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Gender and political theory : masculinity as ideology in modern political thought.

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GENDER AND POLITICAL THEORY:
MASCULINITY AS IDEOLOGY IN MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

A Dissertation Presented

By

Christine Di Stefano

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 1984
Department of Political Science



Christine Di Stefano

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GENDER AND POLITICAL THEORY:
MASCULINITY AS IDEOLOGY IN MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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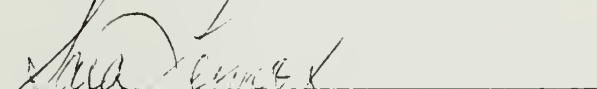
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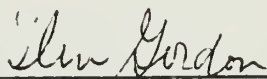
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in loving dedication to my foremothers:

Anna Federico Di Stefano

Anna Dament Holbrook

Anna Jane Holbrook

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ABSTRACT

Gender and Political Theory:
Masculinity as Ideology in Modern Political Thought

September 1984

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M.A., University of Massachusetts

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Directed by: Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain

In this feminist reinterpretation of modern political theory, the works of Thomas Hobbes, J. S. Mill, and Karl Marx are analyzed with a view to uncovering the gendered dimensions of their thought. I argue that Western political theory, as a male-dominated discipline, is also a gendered phenomenon. Psychoanalytic object-relations theory is invoked and used to provide the model for masculine gender identity, which is treated as a historically and culturally specific form of human identity. Masculinity is found to have had a significant impact on modern Western political theory. Masculine subjectivity is seen to operate as a privileged but unacknowledged standpoint which effectively writes women out of many of the substantial concerns of political

theory. It is analyzed as an ideology operating at a latent level in the discourse of political theory, which embodies, expresses and reproduces particular interests. I invoke the term "world view" to analyze masculinity as an ideology characterized by a set of systematically interconnected beliefs and attitudes which have a wide-ranging influence on the concerns of political theory. Several key issues emerge as points of focus: the political theorist's treatment of nature, necessity and freedom, his intellectual style, his methodology, his assumptions about human nature and social relations, and his prescriptions for the "good society". This work concludes with the argument that masculine ideology poses significant obstacles to feminist efforts to situate women within political theory. Such efforts, if they are to succeed at all, will have to be cognizant of the "masculine imagination" in the discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis of this dissertation began as a hunch that first took shape during the final months of my preparation for the comprehensive examination in Contemporary Social and Political Thought in the spring of 1979. As I began to "put it all together"--to look for useful points of contrast and comparison between the great social theorists--I began to wonder about this tradition as an essentially male-dominated one. Surely, I thought, there must be ramifications which extend rather deeply and un-selfconsciously in such a tradition. What were they? How might I go about finding them? To what extent was my own work and identity as a political theorist already implicated in them?

My hunch began inchoately. Gradually, it assumed a more definite shape, thanks to the critical resources of social and political theory itself, along with the virtual explosion of published work in Women's Studies and feminist theory. As I read and re-read the texts of political theory, my identity and commitment as a feminist took firmer and more complex shape as well. Much of this was due to the developing and myriad attempts by women to develop specifically feminist analyses of and responses to

various issues: significantly, the international arms buildup and the threat of global nuclear devastation, U.S. imperialism, and domestic social welfare issues, including racism, violence against women and children, unemployment, environmental degradation, and social service cutbacks. I must also mention the Women's Pentagon Action, a group to which I have been tangentially and vicariously connected, as an important shadow presence in this work.¹

With the benefit of hindsight, I can now say that I have been engaged in a feminist hermeneutic of sorts. That is, I have approached the texts of modern political theory with a view to interpreting them in a way that reflects both my own historical and social identity as a "woman" and what the texts themselves have to "say". I have been simultaneously active and passive in this process: "listening" attentively, "interpreting", and "talking back". I would like to characterize what follows in this dissertation as a "conversation"--sometimes playful and teasing, often deadly serious--with the brothers and fathers of a tradition to which I am deeply and irreversibly attached, even if uncomfortably so.

The claim put forth here is a modest and circumscribed one. It does not address directly many of the urgent questions confronting social and political theory. Nevertheless, this claim does seek to promote a new interpretation of political theory which has potential

longer range implications for our casting of issues, problems, and their solutions. Specifically, this work aims to enhance the critical self-understanding of those who engage in the discursive practice of political theory by highlighting the issue of gender, a phenomenon in which we are all deeply implicated.

This study looks to the intersection of gender and modern Western political theory with a view to uncovering and elaborating a distinctive standpoint in that discourse.² I call that standpoint "masculine" and also refer to it as an "ideology". The latter term is used to highlight the partial and determinate nature of this outlook, in addition to its deleterious effects on women. Its determinate nature, I argue, is located in gender-differentiated patterns of human development. "Masculine" is used to underscore the gendered aspects of this mind-set. (There is no such thing as "male" thinking.) It is also intended as a historical label of sorts. This study of gender and political theory, which begins with Hobbes, is deliberately confined to that segment of political theory labelled as "modern", produced and inhabited by a subject who is conceived as the agent of his fate.

This work is, like any other, susceptible to a number of criticisms. Some of them must remain as outstanding and unresolved problems, at least for the present, either

because of my own limitations, or because of the necessarily circumscribed nature of this project. Others I hope to be able to address, at least in part, if not to the full satisfaction of potential and actual critics.

Insofar as I can make out, criticisms of this work are likely to cluster around the following two issues. The first is the charge of formalism. The other is the charge of reductionism. Each criticism is formidable and substantive. I do not take either lightly. While I cannot hope to meet all of the objections which issue out of a concern with these perceived interpretive tendencies, I do aim to meet them at least part way and to keep the door open for future revisions of this work in the light of such criticism.

The charge of formalism is compelling and serious. This work may well be too engaged with the "text", to the exclusion and detriment of a historical appreciation of its embeddedness in social, political and cultural phenomena. The tendency to ignore history is one of the constitutional hazards of the trade for those of us who do not do "the history of political theory" per se. That is, those of us who approach political theory as a "living tradition"³ do not read these texts for their historical interest only, or even primarily. We do not compare and contrast them simply with respect to their historically-specific contents and meanings. Rather, we set up "conversations" between

theorists that never in fact existed, and we appropriate and apply various problematics and insights from these works to the contemporary landscape as we see it. Sometimes we try to imagine how a Machiavelli, or a Rousseau, or a Hegel would respond to the issues and dilemmas of our time. "Historically" speaking, this is an absurd exercise. Why do we do it? Because we have to. Because we cannot help but establish generational links with the thinkers of old. Because we need to understand who we are in relation to who we think they were. This kind of activity in political theory also enables a sense of perspective and multiple vision that would otherwise be unavailable to us. It continues a conversation that is, strictly speaking, undoable, because the old boys are dead and long gone. But it contains the promise of newly discovered perspectives on our own historically-specific "ways of seeing". It may also engender a more developed historical appreciation for the roots of our political thinking in the present, and for the peculiarities of our vision. Whether or not he intended to do so (and, of course, he did not), Hobbes has something to say about the socio-political aftermath of a nuclear war. His state of nature lurks in that scenario and enables us to ponder its horror with additional clarity and fewer illusions than we might otherwise have. There is nothing "historical" about this appropriation of Hobbes (unless we wish to work out

the parallels between the England of the Civil Wars and a post-nuclear war world), but it is, I would argue, a legitimate and useful one.

What are we doing when we go back to the texts of political theory? This is a complicated question. Certainly, we can read them as "historically specific" primary source documents. This is edifying and important work; certainly we need to take account of it. But this approach does not exhaust the full range of possibilities. We can, indeed we must, give these texts contemporary readings, readings that could not possibly have been available to the original theorists.⁴ When we do this, we are simultaneously attempting a reading of the text "on its own terms", even as we are judging the "quality of the effects, in us as readers".⁵ Those of us who are feminist readers are "stuck" with this approach. We can do no other. The only alternative (and it is an alternative that some feminists have chosen) is to ignore the discursive male-dominated traditions of our culture. This alternative flies in the face of our structuration as "women". It is an idealist flight of fancy.

All of this is a roundabout way of getting to two points that I wish to make in response to the charge that this work is formalist. The first is that I am not at all sure what would be gained by invoking and reiterating the historical background of the political theorists under

consideration in this study. Of course this background is important to understanding their work. I am aware of it and often cite such material in my chapters. On the other hand, I have sought to highlight the gendered aspects of each theorist's imagination and work. There is nothing in the explanatory claims of my approach which is exclusive. As I argue, this is one way, among others, of interpreting these theorists. The historical background which is most appropriate to this line of analysis is that of family history and relations between the sexes along with any intellectual history that highlights the gendered aspects of intellectual frameworks. To date, the former offers more tangible information than the latter. While family history has certainly undergone changes in the period we could roughly characterize as 1600-1900, this period is also cohesive in many respects. Significantly, it witnessed the emergence and solidification of the modern nuclear family and scientific "rationality".

When we look at Western history as feminists, we are faced with two wildly divergent possibilities for analysis. On the first view, it is tempting to view that history as an unbroken sequence of sexism, misogyny and patriarchy. When we view the treatment of women in ancient Greece (both actually and in the hands of the philosophers), for example, it is difficult to resist the temptation to situate such treatment on a line of continuum

that extends into the present. On the second view, our sensibilities as women may incline us to look for the varieties and particularities of "different" experiences on the basis of cultural, ethnic, historical, religious and other factors. We know what it feels like to not be understood on our own terms, and we hesitate to foist grand interpretive schemes onto others. The dangers of the first view are obvious: it flattens out the significant diversity and complexity of human experience. The second view, however, issues in another problematic: the inability to theorize about meaningful patterns of human interpretation, belief, behavior and action.

Based on my reading and interpretation of history to date, gender between 1600 and 1900 in the West constitutes a meaningful enough pattern to be used in fairly constant ways. While they share many significant differences, Hobbes, J.S. Mill and Marx share a gendered imagination. This is what my interpretation seeks to illuminate. The historical terrain upon which this interpretation is based is, I admit, a contested one. As such, and to date, it is no less secure than the position of those who call for a periodization of gender that is significantly different from the one which I employ.

My second point has to do with the interpretation of texts. Do texts exist independently of their readers? Is there "a text"? My definitive answer is: yes and no.

Certainly, the text can be said to exist independently of its readers. On the other hand, we can only know it through the interpretations that we and others bring to it and that it appears to elicit on its own. I would suggest that while "the text" can admit of a multiplicity of readings, this is not to say that all interpretations are always equally valid. We need to be able to judge the adequacy and helpfulness of interpretations. I would agree that it is fundamentally incorrect to view the text "like an autonomous and functionally fully competent organism."⁶ On the other hand, it is not simply an amorphous collection of words. We need to respect authorship. I do not ally myself with those who think that authors can be dispensed with as the inconsequential conduits of the text. Writing is simply too arduous, too labor-intensive, to admit of this approach. This does not, however, mean that the activity of "reading into" or "rereading" is illegitimate. To understand something on its own terms is often to condone it. For feminists, among others, the injunction against "reading into" is both deceptive and overly restrictive: "But if we do not reread, we shall go unread, bees who drone on while spiders spin their webs."⁷

What does all of this mean for the charge of formalism? I do focus on the texts (and, to a lesser extent, on the authors of those texts.) In many ways,

these texts have taken on a life of their own in the discursive activity of political theory. As I argue, these texts have some interesting things to tell us. They display what I believe is a gendered imagination. And why not? All are situated in the context of modern gendered Western society. All are written by "men". If this is formalism, so be it. I am offering a textual interpretation that certainly admits of a more direct linking up with history. But this dissertation is a finite limited project, like any other. If history or biography is less developed here than some would like, its absence does not pose a fundamental, devastating criticism of the legitimacy of my interpretation. Instead, I would assess such criticism as an invitation to further development and exploration.

And now for the charge of reductionism. This is, of course, one of the hazards of applying psychoanalytic theory to anything that is larger than the individual patient. I am certainly not the only one to have found this theory compelling and full of explanatory power, particularly with respect to the entrenched power and pervasiveness of gender. However, there are many who do not find this theory compelling, or even mildly interesting.⁸ This gap is one that, for the time being at least, is intractable. I do not expect to convince anyone of the appropriateness or usefulness of

psychoanalytic theory in this work. Instead, I use this theory in a heuristic fashion. It provides the taken-for-granted starting point of this analysis. As such, psychoanalysis is the "blind spot" of my interpretation. To engage systematically with all of the criticisms of this method would make the analysis itself impossible. We must all start somewhere; and our starting points do not admit of perfect, airtight certitude. Something must be taken for granted somewhere, if we are going to get started at all.

I believe, and am prepared to argue, along with Sandra Harding and a multitude of others that "of all social characteristics, gender is the earliest to be solidified in the individual, the hardest to change, and the most inextricably connected with how we conceptualize and relate to ourselves, to others, and to nature."⁹ When I invoke gender as a necessary constituent of identity and thought in the modern world, I do not mean that it produces predictable and virtually similar outcomes in gendered subjects. For example, I can acknowledge the power of gender in my own sense of identity, even as I do not fit the standard mold of the "feminine personality". What this means is that all individuals interpret, mediate and even transform the substance and constructs of identity in particular and sometimes unique ways. On the other hand, we do not do this in wildly divergent ways. To a

significant extent, we are embedded in "ways of life" that set practical and cognitive limits on our abilities to 'fight the system'. The terms of opposition and collusion are necessarily colored by the substance of our revolt or acquiescence. Why is it reductionistic to suggest that Marx's intellectual style contains traces of the self-other oppositional stance between male child and mother? Or that his account of class relations, like that of Hegel's Master and Slave, sounds an awful lot like a particular stage of separation-individuation that inclines to a dualistic view of radically opposed yet connected entities? I am certainly not advancing this interpretation at the expense of all others, e.g., a historical study of the notion of "dialectics". I do not claim any kind of exclusive or primary explanatory power for my interpretation. It is, I would argue, one among a number of interpretive accounts that we can and must utilize.

The terrain that I have attempted to map out here is a complex one. If I have put blinders on, confining myself to textual interpretation and a psychoanalytic understanding of gender, it has been in the interests of securing some foothold in the location of the intersection of gender and modern Western political theory. To suggest that such an intersection must exist is not implausible. To go looking for it is something more than a wild goose chase. What turns out to be almost incomprehensible and in

need of some explanation is that we have failed, until recently, to reflect on the possible modalities and implications of such an intersection.

Finally, I should like to point out that this work is not intended to be a specific substantive contribution to feminist theory. That is, the aims of the work are modestly confined to the intersection of gender and modern political theory in the work of three political theorists. As such, many issues are left unaddressed. All I am attempting to do here is a documentation and substantiation of the claim that modern political theory is a gendered phenomenon. I would hope and expect, of course, that this analysis will help us to produce better feminist theory and better political theory in the future.

The organization of the dissertation is as follows: In Chapter I I explore the issue of sexual and gender differences with several aims in mind. I want to establish the plausibility and significance of gender-differentiated experience and consciousness. I want to locate my position on the female-feminine side of that divide. And I want to tentatively explore the hazards and promises of a focus on "difference". A feminist politics of difference, confusing and problematic as it is, has been the impetus of this work.

Chapter II is an elaboration of the notion of masculinity as ideology. It provides the theoretical and

methodological foundation, drawn in large measure from psychoanalytic theory, for the subsequent examination and interpretation of Hobbes, J.S. Mill, and Marx. Chapters III, IV and V are devoted to each theorist, respectively. Finally, in Chapter VI I sum up the main insights of the previous three chapters and seek to apply them to the topic of gender and political theory. Many of these ideas are necessarily speculative and open-ended. They require further practice and application.

Material which is relevant and suggestive for the analysis of masculinity as ideology in modern political theory, but not amenable to direct inclusion, has been organized into two Appendixes. The first provides an examination and anticipation of some of the theoretical trouble-spots associated with the attempt to read gender back into history. It provides a background defense of the analysis of gender and political theory developed in the main body of the dissertation. Those who are immediately sceptical of my enterprise for historical reasons, or because of a distrust of psychoanalytic theory and psycho-history, are urged to begin with this first Appendix. In the second, I explore several attempts on the part of some French feminists to articulate a theory and politics of difference. This material is fascinating, unorthodox and eclectic. I believe that it offers tangible clues for a more creative use of language in political

theory. While I am not yet ready to integrate the stylistic and substantive aspects of this unique discourse into my work as a political theorist, I want to acknowledge its powerful presence in the "subconscious" of this study.

The evaluative criteria which may and ought to be applied to this interpretive study are necessarily complex or "mushy", depending upon one's epistemological standpoint. Clear-cut demonstrations of proof or empirical invalidation will not work here. There is no way in which the analysis to follow is susceptible to evaluation in terms of air-tight, exclusionary proofs. In any case, I have no desire to proffer a singular explanation which excludes or supercedes all others. Instead, I would invoke the criterion of "plausibility", defined by Richard Sennett as "a matter of showing the logical connections among phenomena which can be described concretely."¹⁰ My aim is to provide a reasonable analysis, one capable of highlighting a hitherto unexamined dimension of political theory--an ideological standpoint constituted in terms of gender.¹¹ Criticism of this work ought to be capable of accounting for the interpretation offered here in terms of an alternative logic (and even this type of criticism would not necessarily undermine the validity of my interpretation), or of indicating that the interpretation does not merit attention because its implications are inconsequential for the proper and contemporary concerns of

political and social theorists. For reasons that ought to become obvious in the course of this analysis, if they have not been made so in this introduction, I believe that this study touches on many of the most gripping problems that we face.

As this work nears completion, several political developments merit brief mention: the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment for women; successful and growing attempts to curtail reproductive freedom; the stubborn intransigence, if not escalation, of racism, sexism, homophobia, and national chauvinism; an increasingly aggressive, arrogant and destructive foreign policy in Central America (otherwise known as "our back yard"); and an impending Presidential election that threatens to turn the democratic "choice" of the American voter into an absolute farce. Now more than ever, it seems, the political pessimism of the Frankfurt School, especially that of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, has been vindicated. Few glimmers of hope exist. We must nourish them for all that they can yield. Feminism, I believe, is one such glimmer. I hope that this work will enable it to shine a bit more brightly.

