" of compulsory gender norms. Again, it seems she is leaving out the embeddedness of gender practices and the difficulty of resisting them. Weeks suggests

that one can adopt a model of the subject as contingent without rejecting necessity completely.

> The subject constituted in and through an accumulation of enactments, the subjectivity that coheres around the relative stability of practices and is manifest in the relative continuity of memories, habits, desires, and interests, is both limiting and enabling. Unlike the anti-ontological performative model, the laboring [or acting] subject accumulates ontological weight without acquiring a transcendental stability (Weeks, 133).

Weeks is saying that there can be an enduring subject constituted by practices, but also by memory and habit, etc. The weight of the past is a kind of necessity or constraint on contingency, but not one which confers an essence on the subject, and not one which completely determines the subject.

The preceding criticisms point out an important aspect of Butler's work, namely, that she holds a too narrow conception of subjectivity linked to too deterministic a picture of language. In this respect they have shown the limits of her arguments on subjectivity.

To recapitulate this argument, she has shown, using Irigaray and Derrida, that subjectivity, for Freud, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Riviere, is founded on exclusion. Specifically subjectivity is founded on the exclusion of women, which makes subjectivity male.

She has also shown that subjectivity *appears to be* an effect of norms acting upon pre-cultural dispositions. Using Foucauldian analysis she reveals that this appearance is a fiction. Subjectivity is a discursive construction whose constructedness is masked by cultural fictions. Following Nietzsche, she claims that subjectivity, rather than being a substantial and enduring core self, is an effect of cultural productions.

s
o
p

e
th
Fo
M
ex
th
a
th
co
Da
dy
sen
it a
for
ide
wo
ide
con

The consequences for feminists are first that we should not seek to gain subjectivity since, in doing so, we only reinforce the cultural fiction that maintains our own exclusion. Second, since our concept of agency as an 'I' that acts voluntarily presupposes this form of subjectivity, we must reject agency as well.

There are two senses of 'exclusion' in Butler's work, one which I will call empirical exclusion, and one which is metaphysical. Empirical exclusion is the exclusion those members of a category for which the "definition" of the category does not account. For example, defining women as mothers excludes those women who are not mothers. Metaphysical exclusion takes place when the very structure of a concept is based on exclusion. Butler would argue that subjectivity works structurally to exclude women in this respect. However, she makes the stronger claim that any category for which there is a definition, in other words, any identity at all, is exclusionary in that it places a limit on the endless possibilities that could fall under that category. Weir takes issue with this concept of identity as repression of difference. Here she criticizes Butler for following Derrida too closely in his assertion that all identity is repression. Derrida argues that this dynamic is a necessary effect of the structure of language. Weir argues that language also serves as a means of communication. Derrida's narrow view of language, in focusing on it as repressive and deceptive, does not allow for the ways in which language serves as a force for connection (Weir, 117-122). Furthermore, it is not clear, according to Weir, that identities carry such ontological weight. She argues that social categories such as 'women' can be contingent (Weir, 119). I think Weir is right. If Butler can argue that identities are discursive constructions, that argument reinforces the fact of their contingency, however entrenched in social practice they may be. As Weeks has pointed

73

out, their entrenchment is not a necessary effect of the structure of the concept, rather, it is the effect of long-established social practice. Thus we can dismiss the argument that identity is necessarily repressive of difference. However, there is still a structural exclusion that can take place that needs to be addressed.

Given the double-bind women are in, according to Butler, and given that seeking subjectivity for women only serves to bar us from it, it becomes useful to hypothesize how the attempt to gain subjectivity would work in this system.

Either women can gain subjectivity or not. If it is possible, Butler might argue, following other feminists, then so doing supports the discursive fiction in the following way: women, to become subjects, must become *male* subjects, that is, women must become "men". That move, to the extent it is possible, leaves out women who do not or cannot become "men". Women, as women, cannot be subjects. The exclusionary dynamic still functions even if some women gain subjectivity. Therefore, if women can become subjects only by becoming "men", Butler is right to say that women are still excluded from subjectivity. For women to seek subjectivity on these terms is to leave this dynamic unchallenged, and may serve to support it.

But women cannot become men and still remain women. Female to male transsexuals (FTMs) prove this point. FTMs are viewed as men to the extent that they are not viewed as women. Thus women cannot function as men and still remain women. Butler's point is supported.

However, Butler is only right about subjectivity being barred to women if there is only one kind of subjectivity. As Weir and Weeks point out, Butler does not justify this assumption. If an alternative subjectivity can be constructed that is not founded on

exclusion, then Butler's argument would not hold. In chapter four I address such a form

of subjectivity.

Chapter Three: Race as a Social Identity

Just as some feminists argue that we cannot rightly use the concept 'woman' or that we cannot generalize about women, some philosophers of race argue that we cannot use the concept 'race' to mean all we want it to mean. These arguments must be taken note of and responded to, but in the final analysis, there are compelling reasons for those of us fighting sexism and racism to hang onto both the concepts of 'woman' and of 'race'.[1] In this chapter, I will focus on the latter.

It is important to consider the construction of race as a social category for several reasons: first, the project of constructing a coalitional identity politics requires attention to at least several significant identities, and race is one of them. The type of coalition I advocate is one in which racial categories (as well as other categories) are recognized as categories that are constructed by power relations. The attempt to dismantle hierarchical power relations does not require that we dismantle these categories. It is important to deal with the specificity of race in itself as well as its intersection with other axes of oppression. Furthermore, it is important to consider the issues that give rise to arguments that the concept of race is only a tool of oppression. Finally, it is useful to consider the arguments about race as they parallel and differ from arguments about gender.

Race and gender parallel each other in that each category has a history of relations of dominance and subordination. They differ in terms of how these relations structure social life. With respect to race, whole communities of people may share racial ties that can work to consolidate power (maintaining domination) or promote solidarity and

---

[1] Although 'gender' and not 'women' is analogous to 'race' I choose to use the term 'woman' since the arguments addressed in chapter two and throughout the dissertation are problems raised about the category 'women' rather than gender as a whole.

resistance to oppression. Gender, as a category, does not result in the physical grouping of people in such exclusive ways, except insofar as women have been, by law and in practice, excluded from many parts of the public sphere. For this reason, women as a group are frequently not viewed as a class in the way one considers race to be a class (Frye, 8-9). The structure of race is different from the structure of gender, and the oppressions that occur on the basis of each differ as well.[2] A coalitional politics must be able to account for these differences.

In the US, and in the world as a whole, there exist many cultures with different values and practices. To the extent that these cultures come in contact with each other, there must be means for negotiating these differences. In some cases, where several cultures coexist, hierarchies are formed that privilege one or more groups over the rest. Such is the case with race, both in the US and in the world. People of color are generally disempowered by many institutions, practices, and belief systems set up by and for white people. The challenge in a pluralist society is to be able to acknowledge the significance of different social groups without instituting power relations that stigmatize some groups and benefit others. Some who envision new possibilities are concerned with balancing a respect for culture with an acknowledgment of the importance of individual rights. One way to characterize this tension is as a desire to seek a balance between communitarian values and liberal individualist values. The former, as a system of political organization,

---

[2] See Marilyn Frye, "Oppression" (1983) for a discussion of the structure of oppression. See Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression" (1990) for an analysis of oppression based on racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ageism, etc.

takes the community to be prior to the individual, that is, the community shapes its members by inculcating the values held by that community. "The good," rather than individual rights based on justice, is pursued in the manner this community sees fit. A liberal society, on the other hand, takes the individual to be prior to the community. A community is nothing more than a collection of individuals who have consented to live together. In this system primary value is placed on the rights of each individual. One can do as she wills, provided her actions do not infringe upon the rights of another. Adjudication between conflicting rights is made by appealing to governing principles to which all consent. Each person is free to pursue the good life as she sees fit.

There are, of course, problems with both systems. Briefly, critics of communitarianism call it totalitarian, since individual rights can be superceded by the needs of the community. Critics of liberalism cite the failure of liberals to acknowledge the system of values that functions in a liberal society. Based on the right of the individual to pursue the good life as he understands it, the liberal state still reflects a common sense of the good--a communitarian value. Other critics of liberalism cite as problematic the model of the individual, as the universal person. The model person is supposed to stand for any person in the state. Thus the model person is considered to be without race, gender, or other particulars, since such characteristics are deemed accidental. The model person is the abstract concept of a person--the universal person. But, critics say, this model individual does have a race (white), a gender (male), a sexuality (heterosexual) etc. To act as if this model stands for everyone, regardless of race, class, gender, etc. is to disenfranchise those who do not fit the model.

The debate over liberalism and communitarianism has gone on for some time, with both sides marshaling arguments for their own position and against the opposing one. There are those who try to take the best from both approaches. Communitarianism offers an account of how culture works to shape an individual. Liberalism brings with it a tolerance of individual differences. For those who wish to combine these approaches, the task is to allow for cultural and individual differences. They understandably want the strengths of each position while eliminating the weaknesses. I believe that many philosophers who address issues of race take up this project since it is easy to see a race (as opposed to, say, a gender) as a distinct culture with values one would want to preserve. Yet, in a pluralistic society, one must also adjudicate between different and sometimes opposing cultural values, hence the desire to develop a communitarian/liberal theory of political organization. Though I respect the motivations that set them on this project, I think that the project will not get us to the kind of society we want: one that is tolerant, even appreciative, of difference. The communitarian model is right in its acknowledgment of the role of culture, but it lacks the structure to handle differences within a culture or between cultures. Trying to amend this lack by importing liberal ideals is wrong headed. The problem lies in the desire to retain the liberal notion of individualism.

In this paper, I will consider the argument regarding the need for such a combination of political values as presented by Lucius Outlaw. While I support Outlaw's goal of preserving race as a concept, I do not agree with his larger project of combining communitarian and liberal political theories to achieve unity in plurality.

78

The Existence of Race: The Debate

When addressing arguments regarding the existence of race, two kinds of

existence are at work. First, there is its existence as a concept that structures social life.

No one engaged in these debates questions the existence of race in social reality. That is,

no one disputes the fact that there is racial discrimination. The dispute is over the actual

existence of racial distinctions as physical properties. That is, races have material

physical existence if we can point to some physical characteristic that correlates with

social distinctions.

Naomi Zack offers a summary of what she calls the 'folk meaning of race':

> Roughly there is an assumption that there are three main human racial
> groups . . . : white, black, and Asian. These races are not distinct as
> species, because interbreeding is possible, and they are something like
> breeds, i.e., natural, biological groupings of human beings into which all
> individuals can be sorted, based on traits like skin color, hair texture, and
> body structure. Although different races have different histories and
> cultures, their histories and cultures are not part of the biological
> foundation of racial differences. This biological foundation has value-
> neutral or factual support from science, and if a racial term is attributed to
> an individual, then something factual is said about her. In other words, the
> term 'race' refers to something [materially and pre-socially] real. (Zack
> 1997, 30).

The material reality of race on this view is independent of its social history. Proponents

of this view may hold that race caused social differences, as opposed to the view that

social differences constitute the meaning of differences in physical attributes. I take the

latter view to be one that Zack would hold. When I refer to arguments that race is real, I

will refer to the view that holds race as a pre-social, material reality.

Those who argue that race does not have such reality draw on empirical research

and on the history of the concept of race. As Zack points out, the meaning of race has

changed throughout European history: for Greeks and Romans, race referred to one's group or culture. In the middle ages one's race was one's family lineage. By the seventeenth century, with the emergence of nation-states, race was associated with cultures and civilizations in geographic locations. In the eighteenth century, race was associated with skin color, but racial divisions were based on culture and religion rather than human biology. (Zack 1998, 2). Zack's history of the concept of race continues as she shows how scientists manipulated the definition of race to justify slavery:

> By the second half of the nineteenth century . . . race came to mean a distinct biological group of human beings who were not all members of the same family but who shared inherited physical and cultural traits that were different from those shared within other races. This meaning of race was constructed by American scientists during slavery and segregation. The claims of these scientists of race were used as justifications for black chattel slavery and white social and economic dominance over Negroes. Based on reports of empirical findings that were often incomplete or even falsified, hierarchies of human races were postulated. Always the black race was on the bottom and the white race on the top, with Asians and Indians in the middle. (Zack 1998, 2)

The nineteenth century concept of race made race into an essence which was thought to determine not only physical characteristics, but moral and intellectual abilities as well. The folk concept of race, then, is a fairly new concept invented by racists using fraudulent evidence. To continue to use the folk concept of race would be to perpetuate this racist fiction.

