

# Valuing Narratives of Hybridity and Multiplicity

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## ABSTRACT

By providing parallel critiques of US Third World feminism and radical lesbian feminism from the perspective of bisexual feminists and feminists of mixed race, ethnicity, and culture, this author argues that theories concerned with power, privilege, and social change would benefit from a valuation of narratives of hybridity and multiplicity.

## RÉSUMÉ

Ayant à l'appui des critiques parallèles de la perception féministe américaine sur le Tiers Monde et du féminisme lesbien radical en partant du point de vue des féministes bisexuelles et des féministes de race mixte, de l'ethnicité et de la culture, cette auteure affirme que les théories reliées au pouvoir, au privilège et au changement social tirerait profit d'estimer à leur juste valeur les récits sur le hybridité et sur la multiplicité.

*Some days the line I walk turns out to be  
straight*

*Other days the line tends to deviate*

*I've got no criteria for sex or race*

*I just want to hear your voice*

*I just want to see your face.*

-Ani DiFranco

## INTRODUCTION: THEORIES, QUERIES, QUESTIONS

*(In a woman's voice)*<sup>1</sup>

My theorizing is concerned with the "in-betweens." My critique, therefore, is directed at theories which are potentially exclusionary by neglecting the experiences of people who have hybrid identities such as bisexuals, people of mixed race, and people who have grown up in multiple cultural contexts.<sup>2</sup> Two theories which may participate in this exclusion are US Third World feminism and radical lesbian feminism. I argue that theorizing about multiculturalism and multiracial existence can enrich US Third World feminist insights, and likewise that an inclusion of bisexual or "multisexual" experiences can improve radical lesbian feminist contributions to feminist theory.

## US THIRD WORLD FEMINISM AND THE INVISIBILITY OF MULTICULTURALITY

*(Problematically in a bicultural bilingual white  
woman's voice)*

Third World feminism emerged in North America as a reaction to hegemonic white western feminism and has provided important critiques of the exclusion of Third World women and women of color in many feminist analyses of women's oppression. Chela Sandoval suggests that US Third World feminism proposes an "oppositional consciousness" that leads to the questioning of white western feminisms (1991, 1). Yet, has Third World feminism, like the feminisms it critiques, fallen short of recognizing diversity of experience within the category "Third World woman?" Does Third World feminism reify monolithic oppositional categories "white woman" and "Third World woman," thereby rendering invisible hybrid women?

Third World feminism has made important contributions to feminist discourse. Third World feminists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Chela Sandoval, and Maria Lugones have presented excellent analyses and accounts of women's experiences of colonialism, patriarchy, globalization, and poverty. More specifically, US

Third World Feminism has emphasized the need for people of color (and members of any oppressed group) to have a separate "safe space." Women of color who are angry as a result of the double blow of racism and sexism can take time away from white women to heal. Gloria Anzaldua discusses this reaction to racism in *Bridges of Power*: "I think that some women-of-color are, in these reactionary times, in these very racist times, choosing to be islands for a little while. These race separatists, small in numbers, are disgusted not only with patriarchal culture, but also with white feminism and the white lesbian community" (1990, 223). However, Anzaldua also points out that being an island cannot be a way of life. Thus, some US Third World feminists see separatism as a protective reaction against racism and sexism, but also see it as a temporary measure, particularly when it comes to forming alliances to end white supremacy and patriarchy.

Third World feminism also provides an analytical framework for discussing racism or antagonism between so-called "Third World" people. Internalized racism, or "introjecting," as Anzaldua calls it, takes place when racial minority groups internalize the racism of the white majority, resulting in racism between different racial minorities (1990, 226). It is difficult to separate white racism from other forms of racism when European colonization has had such profound effects on much of the world. In *Yearning*, in her chapter entitled "Third World Diva Girls," bell hooks entreats women of color to be "ever vigilant, living as we do in a society where internalized racism and sexism make it a norm for us to treat one another harshly and with disrespect" (1990, 94). So while there are problems with assuming automatic support and solidarity between different Third World feminists, Third World feminism has provided an important analysis of power and oppression that contributes to our understanding of the history of colonialism and racism experienced by Third World people.

#### **WHAT MULTICULTURALITY HAS TO OFFER THIRD WORLD FEMINISM**

*(Unproblematically in Tania's voice)*

I am half, my children half again,  
our blood thinning as our skin whitens,  
the half-life of my culture one generation  
long.

My sisters don't recognize in me  
the long cry back to the high hills  
where I watched my sheep,  
a warm cape for the chill night.