FOOTNOTES

¹See Rhoda Linton and Michele Whitham, "With Mourning Rage, Empowerment and Defiance: The 1981 Women's Pentagon Actions," in Socialist Review 12 (3-4), pp. 11-26.

For all of the sophisticated theoretical work that has been done on "praxis", I have yet to reconcile what feels like a distinct contradiction between "theory" and "practice". It always seems as if one must take place at the expense of the other. The absence of a forthright discussion of this issue among political theorists who consider themselves to be "radical" never ceases to amaze me.

²I am most indebted to Nancy Hartsock's work on the feminist standpoint for jogging and helping to solidify my thinking during the early and difficult stages of this work. She was generous enough to share her paper with me several years before its publication. See "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 283-310.

³I understand that historians of political theory such as John Gunnell might disagree with this way of putting it, but this is how it looks and feels to me. Cf. John Gunnell, Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation (Cambridge, Ma.: Winthrop Publishers, 1979).

⁴For an appreciation and exploration of this point on the part of a feminist historian, see Susan Schibanoff, "Comment on Kelly's 'Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400-1789'," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 9 (2): 320-326.

⁵Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism," in The Politics of Interpretation, ed. W.J.T. Mitchel (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 66.

⁶John Mepham, "From the Grundrisse to Capital: The Making of Marx's Method," in Issues in Marxist Philosophy, vol. 1 Dialectics and Method, eds. John Mepham and D-H.

6 (cont'd) Ruben (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979), p. 146.

⁷Schibanoff, "Comment on Kelly," p. 322.

⁸See Donna Haraway, "We Think, Therefore We Are," rev. of Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, edited by Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, in "The Women's Review of Books" 1 (2), Nov. 1983, pp. 3-5.

⁹Sandra Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality? A Survey of Issues," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), p. 49.

¹⁰Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 43.

¹¹As happens to most of us who think that we are doing "original" work, someone invariably emerges on the scene that we thought was singularly inhabited. As I discovered about three quarter's of the way through this work, Jane Flax has been involved with many of the issues explored here. Her notion of "the patriarchal unconscious" is similar to what I have described as a "deep structure" of masculine ideology. We are both engaged with the texts of political theory. See her "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics," in Discovering Reality, pp. 245-281.

C H A P T E R I

THE PROBLEM AND POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE:

TOWARD A RADICAL COMPARATISM

Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem--those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply--you are yourselves the problem.

Sigmund Freud, "Femininity"

To blunder over the fundamental problem of 'man and woman', to deny here the most abysmal antagonism and the necessity of an eternally hostile tension, perhaps to dream here of equal rights, equal education, equal claims and duties: this is a typical sign of shallow-mindedness, and a thinker who has proved himself to be shallow on this dangerous point--shallow of instinct!--may be regarded as suspect in general, more, as betrayed, as found out: he will probably be too 'short' for all the fundamental questions of life, those of life in the future too, incapable of any depth.
Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil

It would seem to follow as an indisputable fact that "we"--meaning by "we" a whole made up of body, brain and spirit, influenced by memory and tradition--must still differ in some essential respects from "you", whose body, brain and spirit have been so differently trained and are so differently influenced by memory and tradition. Though we see the same world, we see it through different eyes. Any help we can give you must be different from that you can give yourselves, and perhaps the value of that help may lie in the fact of that difference.

Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas

The enigma of sex differences, baffling and haunting in its persistence through the ages, is also centrally related to the enigma of Woman. Both share a history of treatment

marked by powerfully ambivalent attitudes, ranging from contempt and fear to inspiration and desire. Each has also been the product of a male imagination. In most cases, sexual difference is predicated on Woman's distinctiveness from the male norm. Commenting on "the peculiar epistemology of sex differences" in the contemporary literature on sex role research, Sandra Wallman writes, "it is as though membership in the female sex class constitutes a role, but membership in the male sex class does not."¹ Simone de Beauvoir made a similar observation in her Introduction to The Second Sex, where she wrote: "the fact of being a man is not a peculiarity"; "it goes without saying that he is a man."² Man as man has not qualified for enigmatic status, persistent dilemmas of the human condition notwithstanding. Freud's reference to the "riddle" of Woman is an apt and powerfully tangible expression of this phenomenon.³ Yet, even as the riddle persists, Freud has been proven wrong on at least one count: the riddle is now pondering herself.

The specific form that the formulation of the problem of sexual difference has taken in the West indicates on the one hand the currently acknowledged and criticized equation between the generic and the masculine, and on the other, women's generalized status as the Other. In the words of de Beauvoir: "Woman thus seems to be the inessential who

never goes back to being the essential, to be the absolute Other, without reciprocity."⁴ It is the specter of Woman--unique, different and mysterious, in the eyes of men--that prompts questions of differences and riddles in the first place. Thus formulated, the question of difference overtly protects, even as it covertly threatens, the male subject as an "absolute human type."

The remarkable tenacity of the theme of sexual difference--a persistent strain throughout various historical chronicles of human culture--is worth noting, along with its frequent thematic cohort, the Dangerous Woman.⁵ Anthropologists have recounted myths of primordial single-sex tribes from which men and women subsequently living together in an uneasy alliance are regarded as the direct descendants.⁶ We read of elaborate rituals and taboos highlighting cross-sex pollution dangers, along with accounts of social organization which often segregate men from women and young children.⁷ The sexual division of labor, of course, is a persistent feature of nearly all forms of socio-economic organization. Several myths pose an authoritarian and whimsical matriarchy as the original ruling structure, subsequently overthrown by men who must preserve their fragile rule through secrecy and careful dealings with women.⁸ Themes of difference and danger lurk behind proposals for safe and harmonious social arrangements

between the sexes. All of which suggests that concern with sexual difference is a basic and powerful feature of the human condition.

Jumping ahead to the contemporary fling with androgyny, we might invoke the adage "where there's smoke, there's fire," to note the persistence of concern with issues of sexual difference in our own age. In the realm of contemporary literature, creative fiction accounts of all-female societies, androgynous worlds, and sex-change experiments attest to this recurring preoccupation.⁹ Informed by a related set of what if . . . ?-type questions, these literary forays play with imaginative possibilities that strain the limits of credibility as they provide unique critical perspectives on the taken-for-grantedness of sexual arrangements in modern everyday life. And the words of one feminist protagonist--"Men and women live on different planets, professor,"¹⁰--signal an important new trend within feminist inquiry, as they hark back to those earlier myths of primordial single-sex tribes.

Originally the bugaboo of the "Second Wave" of the feminist movement in the United States, difference has been reinserted into the vocabulary of feminist discourse; it is no longer a dirty word. While the manipulation and gross exaggeration of sexual difference was correctly perceived by many feminists of the 1960's and early 70's as a central problem, the corresponding political and theoretical

impulse to abolish difference altogether was misconceived. Many of the proposed feminist solutions to the problem of sexual inequality, construed as being identical to the issue of difference, were crudely simplistic and dangerously instrumental. In the hands of Shulamith Firestone, for example, the problem of difference-as-inequality was reduced to the biology of reproduction and "resolved" through future projections of the technological appropriation of pregnancy and childbirth.¹¹ Liberation became a vision of denatured people. Such is the likely outcome of a conception of equality posed in opposition to difference-as-inequality-on-the-basis-of biology.

In the attempt to give up difference, feminists almost lost a crucial critical tool for analysis and practice. For a time, the reigning assumption was that women should emulate men. Little thought was given to how the social order might or ought better accommodate women. Policy prescriptions were oriented toward minimizing those liabilities that women as women tended to shoulder. And feminist sex role research was designed to prove that difference was nothing more than culturally contrived attempts to keep women from competing with men. The "anything you can do I can do better" theme caricatures the revolt from difference that inspired much research, designed to reveal the ultimately arbitrary nature of sex differences. What was lost in the flurry of research and

rhetoric, however, was any sense of or interest in the uniquely critical role that women, in the name of difference, might be able to assume.

Still, it is worth reminding ourselves of the still powerful equation between difference and hostility to women, exemplified in the Nietzsche excerpt above.¹² His articulated fears of "betrayal" and "exposure" were indeed well-founded. The mistake, however, would be to take him at his word. (Nietzsche, I believe, is trying to provoke us here, by rendering explicit a misogynist attitude in Western philosophy of which he was acutely and brilliantly aware.) Ironically, it has been precisely through the investigation, rather than the denial of "that abysmal antagonism" that masculine standards have been rendered more open to criticism. A significant shift has been effected from the desire to emulate men to a calling into question of the masculine paradigms of success, excellence, identity, and "deep" thinking. Some feminist critics have gone so far as to analyze masculinity as an outmoded and perhaps even dangerous construct.¹³ It is this possibility, embedded within Nietzsche's observation, that signals in part the new critical import of a return to difference. He understood all too well the fragility of a masculine identity premised on the repression and fear of women. The critical question for feminists today is whether such repression and its parade of symptoms are to

be undone through the denial or articulation of difference.

While these issues are significant within the context of the development of contemporary feminist theory in the West it would be mistaken and arrogant to presume that today's feminists are the first to have grappled with the theme of difference. Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century, written in 1844, is an important historical touchstone in this respect. Her observation that "the idea of Man, however imperfectly brought out, has been far more so than that of Woman,"¹⁴ could have, and perhaps did, serve as the guiding inspiration for the Women's Studies programs developed in the 1970's. While arguing for equality in non-negotiable terms--"We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man,"¹⁵ --she also demonstrated a faith and pride in what she termed "the feminine side". Eschewing "the hard intellectuality of the merely mannish mind,"¹⁶ Fuller celebrated those uniquely feminine attributes which she named variously as "poetical", "intuitive", "electrical", and "magnetic". "Let it not be said, wherever there is energy or creative genius, 'She has a masculine mind'."¹⁷ To have the same rights and opportunities did not, for Fuller, mean that women should or would want to emulate men. Invoking a nature that "seems to delight in varying the arrangements, as if to show that she [sic] will be fettered by no role,"¹⁸ Fuller was comfortable with

difference, between and among the sexes. In spite of her crudely formulated--as she herself admitted--dualistic classification of Energy/Harmony, Power/Beauty, and Intellect/Love, signifying the twofold growth of the human being as a creature with masculine and feminine attributes, she was insistent, as Freud subsequently was, that these characteristics were not symmetrically and strictly distributed between the sexes. "Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman."¹⁹

Above all, her reflections on the unique contribution that a feminine sensibility might offer the heretofore male-identified intellect are subsequently echoed in the works of various feminists pondering the unique contributions of women to culture. We are reminded of Margaret Fuller in the works of Virginia Woolf, Adrienne Rich, and Julia Kristeva, to name a few.²⁰ The following passage, for example, describes a typically feminine way of seeing and knowing which has more recently resurfaced as an inquiry within social science research and psychoanalytically-based theorizing. Fuller here is describing the "field dependent" woman of social science studies, the psychoanalytic female subject (often characterized as a narcissist) with more loosely constructed ego boundaries,

who is more closely attuned to the intersubjective nuances of her environment:

The electrical, the magnetic element in Woman has never been fully brought out in any period. Everything might be expected from it; she has far more of it than Man. This is commonly expressed by saying that her intuitions are more rapid and more correct. You will often see men of high intellect absolutely stupid in regard to the atmospheric changes, the fine invisible links which connect the forms of life around them, while common women . . . will seize and delineate these with unerring discrimination.²¹

Her insistence on the mutual enrichment of the intellect and the emotions, in vital dialogue with each other, bridges those infamous Mind/Body, rational/irrational divisions that, in collusion with assertions of sexual difference, have been so instrumental in legitimizing the social and intellectual inferiority of women with respect to men.²² "Nature provides exceptions to every rule She [sic] enables people to read with the top of the head, and see with the pit of the stomach."²³ In her acknowledgement of a rich multiplicity of ways of seeing and knowing, including the cravings of the heart and the vision of the stomach, Fuller celebrates "unison in variety, congeniality in difference."²⁴ Above all, her work carries the hope that the claim to difference need not exact the price of social and political equality.

Fuller's work, however, is the exception to a more pervasive rule, one which appears incapable of invoking difference without summoning the specter of inequality. In

the contemporary vein of social scientific inquiry, most accounts of sex differences fall into one of two explanatory modes: nature or culture is identified as the singular cause/precipitating factor of such differences. This binary habit has served to distort the issue at hand in the search for overly simple and neat answers. It also plays into and out of the very style of thinking which has rendered difference so troublesome for women.

The most glaring shortcoming of the nature/culture dichotomized construct is that it fails to deal with the nagging fact that what is called nature is itself a construct of culture and that there is nothing inherently unnatural about culture. As the philosopher Mary Midgely points out in her exploration of conceptions of human nature, culture is eminently natural in the sense that all human societies create culture.²⁵ Additionally, social scientific attempts to distinguish between the methods and subject matter of the social and natural sciences have resulted in an inflated dependence on the concept of social role, to the near-exclusion and detriment of biology, the life of the body, and inherited psychosomatic dispositons. If naturalistic explanations for women's "inferiority" relative to men smack of a barely disguised transition from magico-religious to pseudo-scientific explanation, overly socialized explanations fail to do justice to an understanding of the human creature as an embodied, carnal,

desiring and sometimes irrational being. Clearly, such accounts also fail to grant human agency significance. Furthermore, and in an ironically reversed twist, oversocialized conceptions of human beings, their histories and cultures, yield a deeply pessimistic account of human events.²⁶ This is particularly troublesome in the attempt to understand the widespread devaluation and oppression of women. For the oversocialized account of the history of relations between the sexes leaves us with two unsatisfactory and ultimately unsocial socialization accounts: Either men function predominantly as brutes, or women tend to be wimpy victims. This brings us full circle, back to a natural accounting.

Overly socialized accounts of sex differences, motivated by an interest in breaking the stranglehold of ostensibly naturalized and therefore powerfully entrenched versions of sexual differences, may be assessed as responses to the perceived and popular equation of difference as inequality. The feminist response to difference construed in these terms takes one of two forms: Difference is denied; or it is reappropriated to the tune of "different is better".²⁷ Both examples indicate the ways in which difference acts as a powerful entrée to the discussion of equality and relations of rights and obligations between men, women and the societies which they inhabit.

This persistent association between difference and inequality--used by feminists and misogynists alike to justify women's superiority or inferiority relative to men--suggests that contemporary Western culture has terrific difficulty with the category of difference. It is as if everything must be categorized and then placed on an abstract continuum of rank with respect to some central anchoring point.²⁸ Difference as such cannot be accommodated, or even left alone, but must instead be transposed into some evaluative frame of reference. Several thinkers have probed this issue and themes relating to it with a marvelous blend of intuitive and analytic insight. Their mistakes are as instructive as their achievements. We will explore the work of Simone de Beauvoir, the grand theoretician of women's otherness in a male-dominated world, and then move on to consider an essay by Robert Paul Wolff which raises more questions than it answers about the inability of liberal political theory to accommodate difference. Mary Midgely's philosophical inquiry into human nature conceptions will be used as a critical counterpoint to de Beauvoir and Wolff. The purpose of this examination is to flesh out some of the issues at stake in the difference-inequality association, along with several critical attempts to effect a divorce.

Mary Midgely's philosophical inquiry into human nature conceptions in Western philosophy and the social sciences

probes the rarely questioned positive definition of human beings in contrast to negatively conceived animal life. We are "after all, a primate species, not a brand of machine or disembodied intellect," protests Midgely.²⁹ According to Midgely, the man-as-opposed-to-animals construct turns on a major feat of denial--our own animality--and leads to a skewed version of human dignity and worth, established in contradistinction to the realm of Nature. In contrast to de Beauvoir's invocation of existentially conceived human action and dignity residing in the arena of Transcendence, Midgely asserts that "Our dignity arises within nature, not against it."³⁰ She has taken a clear stand against philosophical and moral accounts which seek to sever the "essential" man from the "inessential" contingencies of everyday life, otherwise known as brutish existence or, in Sartre's term, as the realm of Immanence. For Midgely, "we cannot dismiss our emotions and the rest of our non-intellectual nature, along with the body and the earth it is fitted for, as alien, contingent stuff. We have somehow to operate as a whole, to preserve the continuity of our being."³¹

This continuity is evinced as much in language and ethics as it is in parenthood or sexuality. "Speech makes sense only for a species that is already constantly communicating by expressive movement."³² The deep and evident relationship between words and the way they are

spoken prompts Midgely to conceive of language in terms of a meaning system rather than as the printed and abstract word. A too abstract notion of language obscures the continuity of language with other ways of communicating, which, by the way, we can also observe in other animals. And she locates the basis for morality in the "weak, but genuine" instinctual inhibitions, which include self -and species-preservation and empathy for fellow creatures. In contrast to the man-as-opposed-to-animal and -nature foundation for morality, Midgely argues that "the claims of reason must be made good, if at all, within the boundaries of human life itself."³³ This terrain of human life necessarily embraces the life of the body, including those regenerative activities that keep bodies healthy and happy and meet our needs for emotional care, security and love. "We are not, and do not need to be, disembodied intellects. We are creatures of a definite species on this planet, and this shapes our values."³⁴ The exclusive identification of a "real" self with soul or intellect, those faculties apparently absent in animals, has produced limited and skewed versions not only of human life, but of animal life as well. Furthermore, such definitions come to resemble a kind of unsteady holding pattern: the realm of the irrational and the carnal--dangerous, evil and especially unpredictable--persistently threatens and encroaches from the outside. One cannot fail to note the

parallels between depictions of this irrational realm and cultural treatments of women and the feminine in the West. Not surprisingly, they have often issued in portrayals of women as being intellectually and morally deficient relative to men. It is precisely these parallels that de Beauvoir's genius identified and sought to render explicit.