Not only does this concept perpetuate harm, those who argue against the physical existence of race point out that there is no evidence to support the claim that race physically exists. So, leaving aside the falsified evidence of the nineteenth century, *current* research does not support the claim that race is real.

Anthony Kwame Appiah discusses the claim that race is a concept that invokes a biological foundation which in fact does not exist. Empirical research shows that there is no significant increase in the correlation of genetic characteristics between two members of the same race as compared with two randomly selected members of the general population (Appiah, 30-31). For example, there may be a greater range of hair color among those considered to be blond than among any two persons selected randomly from the general population across races.[3]

Appiah acknowledges the shared history and social location of groups of people, but rather than call this race, the better term is culture. According to Appiah, similarities among people thought to be attributable to a shared history based on skin color are not easily reducible to race:

> What exists "out there" in the world--communities of meaning, shading variously into each other in the rich structure of the social world--is the province not of biology but of hermeneutic understanding (Appiah 1986, 36).

These communities of meaning exist--Appiah does not deny that. And he fully understands the social implications of membership in a community of meaning specifically organized, in part, by a common African lineage. However, Appiah rejects the biological connotations that the term 'race' implies, and so argues that we must replace this term with the word 'culture'.

Zack addresses the question of the existence of race from a philosophical perspective. Two arguments that I will consider here are the argument of race as family resemblance, or a cluster concept, and race as a natural kind.

---

[3] Thanks to Jen Benson who suggested this example.

The family resemblance argument is an acknowledgment that there are no

necessary and sufficient conditions that define racial distinctions. Nevertheless,

proponents of this view could maintain that there is a set of individuals,

> . . . who share different amounts of those physical traits considered by be
> racial, family relations with other people in the same racial group, and self
> identification as members of that group--not to mention self identification
> by members of other racial groups. (Zack 1997, 36).

Zack notes that Appiah considers this a formulation of the 'folk conception' of race.

They disagree on what they think is the 'folk conception of race.' What constitutes that

which ordinary English-speaking folk call a race, for Appiah, is what he first calls

culture, and later calls 'ethical identity' described as the following:

> . . . the experience of a life as a member of a group of people who
> experience themselves as--and are held by others to be--a community in
> virtue of their mutual recognition--and their recognition by others--as a
> people of a common descent. (Appiah 1997, 79)

While Appiah finds it acceptable to describe the *folk concept of race* as if it were an

'ethical identity' to make it non-biological, Zack rejects this option on the basis that this

formulation does not capture the meaning of the folk notion. If the family resemblance

model of race, rather than the biological model, was intended by those who use the folk

conception of race, then we would indicate of someone designated black, " . . . what kind

of black the individual in question was." (Zack 1997 36). Since we do not do this for

black folks, Zack maintains that the family resemblance model of race is different from

and therefore not a defensible interpretation of the folk concept of race.[4] Therefore, the

---

[4] Zack notes that we judge Native American heritage according to blood quanta. We also ask about the specific ethnicity of European Americans, though the latter she suspects may still refer to 'bloodlines'. I agree with her hunch, having grown up identifying as, among other things, 1/8 Irish.

family resemblance model does not stand as evidence for the claim that race is materially and pre-socially real.

One may wish to argue that race is real insofar as it is a natural kind. Zack categorically rejects this proposition since it has been established that there is no racial essence nor are there necessary and sufficient conditions with which to define race. Zack's main support for the claim that race is not a natural kind is that, while there are physical traits that have been designated as indicators of race at a certain time and place, ". . . there is no purely racial sub-structure *per se*, to which morphology that is perceived or judged to be racial on a folk level, can be necessarily or (even contingently) connected." (Zack 1997, 37). She compares the physical traits considered to be racial with physical traits taken to indicate biological sex. Acknowledging that the assertion of sexual dimorphism is an oversimplification, nevertheless she points out that bodily characteristics indicative of sex have a correlative chromosomal structure, namely, XX, XY, or some variation. In contrast, the physical traits associated with racial distinctions have no such correlative chromosomal structure. There is no "race gene":

> . . . the sexual identification paradigm is objective or real in a scientific
> way, while the racial part of clusters of racial traits are solely "in the
> head." Race is a social construction imposed on human biological
> differences which are not themselves racial--because nothing is racial
> which is not "in the head." Again, the genes for these traits deemed racial
> are scientifically real but there is no racial aspect of these genes which is
> scientifically real. And yet, on a flesh and blood level, the prevailing
> assumption is that race itself is physically real. (Zack 1997, 37)

In the face of these arguments it becomes apparent that the folk concept of race as real is indefensible. Both Zack and Appiah seem to accept the concept of race as family resemblance, which, as Zack maintains, differs significantly from the folk concept of

83

race. Zack does not explicitly state that she thinks we ought to give up the term 'race'. She does acknowledge disagreement on this point and seems to find some uses of the term to be acceptable.

In contrast to the preceding arguments, Outlaw defends the use of the word 'race' as a term that has a biological component. In the face of arguments against the existence of race, Outlaw answers simply, that we must preserve this concept as a matter of social justice:

> . . . it has not come to pass that physical and cultural differences among groups of peoples in terms of which they continue to be identified, and to identify themselves, as races and ethnies have either ceased to exist or ceased to be taken as highly important in the organization of society, especially in situations where there is competition for resources thought vital to lives organized, to significant extents, through racial and/or ethnic identities (Outlaw, 10-11).

In short, race and ethnicity (as well as other differences) are *made significant* by forces that serve to marginalize groups. The marginalized group, in using and analyzing the concept of race, is not thereby responsible for its being socially salient. Outlaw seeks an understanding of race that, unlike *racist* and invidious ethnocentric concepts of race, seeks to end justification of exploitation, marginalization, and oppression on the basis of race. One of the strengths of Outlaw's position is this argument in favor of continuing to use the concept of race. Yet it is not clear that theorists such as Zack and Appiah deny the social relevance of race. Their argument is aimed at biological justification for racial classification. So Outlaw is responding to a claim they are not making. Nevertheless, his reasoning could be justification for preserving the term 'race' by adopting the family resemblance model in place of the natural kinds model.

To the argument against the existence of race as a natural kind, Outlaw has two responses. First, he cites Aristotle's claim that, "for any given science or systematic attempt to achieve certified knowledge one should seek no more precision than the subject matter allows." (Outlaw, 11). Thus we can cite statistical studies which outline the general characteristics of a race without having to specify necessary and sufficient conditions. This response implies that Outlaw wants to defend some notion of a biological substructure for race, though not a notion of biological essences defining races. His goal may best be explained by considering his larger project.   Outlaw takes up the question posed by Carleton Coon, namely, when two races meet, why is there not sufficient intermingling such that over time the two blend? Instead, while there arises a group of biracial persons, generally the races remain distinct. The answer that Coon poses is a racist speculation about the role of genetics in determining superiority. (Outlaw, 3). Outlaw takes up the issue with the intention of seeking an antiracist explanation. The problem can be summed up by the question Outlaw takes from Coon, Why are we not all light khaki? (Outlaw, 13).

Starting from the fact that there *are* observable distinctions between human beings such that it is possible to sort persons generally into groups, Outlaw turns to W. E. B. Du Bois' speculation on the persistence of racial distinctions. Both Outlaw and Appiah draw from the work of Du Bois on race. They come to different conclusions on the question of whether Du Bois believed in the existence of races as biologically real. Outlaw focuses on Du Bois' earlier work, "The Conservation of Races," to support his claim that there are actual racial distinctions. Appiah argues that Du Bois' later work demonstrates a move away from this early position to a concept of race as social construction, to use

contemporary terminology. Du Bois struggled to explain the basis for connection among

African peoples and their descendants. With so much diversity among African and

African-descent peoples, he concludes, in his later work, that the connection of race is not

sufficient, yet Appiah notes his reluctance to relinquish the concept. Appiah concludes

that Du Bois's use of the term 'civilization' where we now speak of 'race' is strong

support for his own argument for the use of the term 'culture' (Appiah, 35).

Outlaw, in contrast, supports the use of the concept 'race'. In doing so, he draws

on a number of factors, biological and social, in his argument of race as a bio-social

collectivity. He makes reference to the earlier work of Du Bois, especially on the cultural

aspect of race. While race has a biological dimension, demonstrated by distinctions in

physical features, race is also a cultural institution. According to Du Bois, the main

structural organizing force, besides common blood, is the message it gives to the world.

Following the scholarship of the day, Du Bois identifies eight different races, and

indicates their respective messages. This classification system is problematic in two

ways, first in the divisions he imposes in the name of race, and second in the messages

and consequent values he attaches to each race:

> . . . the sociological and historical races of men [sic] began to approximate
> the present division of races as indicated by physical researches. At the
> same time, the spiritual or physical differences of race groups became
> deep and decisive. The English nation stood for constitutional liberty and
> commercial freedom; the German nation for science and philosophy; the
> Romance nations for literature and art, and the other race groups are
> striving, each in its own way, to develop for civilization its particular
> message, its particular ideal, which shall help to guide the world . . . (Du
> Bois, 23-24).

Clearly Du Bois is working with a nineteenth century understanding of anthropology, yet he is trying to come to an understanding about the conservation of races. His notion of the 'message' of each race, according to Outlaw, is a move away from biology toward a cultural understanding of ties that explain the place that a people holds in relation to other races. Further, he is arguing in favor of the conservation of races within a pluralist society. Du Bois is against assimilation, but he is also against separatism. This position is taken up by Outlaw, who wants to incorporate communitarian and liberal principles in his model of social organization.

Du Bois defined race in the following way:

> . . . a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life (Du Bois, 21).

Race, then, for Du Bois, has two components, the biological (blood)[5] and the cultural, shared history-shared striving. It is the cultural element that Du Bois highlights in his claim that each race has a "message" to give to the world, since that would be how the message is carried through to subsequent generations, and to the world as a whole. The biological component is not part of this message, but may, instead, reinforce divisions among peoples that culture reproduces.

Du Bois does not identify a distinct contribution made by Africans, so he places the African race in the schema as one of the races whose message is incomplete. The

---

[5] By biology and "blood" I take DuBois to be referring to a combination of kinship relations and physical resemblance that is not fully articulated (Du Bois, 21). The reference to biology should not be understood as making any claims regarding a genetic

completion of this message is one task that Outlaw takes up. The message is both substantive, a body of knowledge, and formal, as one among many "messages" in a pluralistic society.

The message becomes a basis, for Outlaw, of a cultural knowledge which he ultimately links to broad, universal knowledge. His argument has some parallels with standpoint epistemology, but his desire to authorize knowledge through universal principles takes him away from that approach. Outlaw argues that race as an organizing principle serves to bring together social groups by reason of shared history, reflecting a biological as well as a cultural connection. His goal is to develop a non-racist concept of race--one which does not replicate or support racist arguments for the existence of race as a category that is then used to justify exploitation and oppression. For example, race can be used against groups by those who make pseudoscientific "correlations" between race and intelligence, or in stereotypes that attribute negative, seemingly "natural" characteristics to people on the basis of race. In this respect the concept of race is a tool of racism, and racists defend the existence of race as a biological term. Thus, Outlaw, in wanting to construct a *non-racist* concept of race, is taking on an important task. A second project that is related to the first is to sketch out a framework for social relations that is both situated, or culturally specific, and pluralist, i.e., respectful of individual and cultural differences. These two arguments are related--the construction of race that Outlaw develops is an integral part of his sketch of a political framework in which an egalitarian concept of race can function.

---

basis for racial difference. I take Outlaw to be following Du Bois in this concept of biology.

Returning to the question of race as a natural kind, Outlaw translates Du Bois' concept of race into contemporary language:

> . . . human populations and their sub-groupings are better understood as *social-natural kinds:* that is, groupings of humans that are formed and named under contingent socio-historical, cultural conditions, according to social conventions . . . (Outlaw, 12).

In calling race a social-natural kind he preserves the sense in which biology is a factor, but always influenced by culture. One way of understanding this mutual influence is through Outlaw's account of how a social group survives over time without dying out or assimilating:

> As with other species of living organisms, so too with humans in the long run: only those populations and/or subgroups survive across generations and in various environments who are successful in building up, storing, refining and mediating to contemporaries and successors life-sustaining, order producing collections of knowledge and practices of particular kinds (Outlaw, 17).