(Julia Park Rodrigues qtd. in  
Glancy 1994, 30)

The numbers of people are increasing whose experiences of oppression are in part due to their mixed heritage, whether it be their mixed race, culture, ethnicity, or religion. These people have experienced the ambivalence and confusion of living with a mixed identity, of being misunderstood, of feeling part of an oppressed group and a privileged group at the same time. Their "living heritage," or the cultural heritage that comes from lived experiences in different cultures needs to be valued along with their genetic heritage. My own living heritage is multi-cultural and inter-racial. I am the daughter of an American mother and French-Canadian father. From the age of six to fifteen, I lived in the Comoro Islands, Malawi, and Trinidad. Since returning to Canada, most of my relationships have been inter-racial and inter-cultural. It is not surprising then that my theorizing about race and culture should include an analysis of hybridity and multiculturalism. Through my experiences of racism and of the invisibility of my own "living heritage," I feel that much of the theorizing that goes on around race and ethnicity are dichotomous and over-simplified. A journal entry indicates my sentiments about this complexity:

*April 1st 1993.* I wish I was completely mixed. I wish my grandmother was East Indian, my grandfather Chinese, my other grandmother black and my other grandfather another whole mix altogether. The whole issue of appropriation of culture is so complex. Who has the rights to access what culture? Race is so important, and at the same time it is meaningless. (Trépanier 1993)

It is obvious that issues around race, racism, cultural appropriation, and representation are not about to get any simpler. Increasingly, people in North America are claiming hybrid identities, and very often it is these people who provide important insights into coalition building and cross-racial and cross-cultural understanding.<sup>3</sup> In Toronto nearly one million people identified themselves as having multiple ancestry in the 1991 census (Tiller 1997, 7). There is a clear demographic trend in the United States and Canada indicating that North Americans of white European descent will no longer constitute the large majority of the population. Researchers predict that given current immigration and fertility rates, by the year 2055 groups now classified as minorities will outnumber whites of European descent (Stix 1996, 22). This will be even more dramatically true in urban centers such as Vancouver, Toronto, New York, and the San Francisco Bay area which are already so ethnically and racially diverse.

Many people are wary of inter-ethnic relationships and marriages because of the misconception that hybridity will necessarily lead to a dilution of ethnicity. This perceived danger of "watering down" or "fading out" is given as a reason for people of the same ethnicity to protect their ethnic integrity, masking the inherent xenophobia of such reasoning. Yet, writers and scholars have pointed out that often the opposite is true: "What do we make of the case (and writings) of Sandra Birdsell, half-Mennonite and half-Metis, who far from showing a decline in ethnic salience, instead provides considerable insight into problems of inter-minority relations within the larger Canadian culture?" (Padolsky 1990, 29-30). Children of racial and ethnic intermixing not only provide insight into the issues of visible and ethnic minorities, but their increased awareness of difference and ethnicity have implications for a better understanding of intra-ethnic relations on communal and social levels.

The experience of being born in one culture, growing up in another, and living as an adult in a third is one that is shared by more people as migration increases. My own experiences growing up in Africa and the Caribbean have indelibly marked me. As a teenager in Trinidad, my

desire to be brown and "fit in" co-existed with a sense that my whiteness was a sign of privilege. Among my friends, white was associated with Americans, who were envied for their access to the "American dream," but who were also ridiculed and stereotyped. After I proved that I could be just as "Trinidadian" as my friends by dancing to calypso music and by talking like a "Trini gyal," one friend told me that when she first met me she thought, "Who is dis gyal wit' de corn colored hair?" As a child in Africa, I remember my friends spending hours braiding their beautiful black kinky hair, and when it was my turn to have my hair braided, it was slippery and limp. When I lived in rural Rajasthan in India, women were astonished by the color of my hair; they asked me if I had a disease or if I had prematurely aged. It was not until the age of fifteen when my family moved to Canada that I was exposed to a standard of beauty (fair skin, slim figure, and blonde hair) different from the many versions I had grown up with.

Growing up with mixed messages of privilege and identity meant that while I recognized that my whiteness gave me privileges, it also gave me a status as "other." On the streets in Trinidad, I was frequently called "WHITEY!" or people would shout, "Go back to South Africa, Afrikaner!" While in Malawi and Trinidad, my whiteness gave me a visibility I did not want, in Canada my whiteness renders invisible my experiences growing up in the "Third World." Can I call myself a Third World woman because of my lived experiences? My position as the child of academics growing up in Third World countries was one of privilege in many ways, made possible by some of the structures put in place by colonialism. Nonetheless, I wish to create a space where I can recognize and validate the impact of my experiences growing up in places where I was different and where I was sometimes viewed with suspicion and hostility. This ambivalence about how to make sense of my experiences growing up in the "Third World" is reflected in my ambivalence about Third World feminist theorizing.