The Second Sex is an important, brilliant work that is simultaneously shot through with unresolved problems. A measure of its continuing importance to feminist theory is the critical attention that it elicits from feminist scholars thirty years after its publication.³⁵ At the heart of its problematic genius is a bundle of dilemmas and contradictions which can be located in two aspects of the work: the first is de Beauvoir's use of Sartre's existentialism, a method and outlook that is ultimately hostile, as we will see, to her feminist enterprise; the second is the very ambivalence of the subject under consideration. The formulation of Woman as Other, while captivating and exceedingly useful, persistently begs the question, Other than what? It turns out that the "what"--male subjectivity and existence--is easier to grasp than its otherness. As the Other, woman is negatively implicated in "the transcended ground of the ontology of the individual male existent."³⁶ Unfortunately, de Beauvoir fails to scrutinize this ground sufficiently.

"[H]umanity is male and defines woman not in

herself but relative to him,"³⁷ wrote de Beauvoir. While this is a potent and critical observation, it fails--as does the work as the whole--to consider whether women might not have unique modes of defining themselves which elude male observation and definition. Woman as such does not exist in her own right within de Beauvoir's frame of analysis. We can only know her, grasp her as the Other, for "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute--she is the Other."³⁸ De Beauvoir's critical acuity was to plumb the depths of this pervasive otherness, to pursue it relentlessly; her failure was to prematurely resolve feminine negativity into the existing masculine terms of positive identity and subjectivity.

Sartre's existentialism, especially as we find it in Being and Nothingness, depicts an ethics that is super-individualistic, transcendent, anti-slime, and rationalist. These key concepts play a powerful role in de Beauvoir's work and ultimately undermine her feminist project. Here is Sartre attempting to define the symbolic relationship between certain physical qualities and their moral counterparts:

The slimy is docile. Only at the very moment when I believe that I possess it, behold by a curious reversal, it possesses me. Here appears its essential

character; its softness is leech-like
 It is a soft, yielding action, a moist and feminine sucking, it lives obscurely under my fingers, and I sense it like a dizziness; it draws me to it as the bottom of a precipice might draw me Slime is the revenge of the In-itself. A sickly-sweet, feminine revenge.³⁹

This language and mind-set has clearly had its impact on The Second Sex, particularly in de Beauvoir's use of the concepts of Transcendence and Immanence. We also find it in her discussion of female biology, where the revenge of the In-itself takes its full toll on women.

The problem, as de Beauvoir sees it, is that women have been unfairly consigned to the natural realm of Immanence. Women are immured in natural processes, whereas men transcend brute existence through feats of projection. Transcendence is the activity which purportedly creates uniquely human values. Notice that this existential frame poses an essential dualism of the human condition, torn between "mere" existence, which we share with animal life, and a loftier Being-for-Itself. De Beauvoir assumes this dualistic and hierarchical frame and then goes on to point out that men and women occupy opposing sides of the polarity. Her complaint is that women have been denied their full share of transcendental humanity. Women have become stuck in a pattern of co-starring as Other to man's Subject. De Beauvoir's critique is ultimately aimed at the gendered differentiation of the dualistic frame; however, the frame itself is retained as a constitutive and

unproblematic feature of human consciousness and
distinctively human life:

Every subject plays his part as such specifically through exploits or projects that serve as a mode of transcendence; he achieves liberty only through a continual reaching out toward other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future. Every time transcendence falls back into immanence, stagnation, there is a degeneration of existence into the en-soi--the brutish life of subjection to given conditions--and of liberty into constraint and contingency. This downfall represents a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if it is inflicted upon him, it spells frustration and oppression. In both cases it is an absolute evil.⁴⁰

Because the Sartrean conception of a feminized arena of Immanence has not been subjected to sufficient critical scrutiny, liberation for women becomes a helter-skelter flight from that realm, a one-way exodus towards Transcendence. In spite of herself, de Beauvoir has unwittingly depicted biology as the grand culprit. Even though she rejects a naturalized biological explanation of sexual inequality--for it would accord poorly with the existentialist maxim that "existence precedes essence"--biology, under the guise of a slimy, feminized Immanence, becomes the effective bogeyman of the account. The accepted equation between Immanence and the feminine, along with the unquestioned radical opposition between Transcendence and Immanence prevents de Beauvoir from exploring two critical possibilities: transcendent moments within, or dimensions of, those activities associated with

the realm of Immanence; and the question of the desirability of Transcendence as a mode of being that necessarily defies and denies the givens of natural existence, even as it requires that these givens be mediated by somebody.

An additional problem related to de Beauvoir's use of existentialism concerns the emphasis laid by existentialist ethics on individual responsibility for fate, which poses serious problems for the conceptualization of the oppression of women. De Beauvoir is caught in a serious bind: how to account for the historical and cultural breadth of women's oppression, within an ethical account of ultimate and total individual responsibility? Are women totally responsible for the mess they are in? No, says de Beauvoir, although she grants that women have complied to some extent in the conspiracy to name them as Other. Woman's complicity in her oppression is explained in existential terms as the flight from freedom and responsibility, which invariably tempts members of both sexes. Transcendence, after all, is hard work. But an additional mixture of our natural proximity to the realm of Immanence and the insidious influence of cultural myths and internalized oppression must also be brought into the account, argues de Beauvoir, along with the more tangible features of economic and political organization designed to maintain women's secondary status.

It is on the terrain of culture that de Beauvoir's analysis works most successfully. As the theorist of the culturally fabricated and not simply self-created woman, de Beauvoir is at her best. In breaking out of the existential ethical frame, she reveals and depicts the variegated and related ways in which the idea of woman is developed within Western thought. In her exploration of that "whole world of significance which exists only through woman,"⁴¹ de Beauvoir initiated an inquiry that continues to enrich and expand the horizons of feminist inquiry most especially in the area of cultural criticism.

Before moving on to a consideration of this world of significance in all of its ambivalence, it is worth noting several apparently unintended but nonetheless critical side effects of her analysis. For example, the play of contradiction surrounding her initial use of the existential categories of Immanence and Transcendence backfires in some provocative ways that have not gone unnoticed. In the course of documenting the horrors of Immanence and the lofty heights of Transcendence, de Beauvoir unwittingly reveals the sham at the core of a transcendence premised on man's repudiation of his natural contingency.⁴² The ontological and moral pretensions of men who must project unto women all that they fear or seek to avoid is rendered strikingly transparent in her account, despite the fact that she supports the transcendental

impulse. She even suggests at one point that women's vantage point in the swamp of Immanence may confer special ways of knowing and observing, that women are in a position to see through the sham in ways that men are not.⁴³ Nonetheless, she never explicitly subjects the transcendent ideal to the criticism that it obviously warrants. Presuming that the subject/object, immanence/transcendence construct will continue to prevail in human relations and activities, her hope is that men and women can take turns playing the Other and tending the home fires of Immanence when necessary.

Finally, the Second Sex reader can hardly fail to notice that while de Beauvoir argues for an existential historical materialism as a method, denying universal and cross-cultural truths that stand over everyday life practices and beliefs, she seems at times to be revealing a misogynist moment in Western civilization itself. Over and over, she documents how the civilizing impulse, rationalist ideals, the conquest of nature, and achievements in the arts have been conceived and executed at the expense of women, as both flesh and blood and symbolic creatures. The implicit suggestion here is that women have a far more critical role to play in the Transcendent project, perhaps going so far as to reconstruct the civilizing/transcendent impulse itself. Indeed, what woman would not, after reading The Second Sex, find something quite

distasteful about the project of Transcendence? The contemporary feminist reappropriation of the previously misogynist notion of woman's deep-seated disloyalty to civilization bears witness to this side-effect of de Beauvoir's presentation. While she sought to explain women's antipathy or apathy towards project-world achievements as a problem requiring a solution, several latter-day feminists embrace this relation as a starting point for a critique of Western civilization itself. "Disloyal to civilization" is the new rallying cry for a feminist politics that embraces otherness.⁴⁴

If de Beauvoir's framework has operated overtly as an impediment to a more critical stance towards a transcendence that is deeply dismissive of women's traditional activities, most especially those related to motherhood and the work of nurture, it carries a more critical covert message. It is this tension and spill-over of meaning which helps to account for continuing interest in The Second Sex as a work that challenges and stimulates feminist thinking. An added strength of the work is, as already suggested, de Beauvoir's exploration of Woman as cultural artifact and symbol, to which we now turn.

"It is always difficult to describe a myth; it cannot be grasped or encompassed; it haunts the human consciousness without ever appearing before it in fixed form. The myth is so various, so contradictory, that at first its unity is

not discerned . . . "45 Here is de Beauvoir at her most critical acuity. The enigma of Woman, within the dualistic frame of male-as-subject/female-as-object, is tracked down and explored in all of its vicissitudes, ambiguities, and ambivalences:

She is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip and falsehood; she is healing presence and sorceress; she is man's prey, his downfall, she is everything that he is not and that he longs for, his negation and his raison d'etre . . . her ambiguity is just that of the concept of the Other: it is that of the human situation insofar as it is defined in its relation with the Other . . . the Other is Evil; but being necessary to the Good, it turns into the Good; through it I attain to the whole, but it also separates me there from; it is the gateway to the infinite and the measure of my finite nature. And here lies the reason why Woman incarnates no stable concept; through her is made unceasingly the passage from hope to frustration, from hate to love, from good to evil, from evil to good. Under whatever aspect we may consider her, it is this ambivalence that strikes us first. (Italics mine.)⁴⁶

If we understand that part of de Beauvoir's project was to give voice to the symbolic ambivalence of Woman, rather than to resolve it in some neat formulation, we can appreciate the work in a variety of appropriate ways. If we agree with this portrayal of the stubborn pervasiveness of the conception of Woman as Other--in a necessarily dialectical relationship with Man as Subject--; if we approach the notion of the feminine as a projection and construction rather than unmediated natural expression, then it is in the spirit of necessary complexity and

ambiguity, rather than of simple cures aimed at resolving easy discrete facts, that criticism of the The Second Sex ought to take place.

Even as a presentation of lived female experience, The Second Sex, while less successful on this ground, often strikes a dramatic and tension-filled pose towards femininity as both true and false experience. For what woman has not, at some point in her life, experienced that alienated sense of Otherness with respect to men and male-dominated culture? experienced and perhaps internalized the cultural distaste for the arena of immanence? known too the seemingly contradictory elevation and romanticization of that sphere? experienced her body as a constraint? felt helpless in the face of unwanted pregnancy? known that the project-world does not accommodate life-world obligations and rationales? felt confused in the face of a shifting and elusive ground of femininity that is perpetually beyond tangible reach? De Beauvoir's accomplishment was to stake a new exploratory claim on woman's "double and deceptive visage." As "all that man desires and all that he does not attain," woman occupies a symbolic netherworld that is neither here nor there, this nor that, in spite of its seeming rootedness in the natural arena of Immanence.

Within de Beauvoir's account, woman's position is remarkably similar to that of Hegel's slave. Indeed, the symbolic dialectical interplay between man as subject and

woman as object bears the unmistakable imprint of Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness in the master-slave parable.⁴⁷ "The category of the Other," writes de Beauvoir, "is as primordial as consciousness itself Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought."⁴⁸ While otherness is not necessarily attached to sexual distinctions, the sexual casting of self/other, subject/object has taken on a persistent and unchanging meaning in the West. Acknowledging her debt to Hegel, she continues, "we find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility to every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed--he sets himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object."⁴⁹ And yet, as Hegel and de Beauvoir both understood, there is an essential tension at the heart of the dynamic whereby the other is depicted as the inessential. As Hegel wrote, "self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged."⁵⁰ The Other cannot be so inessential that it fails to acknowledge and confirm the Subject. On the other hand, it cannot be so essentially like the Subject that it fails to provide a contrasting ground. Hence, women must simultaneously and alternatively embody essentiality of the highest order, as well as a brutish and trivialized animal-like (non-human) existence:

She is the good mediatrix between propitious Nature and man; and she is the temptation of unconquered Nature, counter to all goodness. She incarnates all moral values, from good to evil, and their opposites; she is the substance of action and all that is an obstacle to it, she is man's grasp on the world and his frustration; as such she is the source and origin of all man's reflection on his existence and of whatever expression he is able to give to it; and yet she works to divert him from himself, to make him sink down in silence and in death. She is servant and companion, but he expects her also to be his audience and critic and to confirm him in his sense of being; but she opposes him with her indifference, even with her mockery and laughter. He projects upon her what he desires and what he fears, what he loves and what he hates. And if it is so difficult to say anything specific about her, that is because man seeks the whole of himself in her and because she is All. She is all, that is, on the plane of the inessential; she is all the Other.⁵¹

De Beauvoir's success, it may be argued, was to give voice to that host of cultural constructs and mixed messages concerning women, and to resituate these as uniquely male constructions rather than as strict derivatives of womanhood. While she had the courage and wisdom to plumb the complicated depths of culturally articulated difference between the sexes, she must be criticized for coming up for air too quickly. Above all, she failed to pursue the dialectical logic and interplay of the subject/object relationship to its more distant and critical reaches. Authentic existence for women becomes an imitative act; rather than confronting and struggling with masculine subjectivity as an otherness, feminine otherness is to be shed so that women may assume their rightful and

human status as subjects for themselves. Unfortunately, subjectivity and transcendence have not, in this account, been visibly transformed through interchange with their repressed counterparts. De Beauvoir's liberation boils down to the specter of universalized masculinity. And yet, if the dialectical and relational logic of the constructs of masculinity, transcendence, and subjectivity continues to operate, who or what shall serve as the Other? Even if de Beauvoir had succeeded in transposing the subject/object interplay into a new and presumably non-sexualized arena, the question of what comes to stand for the Other is a critical one. In an age of nuclear weaponry, endemic racism, national chauvinism, diminishing natural resources, and crises of meaning and confidence among certain populations of the industrialized West, the Other stands ready to embody the problem or to legitimize the solution aimed against it. As Jew, Nigger, Witch, Nature, Homo, Pinko, Lezzie, Enemy, the Other will continue to stand for what we simultaneously fear and desire, for that which is the ground of and threat to our particular construction of identity.

Difference entails a radical disregard of the Other, even as it posits the Other. De Beauvoir responded to this feature of the problem and effectively proposed the elimination of gender differences. What she failed to consider in the longer run is, as Josette Féral argues,

that the denial of difference also entails a fundamental disregard of the Other. This failure, in turn, is related to de Beauvoir's uncritical adoption of the existing logic and terminology of difference. Féral describes this logic thus:

Master and slave, conqueror and savage, such are the reductive dichotomies through which the relationships of difference have always been perceived in our Aristotelian West. The Oneness of the master confronts the slave's duplicity, fullness confronts the void, and presence confronts absence. Thus difference has always been construed and perceived through a set of binary oppositions that leaves no room for an authentic difference set outside of the established system.⁵²

The possibility of such an authentic difference never makes its way into The Second Sex. Women's otherness, correctly perceived by De Beauvoir as masculine-derived, is nonetheless constrained by this analysis:

Thus a woman does not become the Other but his Other, his Unconscious, his repressed, and she gets caught in the endless and enduring cycle of his representation. Enmeshed in man's self-representation, woman exists only insofar as she endlessly reflects back to him the image of his manly reality.⁵³

De Beauvoir's solution to the problem conceived in these terms was to argue forcefully for the end of women's enforced and acceded-to status of the Other. What de Beauvoir did not consider, however, was another possibility, more recently articulated by a new generation of French feminists, of theorizing and acting in the name of a more critical and re-evaluational heterogeneity, "in the name of

its own inner diversity":

Difference, in this context is not simply defined by reference to a norm--the masculine norm--whose negative side it would be while remaining inscribed within the realm of identity. Rather, difference is to be thought of as other, not bounded by any system or structure.⁵⁴

There is a final critical note that requires attention. In attempting to answer the deceptively simple question "what is a woman?" de Beauvoir sought to articulate two very different aspects of the modern Western female condition. Two womanhoods are the subject of The Second Sex: womanhood as cultural fabrication and womanhood as concrete lived experience. As we have seen, the work often succeeds in providing a host of critical observations on the masculine construction of femininity, with the significant result of portraying masculinity itself in critical terms. Unfortunately, however, de Beauvoir fails to develop a competent or useful analysis of feminity as lived experience. This is especially true of her depiction of sexuality and maternity. Mary O'Brien's important criticism of de Beauvoir centers especially on these themes:

De Beauvoir shares the masculine evaluation of sexuality and sexual freedom as having value superior to reproduction, thus accepting the measuring of an individual existent's experience in the light of another's values, even where it contradicts the experience of the individual existent in question, the experienced reality of procreating women. This is, by definition, bad faith. This core of bad faith is the negative component of de Beauvoir's important legacy to

feminist thought.⁵⁵

De Beauvoir has become so caught up with feminity as a second-level order of experience that she cannot deal with it in substantive, experiential terms. This failure is, I would argue, integrally bound up with her failure to consider difference "in the name of its own inner diversity." Otherness, along with the realm of Immanence, devalued as the repressed terrain of Transcendence must, according to the logic of her account, be repudiated by feminists. De Beauvoir never stops to consider the wisdom, pleasure and critical vantage-point that might inhere in uniquely female activities and biology, in spite of, or beyond the reach of, the hierarchical and dichotomous structuring of a male-dominated world.

In sum, de Beauvoir's failure was her inability to transcend the terms of the problem as they were initially presented to her in the form of myths and intellectual frameworks. Mary Midgely's critique of the identity-through-difference-as-opposition construct provides a plausible sense of an alternative approach. Exchewing mono-meaning, she argues for a psychic and intellectual pluralism that can do justice to the complex structure of human feeling that is the rock-bottom basis for ways of life. In contrast, de Beauvoir flees this female-identified sphere. Like de Beauvoir, Midgely takes on explicitly the problems of equality and difference as

they ramify on women in male-dominated culture. In contrast to her, she opts for difference and opposes the conflation of equality with sameness, an issue that de Beauvoir did not address. Arguing that the unique and important issues in women's lives can't be meaningfully addressed via a notion of equality-as-sameness, Midgely suggests that the attempt would be "like trying to dig a garden with a brush and comb. The tools are totally unsuitable."⁵⁶ For a variety of reasons, women are significantly different from men, says Midgely. De Beauvoir, in a fashion, agreed, when she noted the absurdity of insisting that "a woman is a human being, just like a man." But de Beauvoir sought to articulate this difference in the hopes of eliminating it, whereas for Midgely, difference is not the problem. The problem is what we make of it.