"Knowledge" as Outlaw uses the term here is a broad category ranging from that needed for survival to that which constitutes a distinct culture. The knowledge he speaks of ultimately comes under the care of that population's philosophers (Outlaw, 18). That knowledge is the message each race has to give to the world. He equivocates on the meaning of 'survival' sometimes referring to biological survival, but also seeming to refer to cultural survival. Outlaw links the importance of racial differentiation with the importance of bio-diversity. Different knowledges are as important to our cultural survival as bio-diversity is to physical survival. Outlaw never makes clear exactly what the biological component is. If it is simply a common ancestry, then he could hold the family resemblance model of race. Since he persists in calling race some sort of a natural kind, it seems he would reject the model that Zack presents.

I find Outlaw's reliance on biology problematic. He can maintain the argument above without relying on a biological foundation for race. Yet, in turning to biology, Outlaw again follows Du Bois's early work. I question this attachment to the biological element. It is possible to defend a concept of cultural knowledge based on shared material conditions--a shared history. Witness the many accounts of standpoint epistemology, which do not rely on an explicit biological dimension. It seems that these accounts would suffice for Outlaw's knowledge project without raising the problematic issues ushered in by a reliance on biology. Furthermore, Outlaw makes reference to the 'natural' in ways that imply race is a 'given'. Since Outlaw does not make clear his understanding of how human knowledge shapes our perception of what counts as 'natural' this concept is problematic. It is crucial to Outlaw's account of race that he recognize the way in which the 'natural' is always mediated by culture.

Nevertheless, I do not stand with Appiah in reducing race to culture. Some important element is lost in that reduction. What is lost is better described as material conditions or kinship rather than biology. Embodied subjects make distinctions according to race as well as culture. As long as some subjects hold power to marginalize other subjects on the basis of *race*, that concept must be available for use by those of us seeking to dismantle structures that maintain white privilege. I find Naomi Zack's formulation of race as family resemblance a model that does not replicate racist and inaccurate beliefs about biology, nor does it lose the sense in which race is socially very real.

With respect to his larger project, Outlaw does not want a completely liberal individualist society where race, class, gender, etc. are dismissed as secondary or

90

accidental characteristics. Nor does he want a completely communitarian society where the group dominates the individual. Finally, he does not want a society where there are no universal principles for adjudicating between conflicting needs of different groups (not to mention intra-group disputes). Thus, he wants the universalism of a liberal framework with the situatedness of a communitarian framework. Though I agree with Outlaw in arguing for the continued use of the concept of race, I do not support his conception of race, nor do I support his argument regarding the relationship of situated knowledge to more "universal" knowledge. Overall I find his commitment to liberal principles untenable in the light of his desire for a situated subjectivity.

The Significance of Race

The debate over the existence of race as a social category is part of a move in postmodern theory against totalizing theories, or meta-narratives.[6] Social categories such as race and gender are rejected because the category, construed as a set or a Venn diagram, erases the significance of differences among members of the category. The failure to acknowledge difference results from the imposition of a certain kind of definition. Recall the previous discussion of identity in the work of Judith Butler (chapter 2 above). The imposition of an identity on the Derridean view squelches the possibilities

---

[6] Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson described the way in which some feminist theories in some way constitute a metanarrative:

> . . . the feminist theories we have in mind here are not pure metanarratives;
> they are not ahistorical normative theories about the transcultural nature of
> rationality or justice. Rather, they are very large social theories--theories
> of history, society, culture, and psychology--which claim, for example, to
> identify causes and constitutive features of sexism that operate cross-
> culturally (Fraser & Nicholson, 26-27).

that exist in an undifferentiated plenum. In response to arguments such as these, Delia

Aguilar writes about the move against overarching theories of social phenomena such as

oppression, and the corresponding interest in 'difference':

> We should be pleased that many feminists now refrain from using the
> totalizing plural "we," and instead take care to give attention to other
> social relations like class, race, nationality and so on.

> The problem that I see, however, is that the approach of the "politics of
> difference" as this is called, at its very best fails to take into account
> asymmetries of power. That is, in its zeal to acknowledge the existence of
> a plurality of differences--presumably to celebrate these in the age of
> multiculturalism--the relations of power that have produced those
> differences are obscured or ignored. So, for example, class--which is the
> result of power relations and often irresolvable conflicts between the haves
> and the have nots--becomes interpreted as a matter of lifestyle and is
> frequently interchanged with "classism," presumably meaning there is a
> celebration of difference (and the list of differences can be very lengthy),
> we never really get to understand how the differences came to exist
> (Aguilar, 492).

Aguilar points out the danger in acknowledging difference detached from the systems of

oppression that caused the difference to become socially salient. This move eliminates

acknowledgment of the power differences that maintain these social groups. When

Appiah names race "the badge of insult," he wants to say that it is a cultural difference

rather than a racial mark (Appiah, 35). This move does not capture all that is salient

about such differences. Racism is not reducible to different cultural experiences. In

response to Appiah, I maintain that 'culture' cannot do all he asks it to do.

What makes race socially salient in a way that, e.g., "handedness" is not, is the

ability of one race to enforce a conceptual scheme in which it is privileged over other

races. The scheme is so embedded that social values and social institutions replicate it.

Even when these values are challenged and rejected by many, their social embeddedness perpetuates the system of oppression.

Thus Appiah's move from 'race' to 'culture' risks a detachment from the larger social structures which perpetuate the differential valuing of cultures. It is not merely a difference in culture, it is a difference in the power to attach social meaning to that culture. Though Appiah is aware of this power differential, he does not include an account of it in his discussion of race and culture. Aguilar, without the need to refer to biology, gives us further reason to preserve concepts such as race, class, gender, etc., even while we understand such concepts to be social constructions.

Race as a Product of the Racial State

In contrast to the debate between Outlaw and Appiah, Aguilar and other theorists have developed concepts of race which do not rely on biological connection, yet do not argue to eliminate the use of the term 'race.' It is useful to consider views of race which focus on power dynamics and the way in which relations of domination serve to construct racial categories.

María Lugones, in response to work on race by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, developed the following outline of a theory of the racial state as a system of white privilege:

i. It produces a classification of people that gives rise to race.
ii. The classification is not a rational ordering based on any 'natural' phenomena.
iii. The classification is historically variable.
iv. The classification has a strong normative force in the form of custom or in the form of positive law.

v. The classification is presupposed (explicitly or not) by many other legal and customary norms.

vi. The classification imposes on people a false identity and arrogates the power of self-definition, even though the history of the classification may include the search and the hegemonical struggle for identity and self-definition by particular groups.

vii. The classification is given meaning by particular organizations of social, political and economic interaction that regulate relations among people who are differently classified.

viii. The racial state also produces ideologies that create the illusion that both the classification and the organization of life that accompany and give meaning to it are justified.

[. . . I think that Omi and Winant would find fault in my formulation of (vi) because it does not give enough attention to competing racially defined political projects. My intent in formulating (vi) is to take these projects into account . . .] (Lugones 1990, 49, note).

Lugones, following Omi and Winant, explicitly claims that there is no basis in natural phenomena for the classification of race in the racial state. Rather, the effect of classification, supported by custom, law, and other norms, is the production of races. This classification is given meaning not by differences in skin color and hair texture, but by differences in social, political, and economic interaction. In other words, groups of people who are racialized live that out in terms of social, political, and economic sanction against them. To deny that is to deny the reality of race--the extreme liberal individualism characterized by libertarianism. Lugones, in short, rejects any claim to a biological basis for race. In this respect, it may appear that she agrees with Appiah, but that is not the case, since she does not advocate eliminating the use of the term 'race' to refer to an oppressive classification system.

Lugones makes the following claim that distinguishes race from ethnicity or culture:

The existence of races as the products of racialization presupposes the presence of racism, but the existence of different ethnicities does not

presuppose ethnocentrism, even if ethnocentrism is universal. So we should conclude that ethnicity is not the same as race and ethnocentrism is not the same as racism (Lugones 1990, 48).

Race, as the product of racialization, is a product of a classification system which institutionalizes a particular form of domination. Race, by definition, invokes this relation. Ethnicity, cultural difference, does not carry with it the logical necessity of relations of dominance. Even if ethnocentrism is imbedded in all relations between different ethnicities, that does not mean that domination is an inherent part of ethnicity as it is an inherent part of race.

On this point, then, Lugones differs from Appiah who would argue that race should drop out of the picture in favor of culture. Lugones preserves the concept as a means of naming relations of domination that structure race.

I suspect that Lugones' answer to Outlaw's question, 'why are we not all khaki?' would be some reference to customs, norms and laws that racialize folks. Once the racial classification seems normal and *natural*, then custom, laws, and norms perpetuate it. This is in accordance with a view of groups that suggests members hang together because of shared customs and history, a dynamic that can take place independently of racialization. In contrast, Outlaw takes common blood and common history as the basis of a "social-natural" kind, and argues from that point to the notion of a shared body of knowledge. Ultimately he seeks recognition of that knowledge by the authority of western philosophy. This epistemology parallels his ideal social structure, which is something like cultural plurality or standpoint liberalism.[7]

Race, Knowledge, Plurality, and Unity

A further aspect of Outlaw's concept of race is the link between 'group-specific' knowledge and knowledge as a whole. His discussion of race and cultural knowledge takes place in a larger discussion about race and philosophy. Outlaw criticizes philosophical approaches which favor abstract, universalistic knowledge. Joining the growing number of theorists who argue that knowledge is situated, Outlaw argues that race-situated knowledge is one such example.

I find the development of Du Bois's work in this respect to be useful in connecting arguments about situated knowledge with arguments about the existence of social categories. Unfortunately Outlaw is still committed to the authority of universal principles in the justification of knowledge. Outlaw argues that the specific cultural knowledge ought to both remain connected to the people who generated it, e.g., Africans and persons of African descent, and also be made accessible to the human community as a whole. This is also in keeping with standpoint epistemology which argues that knowledge generated from a particular standpoint is not limited to those who share that standpoint, though it has significance to those who share those material conditions. Thus, knowledge can translate across cultures. For Outlaw, philosophy is the medium of translation; philosophy seeks to bring reason to all forms of social life. Under this framework, social groups are considered insofar as they form a broader unity. Conflicts between groups can be mediated by appeal to universal principles (Outlaw, 29).

I have two main concerns with this social/epistemological framework. First, in appealing to universal principles, it is possible that intragroup differences can be erased

---

[7] Marilyn Frye suggested the latter term.

by seeking unity at the macro level. Second, the presumed authority of universal principles calls into question the validity of situated knowledge. It seems that the universal supersedes and undercuts the strength of situated knowledge. The level of generality that Outlaw seeks could lead to an erasure of difference in much the same way as assimilation into white culture undercuts the ground for a distinctive Africana philosophy. Within the race, Outlaw acknowledges differences among Black folks when he cautions Black intellectuals to avoid generalizing solely from their own experiences. But in general he abstracts from these differences, which results in a concept of race where every member shares the same goals and interests. This view stands in contrast to the views of the Combahee River Collective, and Patricia Hill Collins. The latter two vigorously defend the preservation of individual differences within racial groupings.

In appealing to universal principles, Outlaw is arguing for the philosophical value of his project. He turns to Horkheimer and Marcuse to do so (Outlaw, 29). Horkheimer and Marcuse argue that philosophy is about human relations in its most general, total form. Outlaw seeks this same level of generality. But such a strong commitment to the universal jeopardizes his commitment to situated knowledge. He could consider the arguments of standpoint epistemologists in this regard, who have varying commitments to objectivity, yet none so strong as Outlaw's (c.f. Harding, Collins). Contrary to Outlaw's assertion that Black intellectuals have been assimilated into white culture, there is a large body of work by Black feminists, for example that he does not acknowledge. There is a serious lack of attention to the work of, especially Collins who, as a Black intellectual is developing a distinct, Black feminist approach to knowledge. This lack

may be a result of Outlaw's own privileging of mainstream philosophical discourse. Outlaw seems to argue that if the source of philosophy is humanity in general, then any knowledge claimed as philosophical must speak to all of humanity. This move seems to discount the role of situated knowledge in his framework.