### **RADICAL LESBIAN FEMINISM AND THE INVISIBILITY OF BISEXUALITY**

*(Problematically in a bisexual woman's voice)*

Queer theorizing and the queer identity have emerged both in and out of the academy in recent years as more inclusive of non-heteronormative sexualities. Queer theory makes a space in the gay and lesbian liberation movement for a recognition of the complexity and diversity of sexual, erotic, and political realities, so that bisexuals, transgendered people, two-spirited people and in some cases heterosexual people can participate in a queer liberation movement which challenges heterosexual norms. According to Annamarie Jagose, queer is sometimes used as "an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications," and other times to describe "a nascent theoretical model which has developed out of more traditional lesbian and gay studies" (1).

However, not all theorists are happy with queer theory or think it is a good idea. The perspective articulated by Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger in their essay "The Queer Backlash" is a contemporary example of radical lesbian feminists alienating would-be allies. They would have us believe that queer theorizing is conservative and "deeply dangerous" for radical feminism. They claim that this is in part because queer theorists see feminism as a totalizing "grand narrative" (1996, 379). They suggest that queer politics "validate" bisexuality, saying: "Whether celebrating the joys of bisexual sex, or promoting bisexuality with explicitly anti-lesbian arguments, these queer-inspired proponents of a 'new' bisexual politics completely fail to engage with radical feminist analyses" (1996, 381). Wilkinson and Kitzinger also presume that bisexual and queer theorists have no analysis or critique of heterosexuality as an oppressive or compulsory institution. Bisexual theorists' critique of compulsory *monosexuality* (the idea that one must be attracted either only to people of the same gender or to people of the opposite gender, but not both genders) certainly does not preclude critiquing compulsory heterosexuality. One bisexual theorist, Karin Baker, has coined the term "compulsory heteromonosexuality" to describe this twofold sexual norm (1992, 509). Wilkinson and Kitzinger believe that "as the meanings of heterosexuality and homosexuality become blurred within a fantasy

world of ambiguity, indeterminacy and charade, the material realities of oppression and the feminist politics of resistance are forgotten" (1996, 382). This statement belies their discomfort with the kinds of challenges to binary oppositional categorization that queer and bisexual theorizing propose. Their position, like a heteronormative one, reifies the hetero/homo divide, rendering invisible hybridity and complexity. Their arguments perpetuate biphobia and monosexism and contribute very little to "cross-sexual" understanding.<sup>4</sup>

The notions of the lesbian continuum and compulsory heterosexuality were introduced into lesbian feminist discourse by Adrienne Rich in her landmark essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." The lesbian continuum, she suggests, includes the friendship and support women get from each other regardless of who they are sleeping with. She defines the lesbian continuum "to include a range through each woman's life and throughout history of woman-identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman" (1986, 51). In her discussion of this possible "double life" which women lead, she does not satisfactorily explore the possibility of a sexual continuum which includes bisexuality. Rich describes a fluidity within the framework of lesbian existence, but fails to move beyond the infallibility of binary categories. Furthermore, working within a radical lesbian feminist framework, Rich makes the problematic connection between radical rebellion (against male tyranny) with the physical passion of woman for woman (1986, 57). This proposition negates the possibility that men can be allies, erotically or politically, perpetuating the idea of "sleeping with the enemy." This notion is particularly problematic for women of colour who may share a common experience of racism or colonialism with men of colour. Similarly, it is an unconvincing argument for bisexual and heterosexual feminists who may not equate their desire for men with a rejection of patriarchy. Although Rich writes that "we need a far more exhaustive account of the forms the double life has assumed" (1986, 67), she has failed to propose that

theorizing about bisexuality is one way to do this. Regardless, Rich recognized the importance of an on-going discourse on sexual politics, demonstrating this awareness by including a letter from Marxist-feminists Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson who posit "a complex social model in which all erotic life is a continuum, one which therefore includes relations with men" (qtd. in Rich 1986, 69). I suggest rewording this statement by proposing a continuum which includes the possibilities of relations with only women, or only men, *or both men and women*.