For Midgely, the preemptive power of the category of Equality, like that of man-as-the-measure-of-all-things, against which animals, the realm of nature, and women are differentiated, evaluated, and then found lacking, is centrally related to our culture's inability to see the world of nature as an end-in-itself. Women are indeed the victims in a world that establishes and ranks male-defined difference. But their repudiation of difference in the name of equality-as-sameness plays into the hands of a destructive and limited mentality that is ultimately at

odds with their interests as women and as human beings. For these interests can only be ranked against those of men, if equality-as-sameness is to reign. Elizabeth Wolgast, writing in a similar vein, notes: "Sex egalitarianism leads to sexual uniformity and this means the suppression of whatever does not conform to some neutral or masculine norm."⁵⁷ Wolfgang Lederer, in his historical survey of myths depicting the fear of women, goes so far as to suggest that sexual egalitarianism is but another attempt to tame the dangerous-because-different woman: "Under the cloak of 'equal rights' we attempt to deny the specifically feminine."⁵⁸ (As we will see in Chapter IV, Lederer's analysis is strongly substantiated in the political theory of J.S. Mill.) Sarcastically invoking that mode of Reason-in-contrast-to-Instinct that Midgely has criticized, Lederer describes the current state of knowledge concerning women and the limits of that understanding:

We are living in a very enlightened age. We live by reason and therefore we know less about women than almost any other age. . . . The proposition 'Woman' has never been so securely in hand . . . yet it would seem that we have 'forgotten' more than we permit ourselves to know.⁵⁹

What we have forgotten, for the sake of psychic convenience and comfort is, according to Lederer, fear of women inspired by their difference from men as perceived by men. As various psychoanalytic accounts have argued, the

prototype for this fear-through-difference construct can be located in the mother-infant relationship, which also frames the early identity-through-difference experience. This topic will be given expanded treatment in Chapter II. For the time being, we should simply take note of Lederer's analysis of the evident cultural denigration of women as a mere 'surface' phenomenon, a symptom, in the Freudian sense, of this deeply entrenched and repressed fear. For this suggests that the liberal claim to and interest in equality may have an other than transparent impulse. For the contents of the repressed never go away. The apparent suppression of sexual differences might be no more than a temporary measure. Culture's revenge against nature, gone haywire, becomes instead the revolt of nature. And Midgely's observation that "The trouble with asceticism notoriously is that what you sling out at the door comes in through the window, in a worse form,"⁶⁰ gives some pause for sobering reflection on the longer range implications of a social movement or order hell bent on eradicating all traces of sexual or gender differences, most especially when such a task requires the de-naturalization of human beings.

Echoing Midgely's concern with "the contemptuous dismissal of the biosphere," Robert Paul Wolff explores his uneasiness with a "traditional political theory [that] simply does not take seriously the dominant facts of human

life, namely birth, childhood, aging and death."⁶¹ In the specific case of liberal political theory, the public-private division has effected a split and ranking such that in its own higher ranked realm, that of the public political sphere, "no account shall be taken of the facts of the private world."⁶² Shoving "out of sight and out of consideration, everything that makes a human being and not merely a rational agent,"⁶³ liberal political theory has progressively eliminated "from the public realm all pre-liberal traces of the differences and inequalities of those facts of human life which theory relegates to the private realm."⁶⁴

Wolff's dilemma is twofold. On the one hand, he is plagued by two contradictory versions of the human subject: man as rational agent, with its voluntarist overtones; and man as embodied and biological creature, with its naturalistic and determinist echoes. He does not think that it is possible to embrace one version without giving up the other. But he is unwilling to give up either. On the other hand, his sense of justice is offended by the systematic ignoring of private world differences in the public realm, even though the liberal state's involvement in these differences makes him justly nervous. What is to be done? If human dignity can only be based on the presumption of sameness, and if the variegated texture of private life threatens such sameness, then

differences threaten to upset the liberal cart of rights. In the face of differences, precepts of fairness become notoriously difficult to apply, except when they are intended to undo such differences.

Is he as stuck as he supposes? Wolff's dilemma, appealing and provocative as it is, appears to be a false one. While he has rebelled against the particular hierarchical form that the public-private dualistic frame assumes, feeling neglected, for example, as a father, husband and son, he has not subjected the dualistic frame itself to sufficient critical scrutiny. Nonetheless, he has done a splendid job of articulating a wide spectrum of felt experience and analytic difficulties produced within this frame of mind, specifying many of its problems even if he does not or cannot correct them.

Wolff has smuggled into his account the unquestioned everyday opposition between rationality and embodied subjectivity, taking this opposition at face value as an unproblematic or self-evident construct. When he invokes "two equally plausible and totally incompatible conceptions of human nature--on the one hand, of man as essentially rational, a-temporal, a-historical; on the other of man as essentially time-bound, historically, culturally, biologically conditioned," (italics mine)⁶⁵ he gives expression to a classical set of dichotomies that Midgely would have us carefully re-appraise. These include:

Nature/Culture, determinism/voluntarism, Immanence/
Transcendence, Instinct-emotion/Reason, and Body/Mind.

(Notice, too, that Female/Male is implicated in each set.)

These dichotomies provide stereotypic versions of competing and mutually exclusive ways of being in the world. Soaring above the petty constraints of this-worldly existence, rational man extends the transcendent chain of being established by the Greeks from Pythagoras on. Immanent man would appear to be stuck in the finite muck of his time-and-body-bound existence with few, if any, cross-cultural and trans-historical links to his fellow men, because of an over-identification with or investment in the banal particularities of his own existence.

But these conceptions of man (and they are of man) are neither equally plausible nor totally incompatible. Neither version, considered separately, is particularly plausible. Each, in fact, borders on the absurd. And such absurdity is brought closer to home once women are introduced to the scene. For they embody and nurture the life of the body, without which the mind would have no life of its own to contemplate, even as these nurturing practices exhibit and require morality and rationality.⁶⁶ From this perspective, the portrayal of man in either/or terms--either essentially rational, or essentially natural--is quite implausible. The inclination to view human beings as sexless (and consequently to

proceed as if they are male) is related to the scheme which Wolff invokes and protests against in that both rely on a disdain for and ignorance of what counts as animal and physical about us; significantly, this includes a sense of a clearly demarcated separation between animal and human existence. Wolff, it would seem, wants to critically question such disdain, but cannot envision an alternative to the separation between the two views. Midgely has provided one version of a safe exit in suggesting that those activities commonly perceived as the hallmark of distinctively human, as opposed to merely animal, functions--language and morality--do not reside in a neatly differentiated arena, are not governed by abstract promptings of disembodied intellects, but have their origins in bodily and instinctual life, which we may, on occasion, continue to share with fellow creatures of the animal kingdom. Viewing intelligence, along with forms of social life, on a continuum model rather than in terms of strictly differentiated arenas, attitudes and functions, Midgely offers Wolff the means of extending his critique of liberal political theory. Notably, this approach would call for a conception of humanity and politics capable of accomodating difference. Something else would have to take the place of our cherished Everyman, that ideal and universal being "possessed of a higher part, a rational or spiritual part, which is unaffected by sexual identity."⁶⁷

The androgynous ideal, of course, comes smack up against the call for a recognition of differences. What makes androgyny such a potent ideal? According to Robert May, the existence of two sexes is an insult to the narcissistic image of ourselves as self-contained and complete beings. (This image, of course, is part of the rationalist conception of man as well.) This may help to account for the remarkable persistence and longevity of androgyny as an ideal. On this view, notions of androgyny are rooted in ambivalent wishes and irreconcilable hopes, for they minimize the importance of our bodies, overlook the tenacity of individual histories, and externalize evil (e.g., the oppression of women) onto 'society'.⁶⁸

Androgyny heaven is the panacea for all of those earthly ills associated with or projected onto sexual difference. "The difficulty and sheer frustration of finding a way to talk and think sensibly about men and women makes it tempting to cut the knot with one sharp thought: we will no longer speak of men and women but rather of human beings who can be either masculine or feminine, or both . . .

." ⁶⁹ Like liberal egalitarianism, May observes, "The New Androgyny aims at enshrining free will and leaving bodies behind."⁷⁰

Rohrbaugh provides one of the many standard definitions of androgyny which can be found in psychology textbooks:

"Derived from the Greek andro for man and gyne for woman,

androgyny denotes an integration of positive masculine and feminine behaviors or traits."⁷¹ What is most peculiar or noticeable about theories of androgyny is that they begin by repudiating a rather frozen stereotypic sex-typed account of sex differences, taking roles as the sum total of sexual or gender identity and difference, and then propose a solution in the form of mixing these frozen and separated masculine and feminine attributes together. Theories of androgyny often seem to be reactions to cultural images rather than real-life experiences, instances of a one-dimensional or false negativity that fails to transcend the terms and terrain which it is ostensibly criticizing. In this case, theories of androgyny, mistakenly building their opposition to rigidly defined sex role prescriptions on a conception of sex differences that has been simplistically reduced to behaviors or roles, end up preserving these crudely fashioned distinctions. Masculine and feminine traits, served up in "positive" combination and subsequently referred to as "androgynous", are still identifiably masculine and feminine traits. We are no closer to understanding why they are associated with two different sexes; androgyny simply proposes that we must now serve them up gumbo style. The solution to the perceived arbitrariness and injustice of sex role "assignments" boils down to one of redistribution and rearrangement.

Along with a stress on absolute personal freedom understood as the absence of impediments to the securing of our desires, several other themes are identifiable in the androgyny literature.⁷² They include: a basic sense of the arbitrariness of culture, a plastic view of human nature, the notion that gender and sexual identity (conceived in crude biological terms) are totally irrelevant to personal identity, and that the body functions as a constraint and must, therefore, be minimized as much as possible. Androgyny fabricates "the Person for All Seasons, the individual who combines the best of each of us and has no apparent blemishes or even limitations."⁷³ In short, androgyny is a near-perfect expression of Sartrean transcendence.

The identifiable and disturbing attempt to minimize, if not totally expunge the body from conceptions of human identities, relations, and social organization reaches its apex in modern-day transsexual technology, where bodies are discarded and surgically re-made within a culture that cannot tolerate confused or complex gender identities which threaten the dualistic stereotypes. Transsexualism, appearing on the surface as the repudiation of androgyny in its apparent overvaluation of the body, is actually the flip side of androgyny's carnal denial. Transsexualism, like androgyny, belies bodily integrity.⁷⁴ Each formulation and its accompanying set of practices evinces

one of the two available responses to a dualistic Mind/Body, Culture/Nature formula. Only in a culture informed and structured by such dualistic reasoning could some unhappy man (and its is predominantly men) conceive of himself as occupying the "wrong" body and needing a different one.⁷⁵ Theories of androgyny, in their denial of the body, and theories and techniques associated with trans-sexualism, in their overvaluation of the body, are the two polar responses elicited by a crude and reductionistic account of the body. Both flee the body as over-valued source of impediments and constraints within a starkly dichotomous formulation. In both accounts, the existing body is the source of trouble, denied within androgyny and reified within trans-sexualism, where a new body will solve the problems posed by the old. Androgyny flees the fetishized body of trans-sexualism; trans-sexualism is heir to the crudely stereotypic notions of masculinity and femininity ostensibly repudiated--yet preserved--by androgyny. Transsexualism enacts the return of the body repressed by androgyny. Both schemes are caught in the grip of a conceptual framework that is deeply flawed and especially injurious to women. For transsexual operations--performed predominantly by men on males who wish to become females--signify the ultimate in male technological appropriation of the female body, including its procreative abilities, while androgynous formulations

of "personhood" nourish the liberal Everyman of market society, who stands to win out over any identifiably female or feminine characteristics. The totalitarian tendencies of androgyny and trans-sexualism culminate in the over-integrated view of society, a desideratum world with no ripples to mar the surface of smooth functioning: a world where the insipid and only apparently genderless smile button serves as mascot.

For those who find androgynous and transsexual treatments of the human body to be deeply troubling--part of the problem rather than a solution to the unjust treatment of women and the general unhappiness of the age--the task at hand would seem to be simultaneously linguistic and conceptual. In re-thinking the body we also require a language that does not surreptitiously reproduce hierarchically related dichotomous constructs, but rather critically invokes them for careful reappraisal. To begin with "the recognition that in the beginning is the body,"⁷⁶ and to disallow a biological determinist interpretation of such a standpoint; to repudiate the "social man" vs. "natural man", Culture vs. Nature, Mind vs. Body, Reason vs. Instinct formulas is the challenge. To invoke women's experiences and sexual difference in critical opposition to these dichotomies--which constitute the substructure of prevailing difference conceptions--is an added, related challenge. For the problem of difference

raises the specter of the body, just as re-considerations of the body resurrect the concern with difference. Theories of androgyny and trans-sexualism bear witness to the internal relation between conceptions of the body and conceptions of sexual difference, as well as reminding us of the dangers of an un-self-conscious acceptance of such dichotomies. When we venture to ask: What is the nature of the boundary line between the sexes? In and of what do sexual differences consist?--we are forced to confront the living body in its powerful presence, complex psychological and cultural articulation, and singular immediacy as felt experience. We are compelled to come up with a language that can do justice to this complexity. In its repetitive and rhythmic biological processes and functions, and sometimes erratic demands, the body invokes not only the sense of individual identity and difference but also calls up the image and sense of collective species-life, spanning historical, political and cultural boundaries. As the root source of our singular sense of selfhood and shared humanity, the body invokes and produces a multiplicity of truths and meanings. Sexual difference, invoking sameness and difference simultaneously, partakes of this complex phenomenology.

When we invoke "difference", however, we must never lose sight of the important fact that sexual difference is created by and embedded within gender, the cultural

construction of sexual identity. "Difference" is a kind of short-hand expression for this more complicated notion. To forget this is to play into a misplaced sense of origins.⁷⁷ That is, while sexual difference is experienced as a natural, biologically-based differentiation, the differentiation itself has already been produced within an ideological universe that defines the difference which is then used as the 'ground' for gender. Androgyny and transsexualism each fail, for shared and different reasons, because they have not grasped the ground of their revolts. "Difference", then, must ultimately be related to gender.

The "call of difference" prompts the renewed and critical examination of culture in terms of gender. In posing the sexually specific question of "who is speaking?", difference invites us to pay attention to two related issues. The first is that we must insist on the legitimacy and importance of asking what--of a specifically woman-derived or/-identified nature--might be missing from particular chronicles of social inquiry. Secondly, difference encourages a concerted focus on the question of how those renditions of society, including methods of description and explanation, which have predominantly been the work of men, might bear the gendered imprint of their creators. It is the second question which will be substantively explored in this critical study of political

theory.

This choice of focus, designed to promote a practice of "radical comparatism" in order to engage with the masculinist assumptions of modern political theory,⁷⁸ should not be construed as implying a misleading sense of neat separation between the masculine and feminine dimensions of experience and their cultural elaboration. Masculinity and femininity, with all of their accoutrements and connections to other cultural categories, are dialectically related in mutually constitutive ways. Each throws the other into vivid and definitional relief, while neither can be isolated in abstraction from the other. It is literally impossible to think one without reference to the other. As lived experience and complex cultural products, masculinity and femininity comprise an intricate pas de deux which, when reduced to its constituent elements, has lost essential qualitative, and not merely quantitative, aspects of itself.

Also worth noting is the fact that it would be impossible to even formulate the notion of a particular and specifiably masculine or feminine rendition of reality without some tangible sense of existing alternatives. Such a repertoire of alternatives exists within the framework of everyday life, in men's uneasiness with the impossible standards of masculinity, in those tangible features of women's lives which elude, even if only partially,

ideological structuring even as they are shaped within an ideology of sexual difference and female inferiority. The following focus on the masculine as a partial rather than inclusive expression of the modern human condition in the West is also made possible by the burgeoning literature on women's lives which has made available for scrutiny and reflection detailed studies of women's heretofore hidden and often publically unexpressed experiences.⁷⁹ In spite of the overwhelming pressures and contrary to de Beauvoir's pessimistic rendering of the female condition in the West, women have been subjects for themselves and each other. They have not submitted blindly to the sexism and misogyny of Western culture but have instead elaborated, with and like those men and women of other specific oppressed groups, complex interpretive schemes and social arrangements by which to live their lives.⁸⁰ That such arrangements are often invisible to the (white male) beholder who is situated in his dominant and all-too comfortable paradigm has, of course, obscured much of the concrete substance and significance of women's lives.⁸¹

The following attempt to tease out and reflect on the dimensions of this paradigm, in the name of a difference that has been simultaneously fabricated and avoided, should be understood as an effort to rectify in all-too-skewed balance of power and vision in Western political theory. As such, it offers the help of a different perspective, as

envisioned by Virginia Woolf in her essay on women, education and pacificism, Three Guineas: "Any help we can give you must be different from that you can give yourselves, and perhaps the value of that help may lie in the fact of that difference."⁸²

FOOTNOTES

¹Sandra Wallman, "Epistemologies of Sex," in Female Hierarchies, eds. Lionel Tiger and Heather T. Fowler (Chicago: Beresford Book Service, 1978), p. 24.

²Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. xviii and xvii, respectively.

³Sigmund Freud, "Feminity," in New Introductory Lectures, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964), p. 113.

⁴The Second Sex, p. 59.

⁵See H.R. Hayes, The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964).

⁶In The Dangerous Sex, Hayes cites accounts of such myths among the Bushmen and Pueblo tribes. For an elaborate discussion of creation stories and their relationship to organized social relations between the sexes, see Peggy R. Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁷See Margaret Mead's discussion of the Tchambuli in Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1963); see also Yolanda and Robert Murphy, Women of the Forest (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

⁸See Joan Bamberger, "The Myth of Matriarchy," in Woman, Culture and Society, eds. Michele Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 263-280.