The connection between political organization, epistemology and metaphysics becomes crucial at this point. One may be marginalized politically because of racist (and sexist) notions of personhood. So one can create inclusive notions of personhood within a social group. Such a construction would not abstract from individual differences, but would build into the notion of personhood the recognition that such differences exist. That project of knowledge production can ultimately change the politics, since political power of all types depends upon recognition by others. The question is, on whose terms does this change happen? If the dominant group must approve the knowledge of the subgroup, such acknowledgment will only be given to projects that maintain the status quo, not to projects that threaten it. Thus recognition of inclusive concepts of personhood, for example, cannot be sought from the larger society. That is why the appeal to universal principles ultimately undercuts Outlaw's project. The commitment to such principles of reason masks an underlying assumption that without such principles we will live in chaos. Contemporary theorists who articulate the ways in which knowledge is situated argue that the move away from universal principles is not necessarily a move toward relativism.[8]

There is a parallel argument for the more explicit political issue. Outlaw seems to move between a liberal individualism, to preserve plurality, and a communitarian view

that gives priority to groups. He wants plurality, unity, and situated knowledge. This is the project of many political theorists.[9] Yet the task should not be to universalize, and abstract from Black philosophy so as to make it somehow applicable to everyone. The task is rather to extend the theories that focus on the relevance of a particular experience so that someone outside that experience can take on that standpoint. The particular ways of extending knowledge to outsiders is a project taken up by standpoint theorists. Finally, it is important to remember that all knowledge is situated knowledge.

To summarize, Outlaw captures an important debate among contemporary political theorists, namely, the question of how to adjudicate between the sometimes conflicting needs of diverse social groups. Yet in turning once again to liberal individualist principles to provide an overarching political framework, he advocates a system that maintains structures of domination. In the next chapter, I will address a theory of subjectivity that provides a context in which identities/groups thrive and one can resist structures of domination.

---

[8] See, for example, Lorraine Code and Lynn Hankinson Nelson.
[9] This is the project Uma Narayan outlined in her talk at the Eastern APA, 12/1999.

Chapter Four: Lugones and Mestiza Subjectivity

In previous chapters I have considered several problems related to political and social identity: in chapter one I looked at criticisms of identity politics; chapters two and three addressed issues of gender and racial identity. Chapter two focused specifically on Butler's account of identity formation. Chapter three focused on Outlaw's construction of race as it fits in a political framework. In chapter four I examine a theory of subjectivity developed by María Lugones. After sketching out this theory I will address the concerns of identity formation raised by Judith Butler. Finally I will address a criticism raised against one part of Lugones' theory.

Lugones theorizes three different types of subjectivity. Depending upon one's social location, one is constructed as a unified subject, a fragmented subject, or a multiplicitous subject. She places each type of subjectivity into one of two frameworks: the unified and the fragmented subjects in the logic of purity, which is the logic of traditional categories, and the multiplicitous subjects in the logic of impurity, which is the logic of resistance. In the logic of purity one is split-separated: either fragmented into pure parts for the purposes of control, or having the appearance of being unified, having no parts, being completely pure. In the logic of impurity, or curdled logic, resistance to fragmentation is resistance to purity, i.e., separation is separation as curdling rather than a splitting to preserve purity, and though one is not unified, one is also not fragmented--rather, one is multiplicitous (Lugones, 458-460, 463). The key distinction Lugones makes is that between split-separation and multiplicity. The multiplicitous subject is the kind of subjectivity Lugones proposes to resist domination. I contend that this subjectivity provides the basis for a coalitional politics of identity.

On Lugones' theory of subjectivity, a subject can be constructed within the logic of purity, which fosters separation and domination through fragmentation, or within the logic of impurity, which resists fragmentation in favor of multiplicity. The logic of purity is the logic of strict dichotomies, of categories which are necessary and sufficient. The 'one drop' rule of the historic American South fits such logic. This rule defined any person as a Negro if they had even so much as one drop of Negro blood. The emphasis on purity has a distinct racial element, as demonstrated by this rule meant to protect the "purity" of the white race. Under this logic, the subject is fragmented, split into parts: the assimilated and the Other. The logic of impurity resists such neat categorization. The mestizaje is the metaphor for this logic. The mestizaje lives in several cultures and, in some contexts she can move easily among them. Instead of dichotomy, there is some fluidity and inclusiveness. The mestizaje as characterized by Gloria Anzaldúa is the embodiment of multiplicitous subjectivity. Lugones argues for the adoption of the logic of impurity as a means of fostering multiplicitous subjectivity.

The key to Lugones' theory of subjectivity is the acknowledgment that subjectivity is a communal construction. Rather than being split between a Latina self, a lesbian self and an angla self, for example, the subject can move between them or call on them simultaneously in a context which allows for multiplicity. This movement can only take place in contexts where multiple subjectivity is recognized and valued. It is this concept of multiplicitous subjectivity which will counter Butler's criticism of the ontological construction of identity, and will provide a framework for a politics that responds to the problems faced by Outlaw's reliance on liberal individualism (chapter 5).

Split-Separation and the Unified Subject

To develop these claims, I begin by looking closely at Lugones' analysis of the unified subject, in contrast to which stand the fragmented subject and the multiplicitous subject. The unified subject is a result of a series of fictions which reduces multiplicity to a unity:

> [The subject in the logic of purity] must himself be pure, unified, and simple so as to occupy the vantage point and perceive unity amid multiplicity. He must not himself be pulled in all or several perceptual directions; he must not perceive richly. Reason, including its normative aspect, is the unified subject. It is what characterizes the subject as a unity (Lugones, 465).

The subject is pure, meaning he fits neatly into established social categories of race, class, gender, etc. The subject is unified, meaning there is apparently no split separation into the assimilable part and the rejected other. That has the further implication that the subject occupies the dominant side of any hierarchy, white, male, christian, etc. From this vantage point, the subject can impose unity on others, thus imposing and maintaining the framework that constructs subjects as unified, like himself, or split-separated into fragments.

This concept of the subject draws upon constructions of the individual under modernity who holds the objective 'view from nowhere' which reduces multiplicity to order and categories. In developing this concept, Lugones draws on Iris Marion Young who criticizes the notion of impartiality. Young develops a criticism of this concept of subjectivity upon which Lugones can build.

Young traces the liberal notion of subjectivity as it supports the concept of impartiality, which she rejects. Impartiality, Young points out, is supposed to prevent

egoism--choosing solely on the basis of one's own interests and desires. The knowing

subject is abstracted from the concrete situation in three ways: 1) from particulars of the

situation, 2) from feelings and emotions, and 3) from other subjectivities in order to

create a point of view that any and all rational subjects can adopt by abstracting from all

of their particulars (Young, 100). This leads to one moral transcendent subjectivity,

"Because it already takes all perspectives into account, the impartial subject need

acknowledge no subjects other than itself to whose interests, opinions, and desires it

should attend" (Young, 101). Relying on principles such as impartiality risks importing

this notion of subjectivity into one's theoretical framework. Lugones takes up Young's

rejection of this notion of subjectivity, focusing on the separation from other subjects that

is inherent in this construction.

In articulating the logic of purity Lugones focuses on the separation of subjects

from other subjects, and separation from parts of the self that do not support the fiction of

unity and purity. So the modern subject must dissociate from those parts of himself

which are embodied and particular:

> The modern subject must be masked as standing separate from his own
> multiplicity and what commits him to multiplicity. So, his own
> purification into someone who can step squarely onto the vantage point of
> unity requires that his remainder become of no consequence to his own
> sense of himself as someone who justifiably exercises control over
> multiplicity. So his needs must be taken care of by others hidden in spaces
> relegated outside of public view, where he parades himself as pure.
> (Lugones 1994, 466)

Lugones is making several important points here. First of all, every subject is multiple,

but the modern subject masks his own multiplicity, or particularity. In other words, to the

extent that the modern subject does not hold the disembodied, universal, rational

viewpoint, that part is masked. The masked part, the remainder, is disavowed--it becomes of no importance. This is split-separation, where the embodied particulars of the modern subject are separated off from those parts which lay claim to abstract universality. In this way the modern subject controls multiplicity, or embodiment. Under the logic of purity, characterized by split separation, no subject is multiple, rather, all subjects are split-separated. The logic of purity works to make some subjects *appear to be* unified. Those who do not or cannot participate in the fictional construct of unity function as fragmented beings. In order to live out this fiction of purity, the modern subject must have maintenance work done by others, e.g., cooking, cleaning, laundry, garbage removal, etc. The 'others,' people of color, white women, poor people, who perform this work, to the extent they are associated with tasks pertaining to particular needs and desires, are not recognized as full, modern subjects. Their work and subjectivity is relegated to the private sphere. Those who remain embedded in a culture, "Mexicans" for example, are likewise denied full subjectivity. The modern subject is viewed as "postcultural". In this sense, then, the modern, unified, pure subject is also separated off from those who do not/cannot take on the impartial, universal viewpoint of the modern subject.

The relationship of the apparently unified subject to those who function as fragmented subjects is one of dependence. The unified subject, the 'impartial reasoner,' depends upon others for physical maintenance and for the maintenance of the fiction of unity. These two tasks are bound together.

> His production as pure, as the impartial reasoner, requires that others
> produce him. He is a fiction of his own imagination, but his imagination
> is mediated by the labor of others. He controls those who produce him,

104

who to his eyes require his control because they are enmeshed in multiplicity and thus unable to occupy the vantage point of control. They are marked as other than himself, as lacking the relevant unity (Lugones, 467).

Production of the modern subject occurs on the material level and the ideological level. The subject-position of the impartial reasoner is the position of control over those enmeshed in material production or in culture. They lack the relevant unity because they are unable or unwilling to adopt the position of impartial reasoner who has no connection to the particular.

The 'other' is constructed as such within this framework as one who is tainted by need, emotion, and the body (Lugones, 467). In the logic of purity, unified subjects are constructed as pure through separation from bodily concerns:

> To the extent that he is fictional, the tainting is fictional: seeing us as tainted depends upon a need for purity that requires that we become "parts," "addenda" of the bodies of modern subjects--Christian white bourgeois men--and make their purity possible. We become sides of fictitious dichotomies. To the extent that we are ambiguous--non-dichotomous--we threaten the fiction and can be rendered unfit only by decrying ambiguity as nonexistent--that is, by halving us, splitting us. Thus we exist only as incomplete, unfit beings, and they exist as complete only to the extent that what we are, and what is absolutely necessary for them, is declared worthless.

The other is tainted by association with the body. Split-separation coalesces into dichotomies, such as the mind/body split. The other is associated with that part of the dichotomy deemed worthless, woman, Black, body, bad. The part of the dichotomy that is valued is the part that appears to be "pure". The ambiguity of the multiplicitous reveals as fiction the purity of the unified subject and the dichotomy which upholds the fiction of purity. Thus ambiguity is ignored. Subjects are split-separated into parts which maintain the fiction of purity. That which is tainted is rejected. Thus some subjects under the

logic of purity become fragmented beings while others appear to be unified. All are split-separated.

In the formulation of the unified subject, Lugones develops a framework which includes the construction of fragmented subjects. While this framework may echo the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic, one important difference is the role of conflict. For Hegel, conflict seems to be inherent in the Master-Slave relationship, where for Lugones, conflict is produced only by the desire of the unified subject to exert control over the others. Thus, for Lugones, conflict is not a necessary part of self-formation and recognition. This is a significant difference and a useful departure from the Hegelian model. While recognition is inherent to self-formation and social relationships, recognition can incorporate a range of power dynamics. The unified subject recognizes the other only for the purposes of control. That is a relationship of domination. But Lugones offers the possibility of other relationships as well. That will be pursued further in the section on multiplicity.

A second point to make is the parallel in this section of Lugones' article to the section in Butler regarding the construction of the dominant subjectivity in relation to the other. For both, the dominant subjectivity involves a dependence upon the other for self definition, and a simultaneous exclusion of the other (Whatever I am, I am not that). In both, the other is the "remainder," the negated side of the dominant subject--the queer in relation to the heterosexual, the woman in relation to the man, and the person of color in relation to the white person. While there is this parallel, the two for the most part diverge on the issue of identity. Both criticize the view of identity as monolithic, atemporal, and exclusive. From that point, their views diverge. Butler holds to the view that identity can

only be characterized in such terms, and so rejects the use of identity (except insofar as we use identity for ease of reference). Lugones chooses to reconceptualize identity as something that can "move". This characterization will be explored more fully in the next section.

Split-Separation and the Fragmented Subject

Lugones proposes the fragmented subject as the alternative to the unified subject within the logic of purity. In contrast to the unified subject, split off from any impurity that would characterize him as other, the fragmented subject is constructed as a split, dual subjectivity. She takes as an example the experience of the rural Chicano. Lugones points out that 'Chicano' is a curdled, or mestizo person. That is, 'Chicano' is a multiplicitous subject rather than a fragmented subject. The Chicano lives in the logic of impurity. But within the logic of purity, the Chicano is characterized as 'mexican/american' (Lugones 1994, 470). Lugones does not hyphenate the two terms, since, if the split were successful, there would be no possibility of 'living on the hyphen' as Sonia Salvidar-Hull has remarked (Lugones 1994, 470, note 11). Lugones intends to emphasize the split in subjectivity.