Some lesbian feminists see the label bisexual as one that is adopted by lesbians to feel safer, so they still have some remnant of the "normalcy" of "professed" heterosexual desire. Clarke supports this notion in the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*:

There is the woman who engages in sexual-emotional relationships with women and labels herself bisexual. (This is comparable to the Afro-American whose skin-color indicates her mixed ancestry yet who calls herself "mulatto" rather than black.) Bisexual is a safer label than lesbian, for it posits the possibility of a relationship with a man, regardless of how infrequent or non-existent the female bisexual's relationships with men might be. (1981, 130)

She suggests that it is safer for a lesbian to call herself bisexual, just as it is safer for a black woman who is half white and half black to call herself mulatto. While there may be some truth to this suggestion in the context of a racist and homophobic society which is built on binary oppositional categories, Clarke negates the possibility that a bisexual mixed woman may call herself this simply because this identity is what best describes her experience. Interestingly, in a later anthology, Clarke revises her earlier position:

I see my lesbian poetics as a way of entering into dialogue from the margins with Black feminist critics, theorists and writers. My work has been to imagine an

historical Black woman-to-woman eroticism and living - overt, discrete, coded, or latent as it might be. To imagine Black women's sexuality as a polymorphous erotic that *does not exclude desire for men but also does not privilege it*. (my emphasis, 1993, 224)

For Clarke, Black women's solidarity with Black men, based on a common experience of racism in North America, provides the grounds for a "polymorphous erotic." The proposition that a lesbian eroticism does not count out desire for men sounds a lot like bisexuality, though Clarke does not name it as such.

#### WHAT BISEXUALITY HAS TO OFFER RADICAL LESBIAN FEMINISM (Unproblematically in Tania's voice)

Q: What's in a name?

Is bisexuality the Janus-face of female sexuality?

Is the hybridity of our identity an ineffective dis-ease?

What is the Janice face of bisexuality?

(Janice Williamson qtd. Acharya 1995, 58)

In her essay "To Be and Be Seen: The Politics of Reality," Marilyn Frye likens phallographic reality to a dramatic production on a stage. In short, men are the actors on the stage, heterosexual women are the stage hands behind the scenes, and lesbians are the audience. It would appear, to extend the metaphor, that no one thought to invite bisexual women to the show, or perhaps bisexual women came to the theater, but were refused entry. It is telling that bisexuality does not figure into this radical lesbian feminist framework. Some radical lesbian feminists fail to recognize that when a bisexual woman is with her same-sex lover, she is often seen as a lesbian, and treated as such. When I have been with female partners in public, I have feared discrimination and faced shouts of "dyke!" as well as experiencing other manifestations of homophobia. With the existence of widespread homophobia and heterosexism, there

is both internal and external pressure to fit into an existing, reified category that resists and empowers. The struggle to form identity in this context is exemplified in this journal entry as I try to name who I am:

23rd October 1993. Terri, a beautiful Gitskan woman, is my lover. Now questions arise: does this mean that I am a lesbian? Well, I guess right now I am. But I also liked the men who were my lovers, and I can see myself being sexually involved with a man again. So am I heterosexual? No. Am I homosexual? No. I am, for lack of a better term, bisexual or how about just SEXUAL!?!?

(Trépanier 1993)<sup>5</sup>

In the West, bisexuality emerged as an identity after a conceptualization of the identities homosexual and heterosexual emerged. Homosexuality as a sexual "orientation" was constructed and pathologized in the mid-nineteenth century in Europe (Dynes 1990, 144). Until that point, sexuality had been constructed so that a homosexual identity remained largely invisible and heterosexuality was compulsory. With the emergence of "homosexual" and "heterosexual" as oppositional categories of sexual identity, bisexual experience in turn was rendered invisible. By the mid-twentieth century, bisexuality had become more visible partly due to the work of Kinsey and Freud, among others. However, in North America, it was only after the emergence of the feminist movement followed by the gay liberation movement that a bisexual movement emerged.

Now, theorizing about the "in-betweens" of sexuality is taking place. This means recognizing the continuum that exists between dominant binary categories. In her comprehensive book on bisexuality entitled *Vice Versa*, Garber puts it this way:

If the standard opposition is heterosexual/homosexual, or straight/gay or queer/straight, that slash mark, that virgule, is the fulcrum on which oppositional energies depend. To replace

the virgule with an ellipsis, a series of dots (heterosexual...homosexual), to replace the opposition with the continuum or, even more disturbingly, to print the words over one another, overlapping, is to challenge the very basis on which a "politics of sexuality" is predicated.