⁹See Sally Gearhart's The Wanderground (Watertown, Ma.: Persephone Press, 1979); Monique Wittig's Les Guérillères, trans. David Le Vay (Paris, 1969; New York: Avon Books, 1973); and Ursula K. LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness (New York: Ace Books, 1969). Christa Wolf's "Self-Experiment," in New German Critique 13 (1978), pp. 113-131, is a delightful and thought provoking treatment of issues of sexual identity and difference raised by a female-to-male sex change experiment.

¹⁰Wolf, "Self-Experiment," p. 121.

¹¹Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex (New York: Bantam Books, 1972).

¹²Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 147.

¹³See the following: Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976); Theodore Roszack, "The Hard and the Soft: The Force of Feminism in Modern Times," in Masculine/Feminine, eds. Theodore and Betty Roszack (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 87-106; and Rosemary Ruether, New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

¹⁴Margaret Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1855; rpt. ed., New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), p. 24.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 115-16. Fuller, of course, assumes a sexual dualism here that would make most of us uncomfortable. Like Freud and others, she cannot really be expected to have known better.

²⁰Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1966); Julia Kristeva, About Chinese Women, trans. Anita Barrows (New York: Urizen Press, 1977), and Desire in Language, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Adrienne Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, and Gynephobia," in her On Lies, Secrets, and Silence (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), pp. 275-310.

²¹Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century, p. 103.

²²See the following: Lawrence Blum, "Kant's and Hegel's Moral Rationalism: A Feminist Perspective," in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy 12 (2): 287-302; Sandra Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of

24 (cont'd) Rationality? A Survey of Issues," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 43-63; and Genevieve Lloyd, "Reason, Gender and Morality in the History of Philosophy," in Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences 50 (3): 490-513.

23 Woman in the Nineteenth Century, p. 116.

24 Ibid., p. 55.

25 Mary Midgely, Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

26 See Robert Heilbroner's compelling argument along these lines in An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), ch. 4.

27 For the arch example of this line see Mary Daly, Gyn-Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Reminism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978). But see also my discussion of a "privileged standpoint" in ch. 5.

28 See Carol Gilligan's discussion of this problem in A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge, Ma. and London: Harvard University Press, 1982), esp. ch. 2. See also Alice Jardine, "Prelude: The Future of Difference," in The Future of Difference, eds. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), pp. xxv-xxvii.

29 Beast and Man, p. xiv, n. 28.

30 Ibid., p. 196.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 243

33 Ibid., p. 44.

34 Ibid., p. xxii

35 See the Papers of the Second Sex Conference, New York University, September 1979 (New York Institute For the Humanities, 1979).

³⁶Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (Boston, London, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 74.

³⁷The Second Sex, p. xviii.

³⁸Ibid., p. xix.

³⁹Cited in Dorothy Kaufmann McCall, "Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, and Jean Paul Sartre," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 5 (2), p. 213.

⁴⁰The Second Sex, p. xxxiii.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 223

⁴²Dinnerstein, in The Mermaid and the Minotaur, has clearly developed this latent tendency in de Beauvoir.

⁴³See ch. 21 of The Second Sex, "Woman's Situation and Character."

⁴⁴See Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization."

⁴⁵The Second Sex, p. 161.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 161-62

⁴⁷G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 111-119.

⁴⁸The Second Sex, p. xix

⁴⁹Ibid., p. xx

⁵⁰Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 111.

⁵¹The Second Sex, p. 223.

⁵²Josette Féral, "The Powers of Difference," in The Future of Difference, eds. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), p. 89.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 91. For a more expanded treatment of this possibility, see my Appendix B.

⁵⁵The Politics of Reproduction, p. 76.

- ⁵⁶Beast and Man, p. 330, n. 10.
- ⁵⁷Elizabeth Wolgast, Equality and the Rights of Women (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 107.
- ⁵⁸Wolfgang Lederer, The Fear of Women (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968), p. 284.
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 282.
- ⁶⁰Beast and Man, p. 191.
- ⁶¹Robert Paul Wolff, "There's Nobody Here But Us Persons," in Women and Philosophy, eds. Carol Gould and Marx Wartofsky (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), p. 133.
- ⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 134-35.
- ⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 136.
- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 137.
- ⁶⁶See Gilligan, In a Different Voice; Blum, "Kant's and Hegel's Moral Rationalism;" and Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking, in Feminist Studies 6 (2): 342-367.
- ⁶⁷Wolgast, Equality and the Rights of Women, p. 131.
- ⁶⁸Robert May, Sex and Fantasy: Patterns of Male and Female Development (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), ch. 7.
- ⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 163.
- ⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 166.
- ⁷¹Johanna Rohrbaugh, Women: Psychology's Puzzle (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 431.
- ⁷²See the following: Sandra L. Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," in Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 42 (1974): 155-62; Ann Ferguson, "Androgyny as an Ideal For Human Development," in Feminism and Philosophy, eds. Mary Vertterling-Braggin, et al. (Totawa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, and Co., 1977), pp. 45-69; Janet T. Spence, "Changing Conceptions of Men and Women: A Psychologist's Perspective," in A Feminist

72 (cont'd) Perspective in the Academy: The Difference It Makes, eds. Elizabeth Langland and Walter Gove (London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 130-148; and Juanita William, Psychology of Women: Behavior in a Social Context (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977).

73 May, Sex and Fantasy, p. 173. See also Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Against Androgyny," in Telos 47 (Spring 1981), pp. 5-22.

74 See Janice Raymond's compelling critique of transsexualism in her The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979). While I disagree with her oversocialized account of gender acquisition, I think that her use of "body integrity" as an ethical and critical standard is important.

75 See Jan Morris, Conundrum (New York: New American Library, 1974) for an articulate and thoughtful account of one man's transition to female status. For a compelling psychoanalytic explanation of the fact that far more men than women seek transsexual changes, see Ralph Greenson, "Dis-Identifying From the Mother: Its Special Importance for the Boy," in the International Journal of Psycho-Analysis 49 (1968): 370-74. For more sinister political explanation of the phenomenon, see Raymond, The Transsexual Empire, and Jalna Hanmer and Pat Allen, "Reproductive Engineering: The Final Solution?" in Feminist Issues 2 (1), pp. 53-74. For a fine philosophical reflection on the phenomenon, see Marcia Yudkin, "Transsexualism and Women: A Critical Perspective," in Feminist Studies 4 (3): 97-106.

76 Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," in American Sociological Review 26 (2): 183-193.

77 See M.Z. Rosaldo, "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 5 (3): 380-417.

78 I have borrowed the phrase "radical comparatism" from Coppélia Kahn's essay, "Excavating 'Those Dim Minoan Righions': Maternal Subtexts in Patriarchal Literature," in Diacritics 12 (Summer 1982), pp. 32-41.

79 This literature is so vast as to make any attempt at an exhaustive or even representative documentation in a footnote ludicrous. I can only highlight the rich array of

79 (cont'd) offerings from a sample that continues to grow at a rapid rate. Anthropology has provided some important substantive and methodological contributions to the study of women in male-dominated societies. See the following for significant attempts to get at women's experiences which may elude or secretly oppose presumptions of male dominance: Shirley Ardener, ed., Perceiving Women (Malaby Press, 1975); Ann Cornelison, Women of the Shadows (New York: Random House, 1977); Murphy and Murphy, Women of the Forest; Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance.

For studies of the contemporary experiences of women in the United States, see the following: Toni Cade, ed., The Black Woman (New York: New American Library, 1970); Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (New York: Dell, 1974); Gilligan, In A Different Voice; Louise Kapp Howe, Pink Collar Workers (New York: Avon Books, 1977); Joyce Ladner, Tommmorow's Tommmorow: The Black Woman (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1971); Miller, Toward A New Psychology of Women; Cherrié Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color (Watertown, Ma.: Persephone Press, 1981); Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976); Lillian Rubin, Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working Class Family (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Sara Ruddick and Pamela Daniels, eds., Working It Out (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); Deborah Goleman Wolf, The Lesbian Community (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

For a mature, late-in-life attempt to put it all together on the part of a sociologist, see Jessie Bernard, The Female World (New York and London: The Free Press, 1981).

⁸⁰See Carol B. Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); and Bettylou Valentine, Hustling and Other Hard Work (New York: The Free Press, 1978).

⁸¹See David Morgan, "Men, Masculinity and the Process of Sociological Enquiry," in Doing Feminist Research, ed. Helen Roberts (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 83-113.

⁸²Woolf, Three Guineas, p. 18.

C H A P T E R I I

THE MASCULINE EXPERIENCE: MASCUINITY AS IDEOLOGY

. . . the existence of two sexes does not to begin with arouse any difficulties or doubts in children. It is self-evident to a male child that a genital like his own is to be attributed to everyone he knows, and he cannot make its absence tally with his picture of these other people. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality

Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth.

Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex

The real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his real connections.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology

It is no secret that Western political thought is overwhelmingly male-dominated. Less obvious and more interesting, however, are the wide-ranging dimensions and implications of this phenomenon which, over the last decade, have received increasing critical attention from feminists. What are we to make of this diverse collective expression of male hegemony in Western culture's various attempts to establish the possibilities, limits and contours of political life? How much of this tradition is potentially useful to feminist critiques and visions of political arrangements? How much of it is deeply flawed and hence, practically irretrievable for emancipatory feminist

purposes? To what extent does the critical excavation and perusal and the male monopoly in Western political theory illuminate deeply entrenched and inherited features of contemporary political discourse?

These sorts of questions have both motivated and been generated by several recent feminist reappraisals of Western political theory.¹ In other fields as well, most especially psychology, feminists have been re-thinking the significance of gender differences while criticizing the unequivocal valorization of male experiences at the expense of female.² Such work has contributed to our critical understanding of the ways in which 'human' standards of identity, behavior and development have reproduced (deliberately and unwittingly) Everyman standards that deny and denigrate female experiences.³ De Beauvoir's earlier claim concerning the confused and mistaken identity between male points of view and absolute truth has received extensive substantiation.⁴

Her insight may also be extended to the terrain of the sociology of knowledge. For those feminists who argue that knowledge is materially situated in particular ways of life, the issue of the generic dimensions of knowledge becomes especially salient.⁵ As Jane Flax has argued: "Knowledge is the product of human beings, for whom knowing is only one form of activity. The history and life situation of the knower cannot be completely different in kind from the form

and content of the knowledge that this subject produces."⁶

Bruce Mazlish has made a similar point in arguing that "there is really no sharp dichotomy between universal theory and practical politics, political ideology and personal identity":

Treatises or essays on political science frequently claim to offer universal knowledge, transcending any particular society, and are as frequently perceived by their readers as primarily contributions to pressing political problems of the moment It is less usual, however, to view a treatise on political science as also being based on the person of the author, on the way his pressing problems and needs shape the way he conceives and perceives the political world.⁷

— Even less usual is an explicit appreciation for and accounting of the gendered person of the author. For it is this person, as will be argued, who experiences particular problems and needs as pressing even as he fails to see and feel others.

We have reached that point in the development of feminist consciousness, practice and theory where it makes sense and becomes possible to explore the notion that male hegemony in political theory inhabits and structures that body of knowledge in a multiplicity of complex and significant ways.) The simultaneous appreciation of male dominance, gender differences, and the material rootedness of knowledge lends itself to the interpretive frame of analysis which will be developed in this chapter and implemented in the body of this work. This analysis may be

understood to enact the intervention of gender differences in the process of reading political theory "through an optic which reveals submerged structures otherwise invisible."⁸ As such, it aims at the identification and exploration of masculinity as an ideological structure with specific perceptual tendencies. In short, this interpretation aims to take gender seriously, as it seeks to bring males under a type of scrutiny they have all too rarely undergone. As David Morgan has argued in his exploration of masculinity and the process of sociological inquiry, "taking gender into account is 'taking men into account' and not treating them--by ignoring the question of gender--as the normal subjects of research."⁹

In treating masculinity as an ideological form, this study takes a cue from Marx's and Engels' analysis of ideology which stressed the material and experiential underpinnings of knowledge:

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.¹⁰

One can, I believe, utilize this notion of ideology without resorting to the claim that ideology is necessarily "false" or simply epiphenomenal. That is, one can retain an

appreciation for Marx's and Engels' insistence on the material underpinnings of knowledge without counterposing ideology to non-ideological knowledge. On this view, all knowledge is to some extent ideological; ideology does not necessarily render knowledge problematic. As it is being used here, the feminist quarrel with masculine "ideology" is that it seeks to totalize its version of identity and experience and that it is based on an unacknowledged and unconscious fear of women which issues in the need to dominate them. This is very different from a simplistic labelling of masculine ideology as "false." As it is being used here, "masculine ideology" is understood to reflect, produce and constitute social relations between and among men and women (including our interpretations of those relations.) It is simultaneously "real" and "false".

In describing masculinity as an ideology I have in mind three notions which, taken together, will comprise the meaning of the term as it will be utilized here. My biggest debt is to the notion of ideology as "world view".¹¹ To this will be added an aspect borrowed from the notion of "standpoint".¹² Finally, I will invoke the image of "deep structure" as a descriptive aid. From the notion of "standpoint" I wish to invoke the claim that material life structures understanding. Standpoints in this sense are vantage points established and secured on the basis of material life conditions. They have profound

epistemological and ontological consequences.¹³

From the notion of ideology as "world view", which I am utilizing in full, two important claims are implied:

1) Western males (from at least 1600 on) qualify as a cohesive grouping of human subjects characterized by 2) a bundle of beliefs, attitudes and goals which have some coherence and a characteristic structure. This bundle need not include all beliefs ever held by all males. It is rather, an identifiable subset of all such beliefs.

Ideology in the sense of world view has the following properties, which I am taking the liberty of borrowing from Raymond Guess's very helpful schematic outline:

- a) elements in the subset are widely shared among agents in the group
- b) elements in the subset are systematically interconnected
- c) they are 'central to the agents' conceptual scheme' (Quine)
- d) elements in the subset have a wide and deep influence on the agents' behavior or on some particularly important or central sphere of action
- e) the beliefs in the subset are 'central' in that they deal with central issues of human life or central metaphysical issues¹⁴

For the purposes of this study, engagement with the political theory enterprise will be taken as a 'central sphere of action'. The major texts of Hobbes, J.S. Mill and Marx will provide the material of our focus. For obvious reasons, behavior will be much less salient as a focus of inquiry.

Finally, I intend to explore and utilize the claim that

masculinity as ideology operates at the level of deep structure. By "deep structure" I mean that masculinity is an ideology comprised of systematically interrelated elements which do not necessarily manifest themselves at the surface of theoretical discourse, although they do exert a powerful influence on that discourse. Identifying such an ideological structure requires an interpretive method akin to that used in psychoanalytic explanations of symptoms and outward behavior which look for the hidden systems of meaning and logic embedded in their outer manifestations.¹⁵

Having set out, but not yet demonstrated the validity of my methodological framework of interpretation, I am now going to turn to gender identity as explored by several neo- and post-Freudians. This material should provide support for the rationale of this framework, as it fills in the substance of masculine ideology. Psychoanalytically understood masculine gender identity formation provides the material underpinnings of masculine ideology, helping us to ground this concept in developmental processes, human relations, and corresponding modes of perception and cognition. It also introduces the unmistakable parallels between masculine identity formation and prevailing conceptions of sexual difference which take the male as the unreflectively assumed norm. This sustained focus on masculine identity formation is also designed to render more visible the particularity and partiality of a man-made and

-intepreted world that de Beauvoir, among others, would have us critically reassess.

Thanks to the work of many post-Freudians, identity formation processes, especially those occurring during the pre-Oedipal stages of development, have been creatively and painstakingly explored. An overview of this material, as it applies to the analysis of masculinity which follows in forthcoming chapters, will be presented. While the main focus will be on masculine identity, aspects of the feminine identity-securing process will be introduced at certain points for purposes of comparison and highlighting. We will begin with the account of identity formation that traces the first months of mother-infant interaction, regardless of sex. Where specific sexual differences in the process of identity formation begin to emerge and to constitute gender as such, we will focus specifically on the masculine rendition of that developmental process.

Several revisions and criticisms of Freud's original formulation of gender acquisition have been made which merit brief comment. Where he believed that the formation of gender identity coincided with the phallic phase, more recent studies indicate that gender awareness exists before the second year.¹⁶ In fact, it would seem that gender identity, the awareness of being male or female in a culture that values, organizes and defines reproductive biological characteristics as constitutive of personal identity,

coexists with the early awareness of being a separate and unique individual.¹⁷

One, especially if she is a feminist, cannot utilize Freud these days without being called on to defend or attack his theory of penis envy. The notorious formulation of penis envy as the distinguishing feature of the tortuous attainment of feminity and point of origin for the many psychological disturbances of women has been extensively criticized since Karen Horney first took up the challenge.¹⁸ This is not the place to review the various disputes and engage deeply in this issue. Since it is not central to the focus on pre-Oedipal experiences and masculine identity formation to be examined here, I will only go so far as to suggest that penis envy is not a crucial concept within the frame of psychoanalytic explanation.¹⁹ That is, the integrity of the psychoanalytic method can be retained without the penis envy thesis. Those who choose to do without it are not guilty of deeply heretical behavior; nor can they be accused of trying to have their cake and eat it too. As an explanatory concept, "penis envy" does not share the crucial import of other psychoanalytic notions such as "repression", "instincts", and "unconscious" thought processes. It may also be a specifically culture-bound descriptive concept whose time will eventually run out. However, those who choose to build on and utilize a psychoanalytic psychology

without the penis envy formulation must be wary of underestimating the injuries to the developing egos and body images of little girls coming of age in male-dominated societies. We should all be able to agree on one thing, however: that there is no automatic or self-evident preferability (aesthetic, functional or otherwise) of the penis in comparison with the clitoris. Unfortunately, Freud's language often conveys the impression that there is. Freud may be at least partially vindicated on this score if we interpret his words as describing, from the boy's point of view, his experience of his body and emerging identity.