In the construction of fragmented subjectivity for the 'mexican/american,' two aspects are especially important: the experience of the split, and the role of culture in defining the other. Lugones points out that both are products of the anglo imagination, a continuation of the fiction which produces the unified subject:

> The rural mexican/american is a product of the anglo imagination,
> sometimes enacted by persons who are the targets of ethnocentric racism
> in an unwillful parody of themselves. The anglo imagines each rural
> mexican/american as having a dual personality: the authentic mexican
> cultural self and the american self. In this notion, there is no hybrid self.

> The selves are conceptually different, apparently contradictory but
> complementary; one cannot be found without the other. The anglo
> philosophy is that mexican/americans should both keep their culture (so as
> to be different and not full citizens) and assimilate (so as to be
> exploitable), a position whose contradictoriness is obvious. But as a split
> dual personality, the authentic mexican can assimilate without ceasing to
> be "cultured," the two selves complementary, the ornamental nature of the
> mexican self resolving the contradiction (Lugones 1994, 470).

The mexican/american is an example of fragmented subjectivity because there is a split

imposed by the dominant (anglo) discourse. The mexican/american is both reduced to

culture (mexican) and stripped of culture (american) but only in such a way as to benefit

anglos. The fragmented subject lives an impossible subjectivity, one organized by and

for the unified subject.

The mark of traditional mexican culture places the mexican/american in a static

relationship to culture. The mexican/american is caught in history, in the anglo

construction of 'authentic mexican culture':

> This authentic mexican culture bears a relation to traditional culture. It is
> tradition filtered through anglo eyes for the purposes of ornamentation.
> What is anglo, authentically american, is also appealing: it represents
> progress, the future, efficiency, material well being. As american, one
> moves; as mexican, one is static. As american, one is beyond culture; as
> mexican, one is culture personified. The culturally split self is a character
> for the theatrics of racism (Lugones 1994, 471).

The distinction Lugones makes here is between two selves and their relation to culture.

The mexican self is caught in an anglo-constructed, unchanging, ornamental, traditional

culture, to which the self will always be reduced. The american self is beyond culture, is

moving rather than static. As a fragmented subject, the mexican/american lives out this

dual subjectivity.[1]

The split subjectivity of the mexican/american mirrors a split between public life

and private life imposed by the logic of purity. The unified subject rules the public

realm, where individuals stand equally before the law. The mexican/american cannot

participate fully in the public realm:

> As split, mexican/americans cannot participate in public life because of
> their difference, except ornamentally in the dramatization of equality. If
> we retreat and accept the "between raza" nonpublic status of our concerns,
> to be resolved in the privacy of our communities, we participate in the
> logic of the split. Our communities are rendered private space in the
> public/private distinction. Crossing to the anglo domain only in their
> terms is not an option either, as if follows the logic of the split without the
> terms ever becoming our own, that is the nature of this--if not all--
> assimilation (Lugones 1994, 471).

Here Lugones highlights the predicament of marginalized subjectivity in liberal society,

or, in Lugones' terms, the problem faced by fragmented subjects in the logic of purity.

One is both relegated to the private sphere and assimilated into the public sphere.

Recalling Young's analysis of impartiality, which is a stance only available to the modern

(or unified) subject, the realm of impartiality is the realm of the public sphere. One can

---

[1] This model works for other fragmented beings as well. The experience of fragmentation
for women of color is to be split between the assimilable part, and those parts not
assimilable, for example, one's culture and one's sex. One may be fragmented on the
basis of one's sexuality, one's age, one's ability, etc. For white women it seems that
there is not a reduction to culture because part of being white is benefiting from the
fiction that one has no culture--that one is universal. To the extent that a white woman
universalizes her own culture, she is participating in this fiction as a unified subject. Yet,
there is a part of white women that is *not* universal. The fiction of unity is revealed in
contexts where she, as a woman, is defined as Other. Fragmentation and unity are not
static--rather, they can change somewhat according to context. To account for this
relational shift, Lugones uses the concepts of 'thickness' and 'transparency,' which will
be discussed below.

only participate in the public sphere on these terms. But, fragmented beings have a subjectivity that is not impartial or pure. To the extent that their concerns are deemed not universal, their concerns are relegated to the private sphere. Either their concerns do not become a part of public discourse, or when they do, are considered to be matters of self-interest rather than "impartial" concerns.

The debate over affirmative action is a good example of this dynamic. In the interest of promoting equality, affirmative action policies have been instituted to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups. Those who oppose such policies, and other civil rights policies, label them "special rights" since marginalized folks are singled out for "special treatment" not available to everyone. Opponents of affirmative action first deny the racism, sexism and ablism of the marketplace. The difficulties faced by these marginalized groups become their own problem--discrimination is relegated to the private sphere. Any policy which singles out persons according to race, gender, ability, etc. is bringing in a private, special interest. To compete in the marketplace, marginalized people are forced to assimilate. But as marked "others" assimilation is also difficult, if not impossible, and destructive as well.

To summarize: both the unified subject and the fragmented subject are split-separated. That means that they have multiple social identities that are "isolated" from each other. One is split-separated under the logic of purity as a fragmented being when one is reduced to one often stereotypical identity. One is split-separated as a unified being when only those parts which qualify one as universal are acknowledged. Split-separation, or the logic of purity, stands in contrast to multiplicity, or the logic of curdling. One is multiplicitous when one's identities exist in relation to each other.

110

Lugones bridges ontology and political philosophy in this argument. The problem of representation in the public sphere has been addressed by many political philosophers, some of whom try to reformulate liberal principles, while others try to create a synthesis of communitarian values in a liberal framework. Lugones takes the issue to the realm of metaphysics, arguing that the problem stems from the construction of subjectivity inherent in the liberal political framework. Her solution comes from metaphysics as well. The multiplicitous, or mestizaje subject is a better explanatory model in terms of characterizing the dynamics of marginalization, and as a result it offers a better solution than liberalism or communitarianism.

.

Curdled Separation, Beings in the Making

Those who resist split-separation, who resist the logic of purity, for Lugones, are living out a subjectivity characterized by the mestiza, the border-dweller, who is neither here nor there. Living out this subjectivity is an ongoing process, hence Lugones at times refers to such subjects as 'beings in the making,' (Lugones, 1994, 477). What is being made is new forms of subjectivity and new worlds of sense. If reason and sense belong to the logic of purity, then the actions of curdled beings are nonsensical (Lugones 1994, 476). To create new meaning, outside of and in resistance to the logic of purity, mestiza subjects must stay connected.

The basis for this connection is not sameness. That would replicate the logic of purity by focusing on the essential attribute and separating it off from the remainder. Instead, Lugones suggests that commonality, "our people" be recognized as shared practice:

I don't think we can consider "our own" only those who reject the same dichotomies as we do. It is the impulse to reject dichotomies and to live and embody that rejection that gives us some hope of standing together as people who recognize each other in our complexity. . . . A more solid ground because it is a more positive ground is the one that affirms the lack of constraint of our creativity that is at the center of curdling; that holds on to our own lack of script, to our being beings in the making . . . (Lugones 1994, 477).

What brings curdled beings together is not a common race or sexuality, but a common resistance to all such dichotomies, the "impulse to reject" such dichotomies. The link is a refusal to uphold the logic of purity and split separation.

Lugones and Subjectivity at the Group Level

Having articulated Lugones' theory of subjectivity at the individual level, I wish to conclude this analysis of Lugones by considering how, in her system, subjectivity functions at the group level. The logic of purity is a framework that constructs groups as well as individual subjects. Within the logic of purity, members of a given social group stand in specific power relations with respect to each other. Some group members are more central, others are marginalized within the group. Lugones uses the terms 'transparent' and 'thick' to account for such differences.

Lugones develops a framework for subjectivity that accounts for multiplicity and the conflicts that arise from multiple membership:

Thickness and transparency are group relative. Individuals are transparent with respect to their group if they perceive their needs, interests, ways, as those of the group and if this perception becomes dominant or hegemonical in the group. Individuals are thick if they are aware of their otherness in the group, of their needs, interests, ways, being relegated to the margins in the politics of intragroup contestation.

112

... Thick members of several oppressed groups become composites of the transparent members of those groups. . . The interlocking of memberships in oppressed groups is not seen as changing one's needs, interests, and ways qualitatively in any group but, rather, one's needs, interests, and ways are understood as the addition of those of the transparent members (Lugones 1994, 474).

Transparent members are those whose interests are best represented by the group. Lugones refers to the title of an anthology by and about Black women, entitled, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave.* The title illustrates that transparent members of the group 'women' are those members who are *white.* Transparent members of the group 'Black' are those members who are male. Persons who are members of both groups, i.e., Black women, are left out of the picture--their interests are not represented except insofar as they are included in the interests of transparent members (Lugones 1994, 474). In the group of Blacks, their interests as women are "special" or "additional," and in the group of women their interests as Blacks are "special" or "additional."

Thick members have ties to several social groups. They become fragmented when the interests of each group, to the extent that they do not overlap, pull thick members in different directions. Furthermore, as Lugones points out, thick members are seen only as the sum of discrete interests. One or two aspects of their identities may become salient in a social context, but the interests thus framed are those of the transparent members of each social group to which the thick member belongs. The political interests of that individual are not recognized by the transparent members of either group. The thick members of the group are fragmented by the structure of the group imposed by transparent members.

113

Lugones points out that the logic of purity separates and constructs group members as transparent or thick members. The logic of purity does not allow for multiplicitous subjectivity, which is excluded in the following way: Fragmented subjects (members of several oppressed groups), are fragmented when transparent members, in assuming their interests encompass those of the entire group, enforce the logic of purity which splits the fragmented beings into the pieces of their various identities. Each piece is a part of a different social group. The groups, organized according to the logic of purity, each reflect the interests of the transparent (central) members. If thick members introduce interests of other groups, the issues tend to be, again, interests of the transparent members of those other groups. For example, a latina lesbian discussing her issues with a group of mostly white lesbians may be interpreted as bringing in issues defined as Latina (and as issues of "transparent" latinas), which are separate from lesbian issues. The group may not recognize her unique issues as a latina and a lesbian. Thus, the fragmented subject is not allowed to express, or make salient, her own unique interests. Transparent members of the group also have ties to other groups, but these ties are suppressed, giving the transparent members the illusion of "purity" or, a singular identity, e.g., 'white'.

Lugones calls for a rejection of the logic of purity. Since unity is a fiction for "transparent" members, this would mean embracing those aspects of subjectivity previously suppressed, that is, acknowledging, in each social context, the power relations in which we are given privilege, and in which we act as dominators. Transparency (the fragmentation of a "unified" subject) should then disappear as these persons acknowledge their connection to marginalized group members. Those who are constructed as thick

(fragmentation of a marginalized subject) members of the group are recognized as whole selves as well. The result would be a subjectivity that acknowledges multiplicity. The self is not encapsulated by one's privilege or domination, rather, all of these relation of power are acknowledged.

Mestiza Subjectivity

In sum, Lugones provides an analysis and criticism of modern subjectivity constructed by and within a liberal political framework. She exposes the relations of domination inherent in the position of the unified subject over the fragmented subject. Her proposal is resistance to the logic of purity that supports and maintains this framework of domination, and the means of resistance is to adopt the practice of curdling. The multiplicitous subject is one who lives in the logic of curdling--the logic of impurity.

Lugones offers a few concrete practices as suggestions for living out the logic of curdling. She calls this method "a practice of festive resistance" which includes:

> Bi and multilingual experimentation; code-switching; categorical blurring and confusion; caricaturing the selves we are in the worlds of our oppressors, infusing them with ambiguity; . . . revealing the process of producing order if we cannot help producing it; undermining the orderliness of the social ordering; marking our cultural mixtures as we move . . . etc. (Lugones 1994, 478).

The general practice is that of disruption of the social order that enables domination. It is important to recognize that one cannot engage in such resistance in isolation. One needs a world of meaning in which the resistance makes sense. Lugones includes an analysis of sociality in her work. I will address that aspect of her theoretical framework in a later

section of this chapter. First I wish to compare and contrast the theory of subjectivity developed by Lugones with Butler's concept of subjectivity.

Lugones vs. Butler on Subjectivity

Lugones advocates a theory of subjectivity that acknowledges and affirms multiple simultaneous identities. Identities, *per se,* are preserved unproblematically. In contrast, Butler supports only a narrow conception of identity; an identity must remain in flux and cannot serve as the ground of a politics. Nevertheless, there are similarities between Lugones and Butler.