(1995, 80)

It is this overlapping that fundamentally challenges the notions of either/or that are so integral to normative structures of knowledge and experience. Because most theories operate mainly in binaries, there is a great fear of the spaces in between dominant categories and the "other." This fear is perhaps at the root of biphobia and monosexism. There is a profound recognition among bisexual theorists of the tendency to engage in what Clare Hemmings calls "otherisation;" what is placed as the "other" will vary, but the paradigm does not (1995, 49). She believes that a contemporary bisexual identity (and in particular a bisexual *feminist* identity) is intricately bound up with theories, practices, and politics of difference versus sameness (1995, 45).

Bisexual theorizing can make at least two important contributions to radical lesbian feminism: first, it questions the binary opposition lesbian/(heterosexual) woman. Second, it suggests an alternative conceptualization of categorization which involves valuing narrative over static binary categories:

...binary language will not offer a space for bisexuality because it declines to take temporality into consideration: Bisexuality is not an "identity" (or a figure or a trope) but a narrative, a story. Yet the practical necessities of politics require making bisexuality into an "identity," at the same time that bisexuality itself, or bisexualities themselves, put in question the viability of a "politics of identity" at all.

(Garber 1995, 87)

These two contributions lead to two approaches to bisexual theorizing, the first is more concerned about deconstructing categories and the second is

more concerned about identity politics and making bisexual stories and experiences visible.

I both embrace and reject the bisexual label. For political reasons, I identify as bisexual, but it is never enough to simply say that I am bisexual. I am constantly searching for terms to describe sexual experience (again in the spirit of playfulness) such as bi-lesbian, bisexual dyke, multisexual, omnisexual, polyamorous, polysexual, and homoheteroautosexual, to name a few. I also believe we cannot always define sexuality as a static identity. However, I will continue to identify as bisexual as long as bisexuals are stereotyped variously as confused, promiscuous, sex-starved, unfaithful, non-monogamous, and largely responsible for the transfer of AIDS from the gay to the straight community. I will identify as bisexual as long as there is homophobia, biphobia, and heterosexism and as long as bisexuals are accused of not being able to let go of "heterosexual privilege" by people in the gay and lesbian community. Bisexuals are sometimes seen as diluting the saliency of the gay and lesbian community, much like perceptions of people with mixed race or mixed ethnicity. As bisexuals, we experience monosexism as well as heterosexism as we continue to feel pressure from gays, lesbians and straight people to fit into one category or the other.

#### THE INTERSECTION OF BISEXUALITY AND MULTICULTURALITY

(*In a bisexual bicultural bilingual woman's voice*)

And it is my body, after all,  
that is the site of your confusion -  
sexual, bisexual, feminist  
but still brown-skinned, black haired  
red-blooded

(Hajratwala 1993, 143)

A greater number of people are claiming and celebrating their multiple sexualities, genders, races, ethnicities, and cultures. June Jordan, an outspoken bisexual African-American scholar, states that "the analogy for bisexuality is a multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial world view. Bisexuality follows from such a perspective and

leads to it as well" (1996, 14). A bisexual multicultural feminism can challenge some of the widely held assumptions about difference and may present a world view that, at its heart, challenges assumptions about the mutual exclusivity of categories. Trinh Minh-ha believes that "In the complex reality of postcoloniality it is therefore vital to assume one's radical impurity and to recognize the necessity of speaking from a hybrid place, hence of saying at least two, three things at a time" (1992, 140). This sentiment is echoed by Laura Perez:

To be an out bisexual in a monosexually-defined society is to embrace the complexities of the middle ground and this, in my mind, goes hand in hand with multiculturalism. Breaking down dualistic assumptions and appreciating the many facets of all our lives can only bring us closer to the freedom we seek. (1995, 112)

The idea of embracing the borderland, supported by scholars such as Gloria Anzaldua and Wendy Lee-Lampshire, provides a space for multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural, and bisexual individuals to become intelligible and visible. In *This Bridge Called My Back*, Mirtha Quintanales, a fair-skinned Latina woman, discusses the irony of being rejected by women of color in the United States because she has fair skin (1981, 156); she is unintelligible. In a bisexual women's anthology entitled *Plural Desires*, Margaret Christakos explains how she is viewed with suspicion by some lesbians because she lives with a man and their infant son; she is unintelligible. These individuals may have insights into strategies for coalition building, for they are both and neither. They are many and none. It is their stories and their poetry that make them intelligible.