Finally, the question of the Oedipus Complex and its dynamics as universal features of gender and identity acquisition rather than as specific psychological accompaniments to the more specific structure of the modern nuclear family form still rages on. Malinowski's attempts to debunk this aspect of psychoanalytic theory by uncovering anthropological counter-examples has given way more recently to the anti-Oedipus and anti-psychiatry movements, which identify psychoanalysis as one of the major guilty culprits in a socio-cultural order that over-represses its people in the name of a falsely singular and unified ego.²⁰ While the universalistic claims of any social theory ought to be justly suspect, the methodological question of the applicability of psychoanalytic concepts to different

cultures and historical periods is an open and complex one. (For a more developed examination of some of these issues, see the first Appendix.) Since this study will begin with the political theory of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), our burden of defense against charges of a historical misapplication of modern concepts is not a large one. In his important study of family history and the emergence of "affective individualism", the historian Lawrence Stone locates the emergent and detectable features of modern nuclear family life within the very time span of Hobbes's life.²¹

In spite of the critiques and revisions, some potent and well-placed, while others are grossly ignorant of the tenets, methods and critical import of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytic approach continues to be the most fruitful method for the study of sex differences and gender identity in modern Western culture. What it may lack by way of speculative and creative ventures into alternative familial and sexual forms, it more than makes up for in its descriptive acumen and explanatory power. For those interested in a sexuality and psychology of the here and now, as biological, psychological, cultural and political phenomena, no other theory can do the job as well as psychoanalysis. What Marx is to the ongoing analysis of a capitalism that has understandably developed beyond the vision of his limited life span, Freud is to the study of a

modern Western psychology that works in the service of a reality principle and pleasure principle that are dynamically related and perhaps evolving in ways that psychoanalysis in its formative stages could not be expected to have anticipated.²² In spite of the criticisms levelled against pschoanalysis, some valid and other grossly misplaced, the theory continues to provide powerful and useful insights on the contemporary construction of gender identity in a sexually divided world where we are all, regardless of the outcome, forced to deal with dichotomous and hierarchical genderized categories of identity.²³

According to contemporary psychoanalytic accounts, the formation of identity begins at birth and continues throughout life. Margaret Mahler, D.W. Winnicott, and Melanie Klein have, among others, enriched our understanding of the pre-Oedipal experiences of identity formation, an arena left mostly untouched by Freud, although he anticipated its importance towards the end of his life.²⁴ Erikson's work, focusing on the life-long process of identity-formation, has broken the orthodox stranglehold of a conception of identity fullyformed with the resolution of the Oedipus Complex.²⁵ The net effect of this work simultaneously underlines Freud's insistence on the crucial importance of childhood experiences while it opens up the temporal parameters of investigation into the pre-Oedipal and lifelong processes of human development.

The most important aspect of the process of identity formation for both sexes, albeit with different implications, seems to be the attainment of separation from the original and highly charged mother-child unity. This primordial experience of unity is simultaneously the ground of and threat to viable identity as we know it. While the mother-child dyadic unity provides a sense of security and unity that first enables the child to think of itself as an entity, failure to separate from this unity spells disaster for future abilities to develop relationships with others and to develop a specific individual and sexual identity.

In the first month of life, the infant inhabits a foggy and delusional world with no awareness of the mother as a separate person. Receiving care under the delusion of its self-nourishing omnipotence, it does not yet perceive that the satisfaction of its needs depends on 'something outside'. This awareness begins in the second month; mother (whoever is the primary care giver) is gradually added to what the infant now perceives as a dualistic, but still self-contained and omnipotent universe. Margaret Mahler described this state from the infant's point of view as a symbiotic union of mother and child.

As the sensory apparatus develops, the infant becomes more attuned to the stimuli of the world and begins to realize a demarcation of its body from the rest of the world. This marks the beginning of the end of that

nirvana-like "oceanic feeling" described by Freud as the repressed memory of and desire for wholeness, sometimes re-enacted in religious yearnings.²⁶

As the mother's face gradually takes shape in the infant's developing repertoire of perceived objects, the infant comes closer to recognizing that something outside itself is satisfying its needs. At this stage, however, it has still not differentiated "I" from "not-I". Self and mother still constitute a dual symbiotic unity in which the infant is magically omnipotent. With the emergence of a specific (as opposed to undifferentiated) preferential response to the mother--often seen in smiling patterns--observers infer that the infant is developing and experiencing the rudiments of identity formation. This is initiated through that interactive process, taken for granted by generations of mothers, and brought to fascinating light by clinical observations on the part of Mahler and her colleagues, in which the mother "mirrors" the child to itself, imitating its facial gestures for the child to see and respond to. If this mirroring exchange is impaired or absent, distinct and often tragic consequences may ensue for the child's identity formation process.

The mirror process offers an early clue to the complex identity that is formed out of relations of mutual reciprocity rather than simple differentiation. Identification of one's self as a self depends on the

mother-caregiver's imitation of the infant for it to literally behold as well as on the infant's growing ability to identify with and eventually introject the images of itself that have been offered by the mother. These early, complex dynamics of inter-subjective relational trust and reciprocity lay the foundations for future social relations, especially those that require empathy, the ability to identify with the position and feelings of another person.²⁷

Through play with the mother-caretaker, the child is helped to move from primitive identification with whatever presents itself to selective identification, premised on the explicit desire to be like a particular object among available others. These selective identifications with various objects in the infant's immediate surround help to promote a compromise between the contradictory desires for symbiotic fusion and independence. Selective identifications (from blankets and stuffed animals to people) promote the secure sense of fusion even as they bear witness to an expanding repertoire of object choices. This process helps to further create a particular sense of self and identity as a subject-object in a world among others.

D.W. Winnicott's work on the role of aggression in the differentiation process highlights the delicate structuring of mother-child interaction as it aids in the psycho-analysis of adult versions and cultural forms of violence.²⁸ The

child's search for self-other boundaries begins with fantasies of destruction that begin to confirm the independent existence of the mother-caregiver. This original attempt at mastery, not to be confused with our adult sense of mastery as the attempt to impose the will of the self on another, is greeted with clear-cut relief on the part of the infant when it fails to "destroy" the mother-caregiver. Early aggressive fantasies result in a beneficial and welcome collision with the resistance of the maternal other. The establishing of the independent presence of the mother portends the independent existence of the self. If the mother fails to provide a tangible sense of resistance, if she fails to "survive" the infant's "attacks", a void is established that threatens boundlessness because she has failed to provide the infant self with the necessary touchstones for differentiation. Frustration in the face of an overly yielding maternal other promotes increasing rage and heightened violence on the part of the infant in its quest for evidence and assurances of its effect on the mother figure. The child is desperately searching for a mirror image of its physical efficacy in the world.

One response to the failure of the mother to provide a sense of boundary against which the differentiation drive can be simultaneously checked and thereby acknowledged is for the infant self to provide its own substitute

boundaries. This involves a process of false differentiation whereby the idealized and untested version of the maternal other becomes introjected. This now objectified (m)other, against which the self must differentiate, promotes a brittle and dualistic ego organization that bears the tragic marks accompanying the absence of vital interchange with the primary other. The danger of merger becomes all the more seductive and terrifying (and it is terrifying enough under more normal circumstances) because it has not been successfully tried and resisted. The only defense is an objectification and instrumentalization of the dangerous-because-unknown other. Such an experience exaggerates the already troubling dynamic between recognition and differentiation. These two needs press for satisfaction in tyrannical and rigid ways that structurally undermine the possibilities for their satisfaction. The logical and practical outcome is a relentless and repetitive search for recognition that proceeds by way of domination.

The noted ambivalence surrounding the conflicting desires for fusion and independence is situated at the core of the miracle, or near impossibility, of thoroughly "successful" (in clinical terms) identity formation. For most of us, this primal ambivalence experienced in relation to a female mother who is part of and external to the maturing neonate, is never fully resolved or incorporated

into consciousness. Instead, it simmers restlessly in the unconscious, an easy target of re-evocation in adult relationships of intimacy that invariably recapitulate emotions originally experienced with the first love object. This primal ambivalence is also central to the vexing tension that we experience in the classically conceived self-other, individual-community relationships in which we strive simultaneously for autonomy and recognition from others.²⁹

The theme of conflicting desires for fusion and radical independence also converges explicitly in de Beauvoir's assessment of the powerfully ambivalent functions of the feminized Other in relation to a masculine subject. As Jessica Benjamin points out, we also find this ambivalence at play in the practice and imagery of sado-masochistic eroticism which invokes the violation of the boundaries of the Other as confirmation of the mastery of the Self in its rituals and roles. How and why this infantile experience shared by children of both sexes becomes culturally elaborated in gendered terms such that men tend to assume the stance of mastery and boundary violation while women are subjugated is an important question. It will be addressed shortly.³⁰

Even with the "best" of all possible mothering, the anxiety of separation is unavoidable. It seems to peak during the second year of life, identified as the

next-to-last stage of separation and individuation. As the child gradually realizes that s/he pursues independence at the cost of magical omnipotence and fusion with the mother, an alternating strategy is employed whereby the child flits from the impatient desire for independence to the passionate yearning for re-fusion. Periodically, the mother is rejected as a suffocating presence, only to be clung to in desperation at some later moment. The observed activity of clinging to/pushing away the mother is the behavioral evidence for this flux of contradictory emotions and desires that the child must struggle to accommodate and resolve. The mother-caregiver at this point must walk a fine line between solicitous behavior that the child may interpret as intrusive and a letting go that puts traumatic and resented distance between the child and its support world.

Understandably, the separation-individuation process is easily subverted or subjected to temporary setbacks. When this happens, clinical observers have reported regressive attempts on the part of children and sometimes mothers to re-establish symbiotic union.

This is the point at which the father's role becomes crucial as a new source of support against reengulfment into maternal union. Around the eighteenth month, the father becomes significant as a facilitator of separation from the mother. Bearing none of the messy and primordial attachments, fears and desires experienced by the infant in

relation to the mother, he is a stable figure who embodies the seductive appeal of an external reality that is not maternally dominated or influenced. This account differs in some important ways from Freud's portrayal of the father who enters the scene only later on during the Oedipal phase as a threatening figure to the boy and seductive object for the girl. Dorothy Dinnerstein's portrayal of the father as providing safe exit for children of both sexes from conflict experienced in relation to the mother and, in so doing, aiding and abetting a process in which the ambivalent feelings toward the mother may be psychically preserved rather than resolved, adds a complicated twist to the story.

In the best of all possible mother-child relations within the modern nuclear family setting, the child will eventually learn to negotiate between the poles of ambivalence surrounding separation from the mother figure. S/he will be able (hypothetically or ideally) to maintain a mental image of the mother as a primary love object and as increasingly distinct from the child's mental representation of him or herself. If the attachment to the mother as a separate object can be developed and then preserved, a coherent sense of identity and well-developed capacities for social interaction are like to result. If this attachment to the mother takes, instead, the form of an identification that blurs the boundaries between the child and her, identity formation will be "disturbed" in some ways. The

ego may be too fragile, overly susceptible to environmental disturbances, and become either too fluid or overly rigid. (Human development and identity are never this neat, simple, perfect, or pathological, of course. It is better to think of these characterizations as qualitative tendencies rather than as fixed pronouncements.)³¹ Finally, the ability to unify the good and bad aspects of the maternal image into one whole representation is important if the child's self-image, vitally related to what s/he is introjecting from the maternal object, is to develop "wholistically". In other words, split maternal images contribute to split self images and to a host of complicated projective and introjective activities which may keep the self divided and unable to function in the world.³²

For the purposes of the analysis of masculinity to be offered here, the most important revision in orthodox psychoanalytic theory involves a shift in focus from the male child's relationship to his father during the Oedipal phase to that prior relationship with the mother. This relationship, in the child's eyes, is already marked by a complicated series of ambivalent emotions, which begin with powerful yearnings for the prior forms of satisfaction, along with the first rage of aggression against a mother-world that inevitably frustrates desire. In the words of Melanie Klein: "The baby's first object of love and hate--his [sic] mother--is both desired and hated with

all the intensity and strength that is characteristic of the early urges of the baby."³³ It is against and within this primal emotional backdrop that the struggles of separation and individuation take place. Overlaid on this complicated ambivalent dimension is the more specific struggle over gender identity. That these struggles and ambivalent desires are first experienced in relation to a female mother is now acknowledged by those operating within psychoanalytic (especially object relations) discourse and theory to be the source of the crucial differences between the identity formation processes of boys and girls in modern Western Societies. This approach confirms Freud's insistence on the asymmetrical patterns of masculine and feminine development, whereby a primal poly-sexuality that is originally undifferentiated with respect to object choice, must subsequently conform to the heterosexual prescriptions of sexual conduct, object-choice, and identity. These prescriptions make asymmetrical demands on males and females who must become men and women. Aspects of separation and individuation take on special and different significance for boys and girls in relation to a caregiver-love object who is, in nearly all cases, female.³⁴ Coppélia Kahn summarizes the difference, explicated most extensively by Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnestein, this way:

For though she follows the same sequence of

symbiotic union, separation and individuation, identification, and object love as the boy, her femininity arises in relation to a person of the same sex, while his masculinity arises in relation to a person of the opposite sex. Her femininity is reinforced by her original symbiotic union with her mother and by the identification with her that must precede identity, while masculinity is threatened by the same union and the same identification. While the boy's sense of self begins in union with the feminine, his sense of masculinity arises against it.³⁵

On this view, the critical threat to masculinity is not that of castration, but rather the threat of maternal reengulfment.³⁶ Minimally, we can say that the latter precedes the former and might, therefore, carry more weight in the overall struggle to achieve masculinity. The boy is faced with the awesome pre-oedipal task of breaking his identification from the mother (dis-identifying)³⁷ and setting up a counter-identification with the father. The double lesson of this experience is that masculine identity is bound up with the experience of dis-juncture and confluct and that it contains an unmistakable ascetic dimension. Masculine identity requires a massive repudiation of identification with that all-satisfying/all-terrifying maternal source. A logical outcome of this difficult process, particularly in cultures which promote a strict sexual differentiation in gender identity and social functions, is the "mummification" of a split maternal image, one that simultaneously promises the blissful ecstasy of total satisfaction as it threatens the primal nightmare of

annihilation. Against such a backdrop, the father's implicit promise to the boy in the later Oedipal drama of a future mother/lover as recompense for his willingness to give his own mother up as a sexual love object is like the promise of store bought icing to top a delectable but temporarily poisonous cheesecake that mustn't be eaten for several years. On the one hand, it fails to address the boy's first wish, which was to be a mommy.³⁸ On the other, the Oedipal drama plays out and helps to preserve the association between women and danger.³⁹

The basic ambivalence of children towards the mother is heightened for boys because of the need to define masculinity in contrast to maternal femininity. This requirement might also understandably be interpreted by the boy child as a betrayal of the mother, likely to incur her dangerous wrath. This logical fear, in turn, intensifies the prior fear of maternal re-engulfment. And this fear of annihilation, traumatic for children of both sexes who must disengage to some degree from the mother, becomes attached in the boy's psyche not simply to some general and neutered version of selfhood, but to masculinized selfhood.

Hence, issues of self and gender are more closely intermingled in the separation-individuation period for the boy than for the girl. In contrast, the girl's struggle for selfhood is not so tied up with a traumatized version of sexual and gender identity, for it is much more easily

secured in relation to a mother-caretaker who is anatomically "like" her daughter. Chodorow argues that the girl's struggle is more likely to be over individualized selfhood and independence and that it takes place during adolescence. If this more protracted period of identification with the mother spells unique identity problems for the girl seeking to disengage from the mother as an individual, at least the struggle for selfhood is overlaid on an already secure sense of gender identity. Freud, it would seem, underestimated the difficulties encountered by boys in gender acquisition.

An important feature of masculine development as outlined in this psychoanalytic literature, well worth noting for the analysis to come in following chapters, is the negative articulation of masculine self-hood vis`a vis the pre-positated maternal-feminine presence. (As a boy, I am that which is not-mother.) The rudimentary building blocks of the boy's struggle to understand what it is that makes him a "boy", a masculine subject and agent in a generically organized and differentiated world, consist of negative counter-factuals garnered through comparison with the mother. Minimally, we can imagine that there is some comfort, some sense of tangible definition in the assertion that "what I am is not mother/female/feminine." Within family settings (certainly nuclear, but others as well) where the father is not likely to be available

consistently as a positive source of substantive information on masculinity, proceeding by way of negative comparison is a sensible strategy. An additional feature of the absent father phenomenon is that overdependence on a maternal figure may require an even more vigorous and aggressive response on the part of the boy who is struggling to achieve his sense of identity.

His society may help him by providing elaborate and rigorous rituals with which to mark his entrance into manhood.⁴⁰

In cultures and families that put a high value on sex differences which are hierarchically favorable to men, the boy exhibiting effeminate behavior learns quickly that "sisiness" is a big no-no. For all the studies that have been done on the horrors on sex role socialization directed at girls, there is still little comparison to the distaste and moral opprobrium levelled against effeminate boys in our culture. Tomboys are tolerated and sometimes even encouraged, especially in families that are fearful of and for heterosexually precocious girls. The taboo against effeminate boys, on the other hand, suggests a powerful brand of horror at the mixing or confusion of cherished and vulnerable categories.⁴¹

This material suggests that there are significant, internal links between masculinity as an achieved and precarious identity and negatively conceived femininity as represented by the mother. The prototypical Self-Other

relationship which so consumed de Beauvoir's analysis, and which she believed to be an immutable feature of human consciousness, may have its roots in the self/not-self definitional process which the boy is forced to engage, contra the maternal figure, in his quest for identity.