Butler's theory of identity formation, or subjectivity, centers on the subject as a discursive construction. The subject is constructed by language and power relations. In this respect, Butler and Lugones are in agreement. It will be useful to reconsider Butler in terms of the framework Lugones has developed.

The subject constructed by discourse, in Butler's terms, is the subject constructed by the logic of purity in Lugones' terms. For Butler, the heterosexual male is the subject that can only be constructed by the denial of the other, the female, and the homosexual. The other constitutes the background against which the subject is defined. For Lugones, the analogue is the unified subject and the fragmented subject. The fragmented subject is tainted, in contrast to which stands the purity of the unified subject. In both Butler's and Lugones' frameworks the subject is defined by the rejected other. Fixed categories define an individual as a subject or as an other. For Butler and for Lugones, the system of categories is a system of domination.

.

Butler and Lugones also agree on the response to domination: disrupt the categories. In some instances, they advocate exactly the same strategies, such as gender-fucking. Overall, both advocate local and contingent tactics for resistance. The similarities between them are significant, but at this point the similarities end.

Lugones provides a theoretical space within her framework from which to form a resistance. This is a place where alternative worlds of sense can be constructed. [2] Butler does not allow for any alternative constructions outside of the symbolic order, or the logic of purity. If language is constitutive of the social world, then there is no getting out of language. This is a point on which Butler and Lugones disagree. It will be useful to look more closely at the arguments on both sides.

Lugones and Butler on Language and the Symbolic Order

As discussed in chapter 2, Butler follows Derrida in arguing that language as a symbolic order is inescapable. There is no getting outside the symbolic order that constructs one as a woman or as a mexican/american. Therefore, for Butler, there is no alternative symbolic order from which one can theorize resistance to the symbolic order. Resistance comes from within the symbolic order, and not for any purpose other than disruption of the categories.

For Lugones, language does not play the same role. While the subject is still discursively constructed, for Lugones there are other worlds of sense, perhaps not recognized by the dominant social order, but worlds that exist nonetheless. In this respect Lugones allows for more materialism than Butler. Lugones looks to material conditions

of life as one aspect that structures a world. On the other hand, Lugones does not

discount the role of discourse in the production of the subject--the framework she names

the logic of purity is an example of discourse in this respect.

The criticism posed by Allison Weir, discussed in chapter 2, demonstrated that

Butler takes language to be too encompassing. Lugones does not make this mistake.

Lugones does not give language the power over subjectivity that Butler does. This is a

strength in Lugones' work.

In order to show how language plays a role in Lugones' work, and how alternative

symbolics are possible in her theoretical framework, it is necessary to explore

Lugones' concept of a 'world.' This is a concept that is developed throughout her work,

beginning with the essay, "Playfulness, World-Traveling, and Loving Perception". This

notion of a world is incorporated into her theory of subjectivity in more recent work.

A 'world' for Lugones, is a conceptual space within which there is a set of

meanings that constitute its inhabitants and structure relationships. Lugones herself

resists a fixed definition of the concept:

> I can explain some of what I mean by a "world." I do not want the fixity
> of a definition because I think the term is suggestive and I do not want to
> lose this. A "world" has to be presently inhabited by flesh and blood
> people. That is why it cannot be a utopia. It may also be inhabited by
> some imaginary people. It may be inhabited by people who are dead or
> people that the inhabitants of this "world" met in some other "world" and
> now have in this "world" in imagination (Lugones 1990, 395).

A 'world' is constructed of symbolic and material elements. That the 'world' must be

inhabited by living persons grounds this concept in the material conditions of people's

lives. That the world can be occupied by imaginary inhabitants indicates that there is an

---

[2] Marilyn Frye first introduced me to this important concept.

important symbolic dimension. Also, inhabitants of a world are able, in some instances, to shape their 'worlds' by bringing in such imaginary people.

This concept of a 'world' is significantly different from Butler's symbolic order. For Butler, there is no concern given to actual persons and their location in the symbolic. Instead of persons, there are subject-positions constructed by language.

Lugones introduces the concept of 'worlds' and 'world-traveling' as a further development of Marilyn Frye's essay, "In and Out of Harm's Way," (1983), in which Frye introduces the concepts of loving perception and arrogant perception. In the following passage, Frye characterizes arrogant perception:

> The arrogating perceiver is a teleologist, a believer that everything exists and happens for some purpose, and he tends to animate things, imagining attitudes toward himself as the animating motives. Everything is either "for me" or "against me." This is the kind of vision that interprets the rock one trips on as hostile, the bolt one cannot loosen as stubborn, the woman who makes meatloaf instead of spaghetti as "bad" (though he didn't say what he wanted). The arrogant perceiver does not countenance the possibility that the Other is independent, indifferent (Frye 1983, 67).

The arrogant perceiver creates a world of meaning, in Lugones' sense. Within this world, everything exists to meet or frustrate the needs, wants, and interests of the arrogant perceiver. In Lugones' later work, she transforms the concept of the arrogant perceiver into the unified subject, placed into the framework of the logic of purity.

> Frye introduced a correlate to arrogant perception, which is loving perception:

> The loving eye knows the independence of the other. It is the eye of a seer who knows that nature is indifferent. It is the eye of one who knows that to know the seen, one must consult something other than one's own will and interests and fears and imagination. One must look at the thing. One must look and listen and check and question.

> The loving eye is one that pays a certain sort of attention. This attention can require a discipline, but *not* a self-denial. The discipline is one of self-

knowledge, knowledge of the scope and boundary of the self. . . In particular it is a matter of being able to tell one's own interests from those of others and of knowing where one's self leaves off and another begins (Frye 1983, 75).

Loving perception, in the context of Lugones' work, is characterized by being able to distinguish the conceptual framework, or 'world' one might impose on another, from the world that person chooses to inhabit. Loving perception truly requires that one travel to another's world.

Loving perception is related to sociality,[3] a relationship between people that fosters ongoing political engagement. The nature of the relationship is one of attending.[4] What that means is paying a special kind of attention to each other: attention that is supportive and engaging, but not uncritical. The loving eye takes the subject on her own terms, meaning is developed through difference, not from a suspension of difference. This relation can create new worlds of meaning. This is a context in which new meaning can be created and recognized. Loving perception is contrasted with arrogant perception. From the point of view of the arrogant perceiver, everything exists to serve him. Only his world of meaning exists, everything is determined by that meaning. If it does not work in accordance with that logic, it is incomprehensible. Crazy. Meaningless.

Frye and Lugones get at the making of new meaning as a form of resistance. Lugones and Hoagland get at the relationships that foster new worlds of meaning. What is necessary for resistance to make sense as resistance is this relationship of attending known as sociality.

---

[3] Rosaldo's term
[4] Sarah Hoagland's term.

Sociality creates worlds of meaning through the attention given to one another. The 'loving eye' is turned toward each other as subjects, and each is understood on her or his own terms. There may be shared meaning, but the shared meaning comes about through the relationship--both or all participate in it, rather than there being a dominant meaning imposed. Yet this meaning is not formed in isolation--there is no private language here. That is the importance of relation.

For example, a woman who, in many ways conforms to traditional notions of gender and family roles may appear to be compliant. Yet she chooses, for example, to paint her house in bright colors--bright trim on the exterior and vivid floor and wall colors on the inside. The arrogant eye would look at this action within the dominant world of sense and would judge it as meaningless except in an aesthetic sense, and then it would be labeled tacky, if it was noticed at all.

The loving eye, the person having entered into relationship with the woman, would come to know her history, to recognize, perhaps, the pattern in her choice of colors expressed through her house, her clothing, and the flowers in her garden. Commenting on one of these examples, the woman might disclose that her love of bright colors is a reminder of her native country which she left many years ago. Her use of color is both a connection to a world of meaning and a resistance to a dominant world of meaning. The loving eye has entered that world of meaning through loving perception.

Furthermore, a 'world' varies in scope, including anywhere from a portion of society to a few individuals, and may be "incomplete:"

> A "world" may be incomplete in that things in it may not be altogether constructed or some things may be constructed negatively (they are not what 'they' are in some other "world"). Or the "world" may be

121

incomplete because it may have references to things that do not quite exist in it, references to things like Brazil. Given lesbian feminism, the construction of 'lesbian' in 'lesbian community' (a world in my sense) is purposefully and healthily up in the air, in the process of becoming (Lugones 1990, 395).

Meanings are not fully determined. Social categories, such as 'lesbian' may be deliberately left somewhat indeterminate. Within a world the meaning of a term may be in some dispute, but is clear enough to be used without being pinned down to some solidified definition.

An important aspect of this framework is that Lugones argues one can inhabit more than one world simultaneously, and one can inhabit a world unknowingly or unwillingly:

Some of the inhabitants of a "world" may not understand or accept the way in which they are constructed in it. So, for example, a recent Latin-American immigrant may not understand how she is constructed in White/Anglo "worlds." So, there may be "worlds" that construct me in ways I do not even understand or I may not accept the construction as an account of myself, a construction of myself. And yet, I may be *animating* such a construction, even though I may not intend my moves, gestures, acts in that way (Lugones 1990, 395-396).

The concept of 'animating a construction' is important. This is the link between subjectivity and 'worlds'. One becomes split-separated in situations where one is animating a construction, where one is living out a construction imposed by the dominant system of meaning, the logic of purity. The fragmented subject does not agree to this construction--it is set up to preserve the fiction of purity for the unified subjects. Although both unified and fragmented subjects can animate constructions, the effect of doing so is different for each, much like the barriers of oppression affect the oppressor and the oppressed in significantly different ways (Frye 1983, 10-13). Though the

experience of animating a construction can be harmful to both in that it maintains split-separation, the consequence for each differs. For a unified subject it serves to maintain the fiction of unity, thus consolidating her power as a white person (and/or heterosexual, christian, etc.) while the same structure serves to reinforce the fragmentation of the fragmented person, thus reinforcing her marginalization as a woman (and/or person of color, lesbian, disabled person, etc.) So, while both animate a construction, the consequences differ significantly.

The construction of subjectivity is directly connected to the worlds one inhabits, or is forced to inhabit. Both "unified" subjects and marginalized subjects are split-separated within the logic of purity. The split-separation of a "unified" person occurs as a result of the denial of some identities that the person lives out. As a unified subject, the person is refusing to acknowledge some self that is a part of herself. (The ability to deny parts of one's self one does not wish to acknowledge differs from the experience of having one aspect of herself taken as the whole, which characterizes the experience of marginalized people.) To exemplify this denial, Lugones points out the way that some people act around persons they have hired as maids:

> ... many times people act in front of their maids as if there were no one in the room. They say things and behave in ways that one can imagine as said or done only in private. When people behave this way, they do not see themselves as the maid sees them and they do not want to remember or recognize the persons who are seen by the maids, of whom the maids are witnesses. The maids can testify only in the world of the dominated, the only world where that testimony is understood and recognized. There are many reasons why the employers do not remember themselves as maids know them. One of these reasons concerns their own sense of moral integrity since, as they are witnessed by the maids, they lack it (Lugones 1990b, 304).

The employers treat the maid as if she is not human by ignoring the presence of the maid in the room. They behave in a public space as if it were private. The maid is both dehumanized and delegitimized as a reporter of the employer's actions, since, according to the employer, the maid was never there to act as a witness. That is how the fragmentation of the maid occurs.

The split-separation of the employer occurs as a result of the denial of the self witnessed by the maid. The employer cannot "see" the self that the maid sees. Thus, certain selves of the employer do not exist for the employer, and s/he can foster the appearance of unity. The perception of the maid doesn't count. In order for one's perception to be accepted as legitimate, one must participate in the fiction that creates the appearance of unity.

Thus both the maid and the employer are split-separated in this situation, but only the maid carries the weight of fragmentation. The employer, having the power to impose her world of meaning onto the situation, is then constructed as unified. In the world of the dominated, the maid can perceive the hypocrisy of the employer, the self whose existence is denied, but perceptions in this world do not count.

Though Lugones herself does not wish to analyze the concept of a world, it is useful to sketch out some elements of what constitutes a world in order to compare this framework to Butler's framework. Worlds, according to Lugones, are constituted by relations between persons. One may participate in constituting a world, or one may be forced into occupying a world, "animating a construction." Relations between persons are structured by language, material conditions, and the power to either convey to or

enforce one's perceptions upon another. Language plays an important role in terms of

naming worlds one might occupy:

> One can be at the same time in a "world" that constructs one as
> stereotypically latin, for example, and in a "world" that constructs one as
> latin. Being stereotypically latin and being simply latin are different
> simultaneous constructions of persons that are part of different "worlds."
> One animates one or the other or both at the same time without necessarily
> confusing them, though simultaneous enactment can be confusing to
> oneself (Lugones 1990, 396).