In the last few decades, there has been an increase in theorizing around gay and lesbian experiences of homophobia and heterosexism, in addition to Black, minority, and Third World experiences of racism and colonialism. There is a gap that is just beginning to be filled in theorizing about the experiences of bisexuality and mixed

race, ethnicity, and culture. But bell hooks warns when making parallels between race and sexuality: "White people, gay and straight, could show greater understanding of the impact of racial oppression on people of color by not attempting to make these oppressions synonymous, but rather by showing the ways they are linked and yet differ" (1989, 125). Moreover, we must be wary of privileging hybrid narratives over other narratives and of creating another binary: hybrid/other. Hemmings believes we need to avoid privileging outsider status in a way that replaces a hierarchy of suffering with a hierarchy of exclusion (1995, 50). In the final analysis it seems that, like Friedman's notion of relational positionality (1995, 16), there is something to be said for recognizing identity as constructed, shifting and fluid, with permeable boundaries.

### CONCLUSION: HOW IMPORTANT ARE ALLIANCES AND NARRATIVES?

Once we have recognized the oppressive structures that exist in our world, we need to first find ways to survive, and second begin to break down barriers. US Third World feminists and radical lesbian feminists have provided frameworks for coping with racism and homophobia in addition to patriarchy. These feminisms, though often accused of separatism, have created a crucial space for women of color and lesbians to heal and build strength. Yet, this separate space must be temporary and the next step must involve building alliances and networks of communication which facilitate the development of strategies for ending injustice,

### ENDNOTES

1. My subheadings are modeled after those of Lugones and Spelman's article "Have We Got a Theory for You!" (1983). In the spirit of playfulness, I use these subheadings as a means of self-disclosing: I am a Quebequoise-American bisexual white woman presently living in North America who identifies with Malawian, Trinidadian, and Indian culture, having spent my formative years in Africa, the Caribbean, and India.
2. I recognize that there are forms of hybridity such as the experience of transgendered people or people who are "somewhat disabled" or who have "invisible" disabilities, but it is not in the scope of this paper to discuss these kinds of hybridity.
3. Two anthologies which are a testimony to the growing group of individuals claiming positive hybrid identities are *Two Worlds Walking*, published by New Rivers Press and *Miscegenation Blues*, published by Sister Vision Press.
4. Biphobia is the irrational fear and hatred of people who love and are sexually attracted to both men and women. Monosexism is

suffering, prejudice, oppression, and exploitation. Kamala Visweswaran talks about the potential for "coalitional subjects" to effect change (1994, 88). The formation of alliances must begin with racial, sexual, and class commonalities and must end with political positionalities.

"Identity" has now become more of a point of departure than an end point in the struggle. So although we understand the necessity of acknowledging this notion of identity in politicizing the personal, we also don't want to be limited to it.

(Minh-ha 1992, 140)

As Minh-ha suggests, the commitment to ending oppression and fighting discrimination can not be limited to race, class, gender, sexuality, age or other defining characteristics; it has to be fought based on alliances that move beyond these differences without ignoring them. This inclusive and visionary framework does not privilege the "outsider" status of bisexuals, or multiracial individuals, but rather it works around the notion of acceptance and celebration of all identities. Perhaps valuing our narratives over our labels will provide us with a way of getting beyond the paralysis, fear, guilt, and accusations that we sometimes find in the women's movement, in our collectives, our classrooms, and our communities. Let us tell each other our stories.



the assumption that it is "natural" for people to be either heterosexual or homosexual and "unnatural" to be sexually attracted to both men and women.

5. I have changed the name in this journal entry to ensure confidentiality.

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## the mood i'm in

i step on the D train it is about 1130 at night and  
the train is full. i can tell there has been a Yankee game  
that has just let out because orange seats are cloaked in blue jean laps  
with blue and white shirts to  
match. and i want to ask the guy across "did  
we win?" but this is the subway & people don't talk do they &  
i am too easily wrapped up in another conversation red not blue the words are  
stomping on the heat with heavy brooklyn accents of two women one is  
explaining the sweltering subway system this summer night. "the center  
of the earth is radiating heat, ya know,  
plus, there's electrical stuff, there's shit going on down  
here." and this woman has black hair she can't end sentences without  
an open mouth "not for nothin' but there is no excuse" she says  
when the conversation moves on. and my walkman batteries die with a groan so  
the conversation is  
harsh music to my ears and the woman she is standing  
feet shoulder-width apart she is heat and city in black jeans. "my father's still  
in his faggoty mood." mouth open she ends her sentence. so  
that's what i'm in.

*Jenna Capeci*