The horror of identification with the feminine, the strictness with which masculinity is defined and established in opposition to femininity, suggest a pairing of rigidity and vulnerability in masculinity. Because the defining parameters of masculinity are so strictly set, they are all the more susceptible to identity-threatening phenomena. This adds a new critical perspective to classically conceived masculine ego "strength", compared favorably in the psychological literature on sex differences (until recently) to women's notorious ego boundary "problems".⁴² Indeed the flip side of such strength may be a brittle rigidity, the diminished ability to accommodate a shifting and unpredictable environment inhabited by independent fellow creatures and an enigmatic nature.⁴³ Nancy Chodorow sums up her reconstruction of the origins and ramifications of masculinity in a manner that bears directly on the themes being explored here:

. . . the division of labor in childrearing results in an objectification of women--a treating of women as others, or objects, rather than subjects, or selves--that extends to our culture as a whole. Infantile development of the self is explored in opposition to the mother, as primary caretaker, who becomes the other. Because boys are of opposite

gender from their mothers, they especially feel a need to differentiate and yet find differentiation problematic. The boy comes to define his self more in opposition than through a sense of his wholeness or continuity. He becomes the self and experiences his mother as the other. The process also extends to his trying to dominate the other in order to ensure his sense of self. Such domination begins with mother as the object, extends to women, and is then generalized to include the experience of all others as objects rather than subjects. This stance in which people are treated and experienced as things, becomes basic to male Western culture. Thus the "fetishism of commodities," the excessive rationalism of technological thought, the rigid self-other distinctions of capitalism or of bureaucratic mass societies all have genetic and psychological roots in the structure of parenting and of male development, not just the requirements of production.⁴⁴

Chodorow's analysis here, which has much in common with the work of Dorothy Dinnerstein and Jean Baker Miller, brings to mind the problem--articulated with passion and sensitivity, but no solution, by Adorno and Horkheimer--of the domination of Nature.⁴⁵ It is not farfetched to pose some of the apparent links between masculine psychology, Baconian science and post-Enlightenment forms of rationality, even if such links do not provide a causal or ultimately satisfactory form of explanation.⁴⁶ Like variations on a theme, all share a rigidly conceived universe of strictly set meanings secured by the principle of non-contradiction and the exclusion of ambiguity. The unmistakably sexualized tenor of a macho reason set in opposition to a feminized world of natural mystery that can be decoded if it is properly tamed is especially suggestive

of important connections.⁴⁷ The seemingly bizarre characterization of Western culture as necrophilic by American and French feminists, notably Mary Daly and Helene Cixous, might also be more firmly grounded in this material.⁴⁸ If the maternal presence as our primal natural surround and corporeal awakener-caretaker-frustrator comes to be associated with women and Nature in a social world that operates within a masculinized Culture/feminized Nature symbolic framework, such links begin to make exciting and profoundly disturbing sense.⁴⁹ Nature, like Woman, simultaneously feared and desired as the dual ground of and threat to masculinized identity and "humanized" Culture, must be dominated, de-clawed and tamed for the safety and pleasure of an ego that would be king.

And yet, an overly subdued Nature-Other, as de Beauvoir saw in her Hegelian fashion and as Benjamin relates in her discussion of infantile aggression, threatens identity as dangerously as an uncontrolled one. For if the tension between the Self and Other is lost, if the Other becomes totally absorbed by the Subject, that Subject has nothing external to itself by which to gage its own identity. The thrill and necessary panic engendered by the antagonistic self-other relation requires an ongoing process of attempted but only partially successful appropriation of an object that must elude total domestication. The feminist charge of necrophilia as characteristic of masculine culture

identifies this extreme logical and behavioral tendency embedded in a masculinized Self/feminized Other relationship projected onto and perhaps also constituting the culture/nature relation, although it underestimates the interest in keeping such tension alive and well. As the self-styled feminist-ecologists active in the contemporary anti-nuclear weapons movement are well aware, the realization of a dead or tamed Nature/Other would bring the dynamic to an abrupt halt, with horrendous implications for the very future of life on this planet.⁵⁰

When we juxtapose the early experiences of masculinity-in-development to the sexual-social arrangements of adult life which must ensure biological and cultural reproduction, the life-long tasks associated with maintaining and protecting a masculine self appear to be overwhelmingly demanding. The boy who had to disengage from the mother as his ground of identity and love object in order to secure a masculine version of identity, who has spent a good portion of his adolescence bonding with other boys, must as an adult reunite with a woman. While Freud rightly pointed out how the girl's problematic shift from mother to father spelt unique difficulties for her future relationships with men, he was less perceptive of the difficulties in the boy's case. When we place adult heterosexual relationships against the backdrop of separation-individuation from the mother, a previously

hidden aspect becomes strikingly salient. As Dinnerstein points out, the man-to-woman relationship is more like to re-ignite unconscious memories of satisfaction and terror than the woman-to-man relationship. Not only does the man enjoy direct access to the body of a woman, thereby rekindling earlier memories of his relation to the maternal body, but his previous relation to that body become the negative ground of his struggle to achieve masculinity. In other words, the man's emotional and sexual experience of a woman in heterosexual relationships is likely to reignite fears and struggles associated with his prior quest for masculine identity.

Within a patriarchal society, which characterizes preindustrial social and familial organization more adequately than contemporary social structure, marriage was the means for men to fulfill their social roles and gain access to patriarchally based political power.⁵¹ Hence, within a patriarchal environment that gives men power over women and access to power as designated heads of households, such power can only be assumed in the name of the father. To become fathers, men need women. Such an arrangement recapitulates the earlier relationship to the mother: both make men dependent on women for the validation of their manhood and for the exercise of masculine prerogatives. And while this dependency is easily masked by the very tangible political domination exercised within patriarchal settings

that deny women citizenship, socio-political participation in the public arena or much choice concerning their marital fate, it is nonetheless at the vital center of the patriarchal works.

What highlights the dependence and potential vulnerability of men and masculinity within a patriarchal setting and to an admittedly lesser extent within modern-day society is the specially important but also problematic cast of paternity. The definitive answer to questions of paternity ultimately lies in the hands of women. Natural (i.e., biologically based) difficulties in ascertaining paternity have led to some of the most oppressive practices levelled against women, practices designed to keep them within the strictly set boundaries of the household and to punish them severely for sexual infractions--real, possible, and imagined, of their making and not.⁵² In a system where lineage and inheritance of property are established through the line of the father, whose only biological role in reproduction in insemination, a female sexuality that is not naturally bound by identifiably restricted periods of fertility and sexual receptivity must be rigidly supervised. This supervision has, as we know, been carried out on the bodies and psyches of women. The vestige of the sexual double standard, still in operation today within a social order that no longer requires it in strictly functional terms, bears witness to the powerful

tradition of male control of female sexuality and reproductive powers. It also suggests that the male desire to control female sexuality and reproductive powers link up in direct ways with the ambivalence associated with the maternal object, the (m)other.

What is of special interest here is the question of whether the human relationship to and experience of reproduction is generically differentiated. Thanks to the work of political theorist Mary O'Brien, male reproductive consciousness has been given sustained treatment as an important ground of distinctively masculine experience.⁵³ Her analysis provides important insight on adult masculinity which will be used in conjunction with the psychological discussion of early life presented above.

In her analysis of the Western political theory tradition, The Politics of Reproduction, O'Brien pinpoints a special concern with principles of continuity which, she argues, reflect a uniquely male concern with and attempt to mediate a problematic and uncertain relationship to paternity. The identifiably masculine search for principles of continuity outside of natural continuity, which is perceived as being untrustworthy, bespeaks attempts to deny female maternal knowledge and power and to establish new grounds for knowledge, identity and control outside of the maternally controlled parameters of reproduction.⁵⁴ Arguing that men experience a biologically-based alienation

in relation to the experience of the "lost seed" and the nine month gestation period of the fetus, of which they have no direct bodily experience, O'Brien believes that this experience generates the need to create alternative modes of continuity--with offspring, fellow human beings, past ages, and a nature which has excluded males from one of its most vital functions:

The creation of a patriarchy is, in every sense of the phrase, a triumph over nature. The notion of man as Nature's master is often regarded as a product of the modern age and the development of science. This is too limited a view. Men did not suddenly discover in the sixteenth century that they might make a historical project out of the mastery of nature. They have understood their separation from nature and their need to mediate this separation ever since that moment in dark prehistory when the idea of paternity took hold in the human mind. Patriarchy is the power to transcend natural realities with historical, man-made realities. . . . We cannot say categorically that paternity was the first historical development of the concept of right. We cannot say categorically that man's discovery of the problematic freedom embedded in his reproductive experience was his first notion of the concept of freedom. We cannot say categorically that the discovery of the ability to rearrange Nature's more problematic strictures was man's first taste of potency and power. What we can say is that, if these things are true, then the history of patriarchy makes a great deal more sense that it otherwise can. (pp. 54-55)

O'Brien's work is important for a number of reasons.

Heading the list is her valiant attempt to take on the troublesome mind-body relation. She takes biology and corporeal experience seriously, although she is in no sense a biological determinist. Rather, O'Brien takes the

biological as an important ground of experience and seeks to trace out the ways in which human beings respond to and shape meaning out of this experience. Of special note is her unique rendition of the ways in which certain biological processes display a dialectical rationale. Re-formulating Marx's rendition of the Hegelian notion that dialectical thinking is essentially correct because it reflects the dialectical patterning of reality, O'Brien looks to the biological process of digestion as an illustration:

Let us think back from the need to produce to the hunger which produced the need, and consider the process of digestion and how it is experienced. This particular process is not usually used in an exemplary way, for as a 'product', human excrement is not regarded as a higher stage of anything nor as a suitable object of philosophy. The honourable exception is Freud From our own digestive processes, we are conscious of a basic structure of process, our own participation in the opposition of externality and internality, and of the unification and transformation of objects All that is argued here is that human consciousness apprehends the living body primordially as a medium of the opposition of internality and externality, of mediation, of negation and of qualitative transformation. (pp. 38-39)

Her focus on "the dialectical structure of our biological functions" prompts an examination of the reproduction of the self and of the species as the two most basic of human experiences, ontologically and experientially prior to Marx's detailed focus on the activity of productive labor and Freud's expanded treatment of sexuality. She finds the failure to take reproduction seriously in the history of philosophy and social theory a notable flaw (Hegel is an

important exception)⁵⁵; but it is also a provocative pattern of denial in need of explanation.

O'Brien's argument is that the history of social theorizing ignores the reproductive arena of human experience and practice precisely because that man-made history reflects the male's unique attempts to mediate those experiences and to deny their originally felt expression. Because the male experiences a problematic and questionable sense of relation to the process and product of reproduction, male theorizing often reflects men's attempts to resolve issues of reproductive biology onto second-level and more abstract arenas. Hence the creation of patriarchy as the theoretical and practical expression of the male's socially (as opposed to naturally) defined right to "his" children. Hence the creation of a variety of social forms (notably, marriage) emerging from a complex series of mediations created by man. (This does not necessarily imply that women have never developed or taken part in such mediations. Clearly, there are circumstances in which women tend to benefit from acknowledged paternity, particularly if subsistence resources are scarce.) Hence the creation of artificial modes of continuity in response to the mysterious patterning of biological time during the gestation period. O'Brien names the rationale which governs the creation of the social forms and ideological expressions of male mastery the "potency principle". The potency principle

incorporates, as it seeks to transcend, the biological paternal experiences of estrangement and uncertainty, alienation and exclusion. These experiences make up "the soft core of the potency principle." As such, the principle is inherently vulnerable and must be carefully protected with negative counter-assertions.⁵⁶

O'Brien's discussion of the potency principle illuminates the often intuited relation of masculinity to a psychology of conquest and domination. And the material of its soft core--an intransigent sense of alienation--might also relate to "the persistent dualism of male modes of understanding," suggest O'Brien. The parallels in the patterning of masculine experience, first in relation to one's (m)other, and next in relation to the wife-child dyad, suggest a recapitulation and further strengthening of patterns of experience established during the early months of life.

Turning our attention to Western culture and its philosophical legacy, we notice multiple examples of various treatments of the problems of alienation, the separation of man from nature, and the separation of man from continuous time. O'Brien locates these problematics in the male consciousness of reproduction. She argues that these persistent philosophical problems are especially reflective of the realities of male experience. Her discussion of genderically differentiated time consciousness is especially

provocative. Arguing that the maternal mode of female time is continuous, while paternal male time is discontinuous, she identifies a "familiar ambivalence" in the male sense of discontinuous time:

. . . . it frees men to some extent from the contingency of natural cyclical time, but deprives them of experienced generational continuity. Historically, men have clearly felt compelled to create principles of continuity, principles which operate in the public realm under male control and are limited only by men's creative imagination. (p.61)

While not seeking to disqualify 'time separated from its biological roots' as a worthy philosophical problem, O'Brien is concerned about philosophy's failure to consider this problem as genderically specific to male experience. This is another expression of de Beauvoir's concern with a masculine rendition of the human condition that poses as the whole truth, which fails to think the experience that woman live, and thereby presents a distorted view of things. Such distortion is amplified by the human tendency to redescribe reality in such a way as to deny the original versions of our fears and disappointments.

The philosophical problem of continuity over time, transposed into the political problem of the state, reflects in significant measure a male-derived problematic.⁵⁷

Hence, the search for principles and means of transcending individual life spans, which are capable of doing so in self-regenerative ways, while a compelling and

familiar issue to men and women alike, is also uniquely reflective of the male's solitary experience of self and problematic sense of regenerative contribution over generations. The time lapse between copulation and parturition, which exacerbates the uncertainty of paternity, suggests that it is this experience, along with the more generalized human trauma associated with mortality, which constitutes the foundation for the idea of time as an enemy: "The shadow of lapsed time is the separation of men from the destiny of their seed. Paternity is, in a real sense, an alienated experience in abstract time: for men, physiology is fate."⁵⁸ Whether and how alternative means of experiencing time and articulating continuity might be derived from the maternal standpoint is a question that merits serious attention.⁵⁹

The fundamental alienation at the heart of male reproductive experience is also manifest in those formulations of human nature which predominate in the Western philosophical tradition. When placed against the backdrop of a puzzling and elusive paternal experience, the persistent amplification of a second nature which magically bypasses biological categories and imperatives takes on a specifically masculine cast. What has been initiated in relation to one's own mother is recapitulated in relation to all potential mothers, i.e., all women. The denigration and repudiation of biological first

nature sets the tone for an exaltation of a refined "human" (male) nature bound by no natural or sex-specific limits. On the other hand, these conceptions of "human" nature end up penalizing women for their sex-specific experiences. The denigration of biological first nature is the logical outcome of ideologies which can only justify and glorify a masculine rendition of the human condition at the expense of the female.

Mary Midgely's perceptive critique of a human nature posed in opposition to an animal nature that is viewed as necessarily limiting and degrading takes on added significance within the frame of O'Brien analysis. We could say that the posing of animal vs. human, first vs. second nature initially appealed to a creature motivated to mediate a confusing and problematic biological experience and to master a situation that eluded his control. Those theories in which "the individual is constituted abstractly without ever getting born,"⁶⁰ populated by what Clifford Geertz has termed "bloodless universals", bear the fruit of the wish to deny maternal origins and the female reproductive contribution. Re-evoking infantile omnipotence, that primal sense of self-sufficiency which we have all tragically lost, second nature conceptions go on to embody the adult masculine desire for a self- and species-generation that can be self-consciously willed, created and controlled. The failure to systematically think both the humanly biological

and distinctively female components of human experience reflects, at least in part, the male's attenuated and problematic experience of reproduction.⁶¹

If we consider O'Brien's analysis of gender-differentiated reproductive experience in conjunction with psychoanalytic accounts of pre-Oedipal identity acquisition, we become especially sensitive to the suggestion that mothers occupy privileged positions within vital arenas of human experience. In both frameworks, maternity threatens males in identifiable ways. The denial of and attempt to appropriate such threats become, in turn, constitutive features of distinctly patterned ways of interpreting and acting in the world which may be called "masculine".⁶² Thus, patriarchy may be understood as a version of men's attempts to overthrow female control over reproduction, while masculinity embodies a fundamental turn away from the mother. In both scenarios, maternal power is denied even as it poses the ultimate threat. Its denial, in fact, serves to make it even more threatening.