'Latin' for many anglos, connotes the world of the stereotypical latin, and at the same

time can connote, for the latina herself, the world of being simply latin. Being labeled

'latin' places one into at least two different worlds. Such is the power of naming.

Language constructs worlds, but there is some ambiguity as to which worlds one means--

e.g., latin, or stereotypically latin.

There seems to be a distinction between the worlds of the dominators and the

worlds of the dominated. Dominators have the power to impose their worlds on others,

while the dominated have the power to construct their own marginalized worlds, some of

which may be imposed on those members of the group who are further marginalized,

such as latina women, and latina lesbians. Worlds, then are also constructed by those

who have the power to create a community of meaning.

Such communities of meaning, in addition to their symbolic value, have direct

material consequences. Within the logic of purity, the marginalized person is constructed

in such a way that closes down possibilities: the job is filled, the apartment is rented, the

victim of violence is targeted. These consequences also support and enforce the

construction of a world.

The preceding analysis demonstrates the ways in which 'worlds' on Lugones' framework, are constructed by social relations involving language, power and material conditions. This is a far richer framework than the symbolic offered by Butler. For Lugones, language is not the only determining factor in the creation and maintenance of a world. Butler, in relying almost exclusively on language, leaves out important factors that influence social constructions. Lugones' theoretical framework is preferable to Butler's.

Sue Campbell raises a criticism of Lugones' theory of subjectivity. As a means of developing an anti-racist consciousness, Lugones argues for a process of identity transformation. One must call on one's own multiplicity in order to travel to another 'world.' Such travel gives one knowledge of the other, and one can recognize how she is constructed in the world of the other. For those who lay claim to dominant identities, this knowledge is necessary in order to adopt an antiracist politics.

Campbell's objection pertains to the assumption that members of dominant social groups have multiplicitous subjectivities. Though exploring one's multiplicity may work as a strategy for marginalized persons, that model is not helpful for those with dominant identities (Campbell, 229). In the latter case, instead of asserting the prior multiplicity of the subject, Campbell advocates a process of unsettling dominant expectations, which facilitates the construction of multiple selves:

> Unsettling expectations helps deconstruct the unquestioned normativity of dominance. Moreover, settled expectations are such an important part of dominant identities that their unsettling is not (like playfulness) a change in attitude prior to the shift in self, but helps to constitute the shift (Campbell, 222).

126

Rather than calling on an assumed multiplicity, Campbell argues that multiplicity can be constructed by the process of unsettling expectations. Campbell is right to emphasize the extent to which ones expectations, when they reflect the norm, can close off avenues of awareness--can close off awareness of ones own dominant identity.

Campbell is also correct to point out that a focus on ones own multiplicity by those with dominant identities can distract from the work of antiracism:

> Those with dominant identities have considerable power to order environments through what they attend to; thus, their environments do not impinge on them or change them. This fact should give us reasonable caution about appeals to fragmentation and multiplicity in the self as aids to the political transformations that those with dominant social identities need to undertake. Those with dominant identities must take responsibility for the often racist patterns of interpretation through which they understand the world. To regard one's identity as multiple and providing diverse standpoints can turn attention away from the responsibility of identifying how systematically distorted one's perspective of others is (Campbell, 229).

Campbell points out an important problem that arises when persons with dominant identities consider their own multiplicity. That is, they can turn the focus back onto themselves, focusing on those selves which are marginalized and ignoring those selves which are dominant. A white lesbian who explores her own multiplicity by focusing on the 'lesbian' and 'woman' marginalized selves, and ignoring the 'white' and perhaps 'middle-class' selves, is not transforming her identity in ways that undermine racism. In fact, this possibility reintroduces the criticism of identity politics raised by Suzanne Pharr (chapter 1), namely, that focus solely on one's identity as a marginalized person leads to a single-issue politics. Those with dominant identities can and do reappropriate the concept of multiplicity to authorize their own marginality and exonerate themselves for any aspect in which they are dominant. The extreme version of this, as noted by Delia

Aguilar, can be found in postmodern celebrations of "difference" where the power relations that construct difference are completely excluded (see my discussion of this point in chapter 3). Campbell is right in pointing out that a focus on multiplicity by those with dominant identities can distract them from political work. However, Lugones accounts for this in her discussion of the unified subject.

The unified subject is fragmented, but the fragmentation is masked by fictitious unity. This is not to say that one who appears to hold a dominant identity in fact is multiplicitous, and ought to focus on those identities that are marginalized. That is not what Lugones advocates. Instead, one who holds a dominant identity must recognize the ways in which she is constructed in other worlds, in the worlds of the marginalized. Those worlds reveal a self that is not benevolent, benign, well-intentioned, and other qualities we'd like to attribute to ourselves. The worlds of marginalized peoples reveal, for example, the ways in which white people can be 'whitely' as Marilyn Frye explains. 'Whiteliness' is analogous to 'masculinity' insofar as both connote characteristics that assert and maintain dominance, seemingly attributable to some innate characteristic attached to race or sex, but which are in fact socially constructed. White people are not necessarily whitely, just as men do not necessarily participate in the construction of masculinity. But many white people are whitely. (Frye 1992, 151-163). Consider again the example of the maid that Lugones analyzes. The employers recognize themselves as unified subjects, good, well-meaning people who pay their maid a decent wage. The maid sees the selves they present only to her, as well as the selves they acknowledge. She sees the fragments, and she sees the fictional unity, and sees that it *is* fictional. For the employers to acknowledge their own fragmentation would require them to travel to

the world of the maid. Such travel would entail the loving perception described above. Such travel would require a profound shift in consciousness on the part of the employers. Thus, the realization of their own multiplicity, or fragmentation as constructed in the logic of purity, would bring about the transformation required for antiracist work. Simple awareness of fragmentation (or multiplicity) is not what Lugones is calling for. Of those who have dominant identities, she requires an awareness of one's fragmentation as a unified subject and an acknowledgment of the ways in which one benefits from such fragmentation. Thus, Lugones' model, properly understood, is sufficient for bringing about a transformational change in identity awareness.

Conclusion

Lugones develops a theory of subjectivity which responds to serious concerns raised by feminist theorists. The subject positions she proposes link the present system with a vision of transformed subjectivity. Her vision is not utopian, in fact, it exists at this moment. Her argument is that we need to extend this vision--to bring it out of the worlds of the marginalized in order to resist the forces which serve to maintain their domination.

Lugones' project is both descriptive and normative. It is descriptive insofar as she is capturing elements of modern society which lead to the construction of unified and fragmented subjects. She is capturing something about social reality that had not been named or described, at least in ways that make the connections she makes. The task of naming is an important part of any politics/theory of resistance.

There is a normative dimension to her work as well. Lugones urges those of us who condemn racism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, etc. to resist the forces of domination and exploitation. The particular means of resistance that she advocates is world traveling. A form of loving perception that requires us to recognize our own fragmentation and the ways in which we contribute to the fragmentation of others. Only through world-traveling can we develop the kind of social ontology that Lugones recognizes as resistant, even liberatory. That social ontology is the logic of curdling, wherein we can move at ease between worlds of our own construction, accommodating all of our multiple identities. Without the logic of purity, there are no worlds where we exist only as stereotypes. When we adopt the logic of curdling, the logic of impurity, we can occupy that space as multiplicitous, mestiza subjects.

In the next chapter I will address specific ways we can take these concepts to form a coalitional identity politics. One of the most important practices that stems from the concept of world-traveling and curdled logic is a rejection of the theory/practice dichotomy. To this end, it is important that Lugones' work not be taken as a theory separate from action.

Chapter Five: Multiplicity in Identities: Beyond the Metaphysics of Substance[1]

The form of subjectivity developed by Lugones is one that allows for a political framework that does not rely on a liberal individualist subjectivity and politics. That is a strength because a liberal individualist subjectivity is part of a political theory that relies on the public/private dichotomy to structure social life. This dichotomy helps to construct individuals who are split between particular interests, relegated to the private domain, and universal interests which are made public. Only interests which pertain to the whole can be admitted into the public sphere. Interests which pertain to a subgroup of the whole are not universalizable. Claims on behalf of particular groups are labeled 'special interest' claims, and are rendered suspect in the public sphere. As a result, those individuals who belong to marginalized subgroups of society, and as a result have an explicit interest in seeing structural inequities addressed, find their claims dismissed as a ploy to gain 'special rights'. Thus the liberal individualist construction of subjectivity is not helpful to marginalized groups.

The liberal individualist commitment to universalistic principles such as impartiality is also problematic. Iris Marion Young's argument, discussed in chapter four, points out that a reliance on impartiality will not eliminate bias. In fact, by appealing to impartiality, we serve instead to instantiate the bias of dominant groups such as males, heterosexuals and white people. Outlaw's appeal to such principles to

---

[1] Much of the thinking for this chapter has been worked out in response to the work done in a conference, the Second Dialogue on Methodologies of Resistant Negotiation, held at SUNY Binghamton, December, 1999. I appreciate the honesty and the generosity of the working group. They embody the concept of political sociality.

adjudicate between competing interests will serve to marginalize the interests of exploited and oppressed groups and will uphold the interests of oppressors.

The two objections I have just addressed name consequences of an adherence to the logic of purity. Mestiza subjectivity does not carry these consequences. Lugones presents a model for relations within groups that can be extended to relations among groups. That model is the basis of a coalitional identity politics.

To return to the story presented in the introduction to this project, I wish to address the question of how the construction of identity developed by Lugones (Chapter 4) can support an identity politics that does not result in the kind of fragmentation and isolation experienced by my friend, as described in the introduction to this dissertation. Subjectivity in the logic of purity is split-separated, even in community. Split-separation is a result of the denial of the relationship of one's multiple identities. If one is forced into a "pop bead logic" [2] in a particular situation or in a particular culture she is reduced to caricatures of those identities recognized by the dominant culture. One result of the construction of identities as multiple is that the pop bead logic, split separation, is rejected. Identities are preserved as important locations for the subject. Yet there is a context in which multiple enmeshed identities are recognized.

Identities within a logic of curdling, a mestiza logic, support a politics of identity insofar as identities are preserved and remain foci of analysis and organization. Though lines dividing identities cease to separate one identity from another, resistance to the logic of purity is not a rejection of categories *per se*. Rather, resistance to the logic of purity is resistance to the form of domination that is enabled by selective enforcement of

132

categories within the logic of purity. When social categories or identities are split-separated in ways that construct unified subjects and fragmented subjects, then categories facilitate domination. It is possible to keep categories more or less intact while recognizing interplay between categories. For example, a latina remains a latina even if the stereotypical understanding of 'latina' is no longer invoked. Over time the meaning of 'latina' will change as the identity is no longer associated with the stereotype. She remains a latina in the multiplicitous sense, in that she is still a woman of a certain age, class, sexual orientation, level of ability or disability, etc. That is, her identity as a latina is inflected by her membership in other social categories. The liberatory effect of the logic of curdling is to allow the mingling of social categories without destroying the categories. This move can offer a response to the problem of the metaphysics of substance.

One major criticism of identity constructions within the framework of the metaphysics of substance is that such identities reinforce the structures that produce them. Even oppositional identities do so because they stand in opposition to, and are therefore defined by the original construction. Construing identities as multiplicitous involves making new meaning for identities. One may ask whether new meaning is always defined in terms of what it opposes. The creation of new meaning could be construed as merely the reversal of dominant meaning, "double-double-unthink."[3] One example of this is the reversal of racist dominant meaning by the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power. The value of African-American identity changed from negative to positive by the

---

[2] Elizabeth Spelman's term.
[3] Andrea Dworkin's term.

adoption of the ideology expressed in the phrase, "Black is Beautiful". [4] That is an example of a reversal in opposition to the dominant meaning. The meaning of "Black" is contested. An identity politics arose around the struggle to value Black identity.

But this move is not only a reversal of dominant meaning. For example, new meaning is created in the articulation of the ideology, "Black is Beautiful". Distinctly African hairstyles were adopted by Black folks (and later by white folks) as a cultural expression and a practical acknowledgment that these styles were especially suited to the texture of hair of many people of African origin. The political ramifications were present as well. Black folks who adopted such styles were censured for being "political".

Only the arrogant eye would see the act of adopting such hairstyles as strictly oppositional. The loving eye would see it in the context of a new or different world of meaning. That is not to say that the loving eye would not perceive the relationship between both worlds of meaning and appreciate the resistance to the dominant world that adoption of such styles expresses. The loving eye would grasp all that, but would not reduce the meaning of that action to merely an opposition to the dominant world. The loving eye acknowledges multiple interpretations of this action. The arrogant eye acknowledges only the interpretation which places the arrogant perceiver in the center.

Acknowledgment of multiplicity in social identity changes the way group members interact. For example, the lesbian community must (and does to a great extent) take into account issues of racism, classism, dis/ability, anti-semitism, and so on. These become issues for every member of the community, not only for those who directly suffer their deleterious effects. The logic of curdling will eliminate the distinction between

---

[4] Bill Lawson's example in conversation, 9/99.

134

'thick' and 'transparent' members of social groups because transparent members, in recognizing their own multiple identities must, to remain consistent, recognize the concerns of thick members. Social groups become a microcosm of the larger society in that many issues would be taken up that might not otherwise be recognized by otherwise transparent members. In the context of a smaller social group, such as the lesbian community, these issues become more "real" to transparent members because they are issues faced by friends and loved ones, and are issues in which everyone is involved or implicated. In this respect, loving perception and world traveling has the potential to foster understanding and concern across differences that otherwise might divide.

Critics of the distinction between transparent and thick membership have pointed out that, in a group of people with many forms of marginalization, it is not clear whose interests get represented as marginal and whose interests as central.[5] One's status as a thick or transparent member is context-dependent, as Lugones points out (Lugones 1994, 474). Within a group, though, members can be marginalized, or made 'thick' in different ways. Are marginalized interests in competition with each other in this situation? For example, early second-wave feminists quickly learned that, in addition to fighting sexism, they would also need to address racism, homophobia, classism, anti-semitism, etc. I understand the question raised to ask who gets to be marginal in this context. For

---

[5] I first became aware of this question in the discussion period following a presentation by Uma Narayan entitled, "Feminist Politics and Cross-Cultural Analyses" (Eastern APA, December 1999). In response to my suggestion that the framework of 'thickness' and 'transparency' might be useful in understanding and recognizing the issues of marginalized groups Narayan suggested that the reduction to two positions is "not sufficient" to capture the problem and suggest an avenue for change. In a private conversation with Lisa Tessman regarding this point, Tessman suggested that it would be

example, an Asian, disabled, middle-class married woman, stands as both oppressor and oppressed in relation to an able-bodied working class, bisexual Jewish woman. Within the logic of purity one might want to call upon a "hierarchy of oppressions" to determine who is thick and who is transparent. The logic of purity fosters separation and fragmentation. But such thinking is wrongheaded.

The logic of curdling resists taxonomies of oppression. There are many ways in which one can be marginalized in a group. In concrete situations, it is not useful to try to sort out and classify the thick members and the transparent members. What is useful is a commitment by each member to be attentive to other members. If each member is engaged in loving perception, and is attuned to the need for world-travelling, the thickness of thick members will cease to function as a source of fragmentation. Transparent members will recognize the fiction of their seeming unity, there seeming commitment to one identity, for example. Both thick members and transparent members will recognize their own split-separation. Through world-travelling and loving perception, split-separation can become multiplicity. The crucial commitment must be made to consider the many worlds each member carries with her.

Multiplicity in the Realm of Politics

The framework of mestiza subjectivity can function as a politics insofar as it suggests ways of organizing society and how power ought to flow among all sectors of society. This framework also functions as a politics insofar as it designates methods of

---

difficult in a group to know who counts as 'thick' and 'who counts as 'transparent'. I wish to respond to the latter concern here.

bringing about progressive change, or at the very least, methods of resisting present forces of domination. Thus, this framework is a politics of liberation.

The framework of sociality created by the logic of curdling has the potential to transform relations between social groups as well as within social groups. The ties that connect members of a group serve to incline each to take up interests not directly their own. Such ties may not appear to exist between different social groups. However, since group members have already come to terms with their own fragmentation and their participation in the fragmentation of others, they are already accustomed to world-travelling. And since they recognize the importance of interests they do not directly share, it is likely that such members would be able to extend that recognition beyond the immediate social group in question. Group members who share a common culture have already learned to take into account the other 'worlds' brought to that world by various members. Outside of that group, they may encounter folks whose world they have already come to know. If, as a lesbian, I am concerned about other lesbians, I will, as a world-traveller, become interested in lesbians of races, abilities, and religious upbringings different from my own. So I will become acquainted with these worlds when I meet people from them who may not recognize in me the common bond of lesbian life.

Identity politics has been criticized for being self-centered in focusing on one's own interests, say, as a lesbian, and only taking up those concerns pertaining to lesbians. I do not accept that interpretation of the motives behind identity politics. Focusing on one's identity as a marginalized person is a means of survival, not a means of self-aggrandizement. The necessary correlate to an identity politics is an awareness of one's identity as a dominator. In comparison to those who reject identity politics, but cluster

among members of their own race and class to further their own interests, a coalitional identity politics is much less self serving.

Toward a Coalitional Identity Politics

If we understand politics to be a sustained, concerted movement that seeks to intervene and endure,[6] we have a concept of a politics that connects with sociality. The relations between persons fostered by sociality are developed in a political context. The loving eye perceives the relations of power in which the subject is enmeshed, and perceives the contexts in which the subject creates new meaning--a meaning that contests power relations or that creates or is a kind of agency.

To link power relations to identity is to repoliticize identity. The Combahee River Collective, in 1977, made links between their identities and their politics. Much of identity politics since then has become depoliticized. Concurrently, in larger discussions of feminist theory, talk of identity gave way to talk about power relations, at least in some circles. This change was beneficial to feminist theory in at least two ways. Since one's identities had largely been reduced to consideration of a single identity, the language of power relations offered a more nuanced, complex analysis of oppression than can be had by a theory considering only one identity. Namely, the language of power relations captures the ways in which we act as oppressors as well as oppressed. This offered a link to considerations of multiple identities. Second, this analysis captures the diffuse nature of oppression, that it is in the minds and bodies of the oppressed as well as in the actions of the oppressors.

However, the diffuseness and complexity led some away from talk about oppression altogether, since it was difficult if not impossible to unequivocally name oppressors or oppressed persons. I think this difficulty led some theorists away from politics and political action as surely as did the reduction of identity politics to single-issue narcissistic "politics". The theorists retreated to theory, and the practitioners of identity politics retreated to identity--both became apolitical in significant ways.

This depoliticization is countered by the reconnection of politics to identity in sociality. Identity cannot be reduced to single-issue politics when understood in the context of the logic of curdling. Likewise, power relations cannot be separated from the concrete situations in which power functions. Grounding identity and power relations in a politics centered on sociality is an important aspect of a relational coalition identity politics.

Adopting the model of mestiza subjectivity necessarily leads to a coalitional identity politics. By adopting a mestiza theory of subjectivity, we recognize our connection to others across "differences" that heretofore were divisive. For example, I would not only recognize my identities as a woman and as a lesbian, but my identities as a white, christian-raised person. I recognize the unearned privilege given to me even as I recognize the harm that comes to me, and I recognize the harm that comes to my friends as a result of a power structure that does not harm me in the same way. As I politicize the harms that come to me, through an identity politics, I must, within the logic of curdling, politicize the harms that come to those to whom I am connected--not through shared oppression, but through shared resistance to oppression. By politicizing (and recognizing

---

[6] Methodologies of Resistant Negotiation, Working Group.

the politicization of) other harms, I participate in building a movement that addresses multiple oppressions, yet is still an identity politics. Such a politics is coalitional in that it takes up many interconnected issues. Yet it is not a temporary coalition, but a sustained effort that comes from the sociality of the logic of curdling and loving perception. Coalitional politics is useful because it is a recognition of the interconnectedness of multiple oppressions. It does not seek to redress the harms of one group at the expense of another group.

This model of identity politics also employs a construction of identity which does not reproduce or rely on a metaphysics of substance. If the articulation of an identity is the drawing of a boundary marking off what is not that identity, then this theory of subjectivity moves away from the metaphysics of substance by constantly considering what it is not, and how that serves to construct what is. The metaphysics of substance relies on the logic of purity to function. But the multiplicitous identity necessarily involves a relational element that connects one to others in the group, and allows for change over time. Both of these elements work to disrupt the substantial unity of the subject. Unlike the subject constructed in Butler's metaphysics, on this construction, the subject is connected to the concrete world and can identify issues on which to act. This subject has political agency.

Bibliography

Bibliography

Aguilar, Delia. "What's Wrong with the 'F' Word" (1994) in *Frontline Feminism. 1975-1995: Essays from* Sojourner's *First 20 Years*, edited by Karen Kahn. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1995.

Appiah, Anthony. "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race" in *Race, Writing, and Difference.* ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

_____. "But Would that Still Be Me?: Notes on Gender, "Race," Ethnicity, as Sources of Identity." In Zack, 1997.

Bourne, Jenny. "Homelands of the mind: Jewish Feminism and Identity Politics" in *Race and Class.*1987, pp. 1-24.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* New York: Routledge, 1990.

_____. *Bodies that Matter,* NY: Routledge, 1993.

_____. "Contingent Foundations" in *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange.* Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell, Nancy Fraser. NY: Routledge, 1995.

Campbell, Sue. "Dominant Identities and Settled Expectations," in *Racism and Philsophy.* ed. by Susan E. Babbitt and Sue Campbell. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Code, Lorraine. *What can she know? : feminist theory and the construction of knowledge.* Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1991.

Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement" in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology.* NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, edited by Barbara Smith. New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (Andrew Paschall, ed.) *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader.* NY: Collier Books, 1991.

Felman, Jyl Lynn. *Hot Chicken Wings.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1992.

Frye, Marilyn. "Oppression," from *Politics of Reality.* Marilyn Frye. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1983

_____. "In and Out of Harm's Way" from *Politics of Reality*. Marilyn Frye.   Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1983

_____. "White Woman Feminist", *Willful Virgin: Essays in Feminism*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1992 _

Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1989

Harding, Sandra G. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? : Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1991.

Hartsock, Nancy. "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism" from *Discovering Reality*. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, eds. D Reidel Publishing Co. 1983.

Hill Collins, Patricia . *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990.

Hoagland, Sarah Lucia. *Lesbian Ethics: Toward New Value*. Palo Alto: Institute of Lesbian Studies, 1988.

hooks, bell. "feminist scholarship: ethical issues" from *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. by bell hooks. South End Press, 1989.

Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. translated by Gillian Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Kahn, Karen, ed. *Frontline Feminism, 1975-1995: Essays from* Sojourner's *First 20 Years*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1995.

Kaye/Kantrowitz, Klepfisz. *The Tribe of Dina*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986, 1989.

JeeYeun Lee, "Beyond Bean Counting" in *Listen Up! Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*. edited by Barbara Findlen, Seattle: Seal Press, 1995.

Lugones, María. "Playfulness, World Travelling, and Loving Perception" from *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*. ed. by Gloria Anzaldúa. Aunt Lute Foundation Books, 1990, pp. 390-402.

_____. "Structure/Antistructure and Agency Under Oppression" *Journal of Philosophy*, 1990.

_____. "Purity, Impurity, and Separation" *Signs* Winter, 1994.

Lugones, María and Spelman, Elizabeth V. "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice'" in *Women's Studies International Forum*. 1983.

Nelson, Lynn Hankinson. *Who Knows : From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism*. Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1990.

Nicholson, Linda. *The Play of Reason: From the Modern to the Postmodern*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Nye, Andrea. *Feminist Theories and the Philosophies of Man*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

Outlaw, Lucius T. Jr. *On Race and Philosophy*. NY: Routledge, 1996.

Pharr, Suzanne. "Multi-Issue Politics" from *Transformation*, January/February 1994, the quarterly newsletter of the Women's Project, Little Rock, AK. Reprinted in *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, edited by Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okizawa-Rey; Mountain View: Mayfield, 1998.

Schulman, Sarah. *My American History: Lesbian and Gay Life During the Reagan/Bush Years*. NY: Routledge, 1994.

Smith, Barbara, ed. *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983.

Surrock, John (ed). *Structuralism and Since*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Weeks, Kathi. *Constituting Feminist Subjects*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Weir, Allison. *Sacrificial Logics: Feminist Theory and the Critique of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

West, David. *An Introduction to Continental Philosophy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996.

Whitford, Margaret. *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Wright, Elizabeth, ed. *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: a Critical Dictionary*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992. Blackwell Publishers, 1992.

Young, Iris Marion. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Zack, Naomi, ed. *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay.* NY: Routledge, 1997.

_____. *Thinking about Race.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1998.