It is no secret that the classic bifurcations in Western rationalism--mind/body, culture/nature, freedom/determinism, reason/emotion--make little sense on the terrain of female experience.⁶³ This is not simply because the denigrated and feminized depiction of the latter halves of these dichotomies violate women's sense of human dignity. We must also consider how female reproductive experiences and the

host of activities entailed by them constitute a different ground for articulating the human condition. On this ground, Nature is simultaneously part of us and external to us, articulating itself in the rhythms and cycles of reproductive biology. Pregnancy and parturition partake of the experience of a nature over which we have little control even as we "labor" as active partners with it. Encountering nature in our unsocialized children, we must simultaneously accommodate it and mold it to the imperatives of civilization.⁶⁴ The female reproductive experience provides a tangible sense of connection to biological species-life and to the species through time, it facilitates a sense of generational, social and historical continuity. The experience of self in relation to biological offspring who partake of parental flesh and blood even as they come to assume autonomous lives undercuts a radically dualistic sense of self/not-self. Likewise, the daughter's quest for identity and separation from the mother who is both like and not like her mitigates against an overly strict sense of differentiation. ("A woman is her mother/That's the main thing"--so wrote the poet Anne Sexton.) And an experience of time with such biological roots calls into question the hegemony of linearly structured time that proceeds as if the seasons, cycles and vicissitudes of nature and human needs were irrelevant.⁶⁵

The material presented thus far constitutes an attempt

to trace out some of the distinguishing features of masculinity as identity, life experience, and ideological standpoint. Two key features of human development and social life have been scrutinized as important arenas for the production and experience of a masculinity with wide-ranging ramifications--infancy and early childhood, as well as paternity. Gender-specific adult experiences in relation to biological reproduction seem to recapitulate the earlier relationship to the maternal (m)other. Such recapitulation would seem to be differentiated along the lines of gender. That is, adult male and female relations to offspring tend to reinforce or to reinvent the earlier sex-specific relation to the mother. These parallels are not simply the products of a psychic repetition of earlier experiences; they are also induced by the biological and social circumstances attending and constituting reproduction. Hence, women, who as daughters experienced a more protracted period of identification with the mother figure are also more likely to identify closely with their babies, to experience a curious confounding of bodily and ego boundaries.⁶⁶ This is a result of the biology of pregnancy, parturition and lactation as well as of their cultural elaboration within a social framework that specifies a sexual division of labor in childrearing. Within such a context, men are presented with the infant child as a fait accompli.⁶⁷ They have had no immediately

tangible or firsthand experience of the creature until it is born. And the biologically dictated lack of guaranteed airtight claims to paternity can, under particular circumstances, increase the psychological distance between father and child. To top things off, men have an identity that is more strictly differentiated and are thereby additionally less likely than biological mothers and women to experience a melting of ego boundaries in relation to infants and "significant others".⁶⁸ Finally, the social facts attending the sexual division of labor, making women more immediately responsible for the early care of the young, reinforce the relative male distance from offspring under these circumstance.⁶⁹

The central linchpin of contemporary psychoanalytic arguments which seek to account for gender-based differences in psychology and personality centers on the differences by which boys and girls separate from the mother. The dynamics of the separation process already presume a sexual division of labor in parenting arrangements such that mothers occupy a privileged place on the site of separation-individuation dynamics. This point merits strong emphasis. Without it, accounts of gender differences are vulnerable to charges of biological reductionism. At the risk of being redundant, I am going to summarize these differences, since they will occupy the backdrop of and be invoked to support the analysis of the following chapters: Where the dynamics of

mother-daughter separation tend towards a 'failure' to differentiate completely, masculine identity is secured by means of an over-emphasis on ego boundaries. Difference and separation from a female (m)other characterize the boy's quest for self within a social setting significantly organized in asymmetrical and hierarchic gendered terms. A concomitant aspect of this process is that the (m)other poses a significant threat to a masculinity acquired in rigid opposition to her. The masculine process of individuation and identity formation, understood in these "ideal-type" terms, is susceptible to a process of "false differentiation" whereby the maternal other is strictly and unrealistically objectified in split versions rather than vitally engaged with and at least partially accommodated in a more complex manner. False differentiation is potentially capable of becoming the ground of neurotic outlooks and activities. It can lead to a sense of unreality and lack of connection to the surrounding object world which must be held at safe, manageable, and non-intrusive arm's length. For some, it qualifies as a "world view", which:

. . . emphasizes difference over sameness, boundaries over fluidity. It conceives of polarity and opposition, rather than mutuality and interdependence, as the vehicles of growth.

That is, it does not tolerate the simultaneous experience of contradictory impulse: ambivalence. Finally, this world view does not grant the other person the status of another subject, but only that of an object. By extension, this object status is granted to the entire world, which, from early on, was infused with the mother's presence. In these psychic tendencies, the

basic elements of Western rationality take shape: analysis of differentiation; duality or polarity; and objectivity.⁷⁰

This "male stance of over-differentiation, of splitting off and denying the tendencies towards sameness, merging and reciprocal responsiveness,"⁷¹ characterized by a dualistically patterned posture (me/not-me) in relation to the world of nature, feminized others, and "fellow" human beings, seems also to be organized and enacted within patriarchal politics and in relation to the experience of paternity. Paternity and masculine differentiation partake of a fundamental alienation and dualism. If "men have always sought principles of continuity outside of natural continuity,"⁷² this may reflect the attempt to mediate a primal dis-connection from one's mother as well as from the process of procreation. Estrangement and uncertainty mark the processes of masculine ego boundary acquisition just as surely as they typify the felt experience of paternity. Masculine identity and paternity also share in a conspiracy of silence and over-compensation in relation to this powerlessness. Hence the relation of masculinity to a psychology of conquest.⁷³

The relationship between the problematic cast of paternity and the institution of patriarchal politics also raises the question of the relationship between Western masculinity and aggression. This is a difficult issue,

easily susceptible to gross reductionism (i.e., testosterone level counts) or to shrill denouncements of macho politics. Why do masculine sexuality and identity appear to be so bound up with an ethos of aggressive domination? We have already noted the ways in which infantile violence functions as an early attempt to address and resolve issues of autonomy and recognition. The fact that our earliest aggressive stirrings are invariably directed against a female is significant. The specifically masculine rendition of these experiences is tied in with that aspect of differentiation which ideally involves the discovery of the maternal person's self, but which tends to be reduced to a process of establishing dissimilarity and difference from the (m)other. The overemphasis on self boundaries in the early securing of masculine identity and its adult version of an insistence that others (including, and especially women) relinquish their own, harks back to that earlier process of separation. In the historical elaboration of paternity in the West, it would seem that father-right proceeded at the expense of mother-right, although this is by no means entailed as the singular logical outcome of claims to the benefits and responsibilities of paternity. The failure of Western men to devise a notion of paternity that might also accommodate maternity is one of the singular tragedies of Western history. That a paternity conceived along such lines could only be maintained by force⁷⁴ is a

logical and strategic outcome of a dichotomous either/or approach to the originally problematic experience which seeks to reverse, as much as possible, the terms provided by the initial interpretation of biology.

This material on masculine identity formation and reproductive experience suggests that there are ways in which masculine experience and identity yield certain cognitive proclivities, tendencies which structure perception and proceed to interpret, create and reproduce the social world along those perceptual lines.⁷⁵ Such perceptual tendencies, I want to argue, may be thought of as comprising an overall ontological and epistemological framework, or world view, organized around the primacy of the masculine subject. This primacy is reflected not only in those substantive and easily identified arenas of masculine privilege and power, including what is now identified and explored as the sexism of Western political and social theory⁷⁶, but also operates at the more obscure level of overall perceptual and cognitive organization. We are entitled at this point to suggest with some confidence that a masculine cognitive orientation may well inhabit the terrain of modern political theory and enjoy a wide-ranging, if obscure (i.e., implicit), influence. This is not to say that all men or all male political theorists think alike, or even that all such men think in identifiably masculine ways. To suggest that gender is necessarily constitutive of

identity, that it is an unavoidable ground of experience and thought, is not to say that it determines personality or intellectual creations in some simplistic or linear fashion. On the other hand, those of us who take gender seriously as a constitutive feature of our way of being in the world, find it difficult to proceed as if we are just "people" thinking "human" thoughts. Thinking and knowledge issue out of a complex process of reflection on and response to experience. While the mediation of experience can take a variety of forms, like the varieties of human accommodation to and revolt against the prescriptions of gender, such mediation must already be colored by the substance of its departure or acquiescence.

Turning our attention in the following chapters to the political theories of Hobbes, J.S. Mill, and Marx, we will examine their work with a view to discovering whether a gendered substratum can be found in their theories. Taking a cue from Marx's and Engels' observation on the links between "intellectual wealth" and the wealth of "real connections", we will proceed with the notion of a gendered self as a self that is constituted in particular relational ways. Gender differences, we have seen, turn on different relational experiences; these experiences produce "masculinity" and "femininity" as different experiences and definitions of the self-in-relation-to the object world.

On a concluding note, the components of a specifiably

masculine outlook will be briefly summarized with a view to filling in the outline of masculinity as a world view that was initially offered at the start of this chapter. The elements of a world view, we recall, were said to be "widely shared", "systematically interconnected", "'central to the agents' conceptual scheme'", to have a "wide and deep influence", and to be "'central' in that they deal with central issues of human life."⁷⁷ In the forthcoming analyses of Hobbes, Marx, and J.S. Mill, I intend to show that masculine ideology can be located in their work and that it occupies a central position in their theories. We will see that elements of masculine theory are "widely shared" among these three key political and social theorists who have been more notable for their differences than for their similarities. This sharing of masculine elements spans 250 years of social and political theory in the West. We will also see that these elements of a masculine world view have a "deep influence" on these political theories and that they are "central" to the formulation of what these theorists take to be "central issues of human life." We are already in a position to appreciate the ways in which the elements of a masculine ideology are or might be "systematically interconnected": Heading the list is a combative brand of dualistic thinking, a persistent and systematic amplification of the primal Self-Other oppositional dynamic and the creation of dichotomously

structured polarities by which to describe and evaluate the events, objects, and processes of the natural and social worlds. The need for singular identity and certainty with respect to one's own identity and that of other "objects" in the environment, a concomitant of which is panic in the face of threats to such certainty, would be another perceptual tendency. The explicit denial of relatedness, to "fellow" human beings and to nature, would be tied in with an extreme version of masculine identity. We can also anticipate a repudiation of natural contingency, including those limits imposed by the body and the natural surround. In connection with this, we can expect to find examples of an identification of contingency with the feminine. We can also expect to find the (m)other lurking in the shadows of this discourse, as an invisible and unacknowledged, but significant presence. Because of the tendencies towards a radical individualism built into the masculine differentiation process, we might also search for various versions of a solitary subject immersed in a hostile and dangerous world. Autonomy is also likely to figure as a significant theme and ideal. Recapitulating the earlier experience of identity through opposition and negation, we can expect to find versions of knowledge-through-opposition, -tension and -conflict, an antagonistic and distanced relation between the subject and object of knowledge. Finally, we can expect attitudes of fear, denigration and

hostility towards whatever is identified as female or feminine, along with its idealization and glorification. Both sets of seemingly incompatible attitudes would recapitulate the effects of false differentiation from the maternal object.

Turning now to the political and social theory of Hobbes, J.S. Mill and Marx, we will see if these claims and intimations of discovery can be substantiated. If they can, political theory qualifies (at least tentatively) as a gendered phenomenon and, as such, ought to be additionally amendable to feminist inquiry and criticism on new grounds. If the intersection of gender and political theory can be established here, we are a little closer to finding and constructing an answer to Vivian Gornick's poignant question:

What, then is the femaleness of experience? Where are the compositional elements of a female sensibility to be found? Under what conditions does that experience and that sensibility become a metaphor for human existence, thereby adding, as the maleness of experience has added, to the small sum of human self-awareness?⁷⁸

FOOTNOTES

¹Jean Bethke Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Susan Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

²Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976).

³For a philosophical treatment of the legal dimensions of this issue, particularly as they relate to liberal conceptions of equality, see Elizabeth Wolgast, Equality and the Rights of Women (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976).

⁴The Second Sex, trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 161.

⁵Jane Flax, "Mother-Daughter Relationships: Psychodynamics, Politics and Philosophy," in The Future of Difference, eds. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), pp. 20-41; Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and the Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, (Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 283-310; Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology for Women," in the Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge, eds. Julia Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 135-188; Carolyn Whitbeck, "A Different Reality: Feminist Ontology," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 64-88.

⁶Flax, "Mother-Daughter Relationships," p. 21.

⁷Bruce Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 79 and 77, respectively.

⁸Colette Gaudin, et al., "Introduction" to Yale French Studies 62 (1981), p. 12.

⁹David Morgan, "Men, Masculinity and the Process of Sociological Enquiry," in Doing Feminist Research, ed. Helen Roberts (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 95.

¹⁰Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, ed. C.J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 47.

¹¹See Raymond Guess, The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹²I am highly indebted to Nancy Hartsock's work for this utilization of "standpoint". See her "The Feminist Standpoint." For a very thoughtful critique of this notion on the part of an anthropologist, see Marilyn Strathern, "Culture in a Net Bag: The Manufacture of a Subdiscipline in Anthropology," in Man 16: 665-88. What Strathern finds as a tendency to universalize the category "woman" is not evident in Hartsock's utilization.

¹³See Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology for Women."

¹⁴Guess, The Idea of a Critical Theory, p. 10.

¹⁵Jane Flax gets at a similar structural image through her notion of the "patriarchal unconscious". See her "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 245-281. I have decided not to adopt her term, not only because I encountered it at a relatively late stage of this work, but also because I feel that "patriarchy" has a historically limited application. "Masculinity" enables us to talk about patriarchal and post-patriarchal culture.

¹⁶Freud's account may be found in Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, in The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. VII, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975) and in

16 (cont'd) "Femininity," in New Introductory Lectures, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964). See Freud's 1931 essay on "Female Sexuality," in The Standard Edition, Vol. XXI, pp. 225-243, for the provocative and critical questions he raises concerning the daughter's pre-Oedipal relationship to her mother which were subsequently pursued by others.

17 Gender seems to be a nearly universal feature of all human societies. With very few exceptions (which tend to confirm, rather than disprove, the rule), gender is dichotomously conceived and related to reproductive biological functions. Aside from this, however, its contents have a wide-ranging cross-cultural variability. See the following: Salvatore Cucchiari, "The Gender Revolution and the Transition From Bisexual Horde to Patrilocal Band: The Origins of Gender Hierarchy," in Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality, eds. Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 31-79; Peggy Reeves Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a classic exposition of the cross-cultural variability of gender conceptions, see Margaret Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1963).

18 For all of the cogent criticisms that have been made of Karen Horney's "revisionist" psychology [see Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women (New York: Random: Random House, 1975),] I would argue that her essay, "The Flight From Womanhood: The Masculinity Complex in Women as Viewed by Men and Women," in Feminine Psychology, ed. Harold Kelman (New York: Norton, 1973) is a brilliant piece. Her argument that the theory of penis envy "differs in no case by a hair's breadth from the typical ideas that the boy has of the girl," (p. 57) raises important questions about the ontological and psychological assumptions of psychoanalytic theory. Unfortunately, Horney failed to pursue the question of the extent to which such presumptions are in fact "true" in the sense that the modern, male dominated, Western world is created and experienced in these terms. This error was committed en masse by American feminists intent on debunking Freud and providing a "positive" image of women.

19 This is not to say that "penis envy" ought necessarily to be thrown out altogether. The longing to appropriate the other may well be a constitutive feature of our experience of "difference". We need, however, to expand the repertoire of the longed-for. Horney was certainly on

19 (cont'd) to something in suggesting that boys probably envied their mother's reproductive abilities.

20 Bronislaw Malinowski, Sex and Repression in Savage Society (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937). See David Cooper, The Death of the Family (New York: Random House, 1971) and Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, trans. Robert Huxley, et al., (New York: The Viking Press, 1977; Paris, 1972) for contemporary versions of anti-psychiatry.

21 Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (New York: Harper and Row, 1979; abridged ed.).

22 See Louis Breger, Freud's Unfinished Journey: Conventional and Critical Perspectives in Psychoanalytic Theory (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) for a sympathetic and critical analysis of "the complex interweaving of perspectives in Freud's work" (p. 28) which partake of conventional nineteenth century views as well as of groundbreaking alternatives. Two of Breger's essays are especially helpful in this respect: "Perspectives Old and New" and "Aggression, Death and the Discontents of Civilization."

23 Here I am anticipating, in an admittedly oblique fashion, the recent critiques of psychoanalysis from various lesbian quarters. These critiques, while compelling in some ways, fail to appreciate the ways in which psychoanalytically-based theorizing can help to account for and validate lesbianism as sexual destiny and/or choice. There is a striking parallel here to earlier feminist critiques of psycho-analysis which failed to appreciate its critical contribution to the analysis of femininity as problematic and damaging. These critiques also succumbed to an overly socialized account of political and social change which could not do justice to the deep complexities of acquired gender identity. (Betty Friedan's recent "rediscovery" of the family is an interesting manifestation of the backlash that has set in as a result of feminism's "failure" to deal with social reality. This "failure" however, should not be attributed to feminism per se, but to its elaboration in the hands of behavioralists and functionalists.)

The crucial issue posed by a lesbian-based critique of psychoanalysis is whether sexism and/or heterosexism operate as a deep bias in the theory. I have yet to be convinced of this, especially in light of recent theoretical efforts to tap into the mother-daughter relationship so as to better

23 (cont'd) understand female sexuality. The dynamics of this relationship, revealed by a psychoanalytic approach, along with Freud's (perhaps unwitting) devastating account of the specific difficulties in store for women in terms of femininity and heterosexual relationships with men provide a good deal of explanatory justification for lesbianism. Cf. Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 5 (4): 631-660; and Suzanne Relyea, "None-Of-The-Above: Gender Theory and Heterosexual Hegemony in Recent French and American Thought," paper delivered at the New French Feminisms Panel of the American Philosophical Association, Boston 1980. My reply to Relyea was entitled, "Reconsidering Gender Theory: A Reply to the Lesbian Critique."

24 The following texts, culled from a vast array of sources, have provided the clinical and theoretical substance for the discussion of early identity formation which follows: Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering; Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur; Melanie Klein, Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works, 1921-1945 (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1974) and The Psychoanalysis of Children (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1975); Margaret Mahler, et al., The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation (New York: Basic Books, 1973); D.W. Winnicott, Playing and Reality (New York: Basic Books, 1971) and Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment (New York: International Universities Press, 1965).

25 Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers (New York: International Universities Press, 1959); Identity, Youth and Crisis (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968); Childhood and Society (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974).

26 Sigmund Freud, The Future of An Illusion, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961).

27 For a fascinating anthropological account of the relationship between early child-rearing practices, adult personality, and culture, see Margaret Mead, Sex and Temperament.

28 I am indebted for this discussion and application of Winnicott's work to Jessica Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love: Rational Violence and Erotic Domination," in Feminist Studies 6 (1): 144-174.

²⁹See David Bakan, The Duality of Human Existence: Isolation and Communion in Western Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), esp. ch. 5, for an especially helpful discussion of the elaboration of agency and communion in human sexuality.

³⁰For better or worse (I happen to think for the better), critical explorations of sado-masochistic imagery and practices can no longer rely on sex-typed standard roles, at least in terms of the participants. Recent lesbian contributions to the literature and theory of sado-masochism make it abundantly clear that s/m is not strictly a male domain or phenomenon. See Heresies #12 (1981), "Sex Issue"; SAMOIS, ed., Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1982), rev. by Lisa Orlando, "Another Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name, in Gay Community News 9 (33), 13 March 1982, pp. 1-2 of the Book Review section. There are many ways of explaining this phenomenon, not all of which undermine Benjamin's position. For example, Lisa Orlando suggests that s/m may involve a playful re-enactment of women's experiences of domination. (This recalls Freud's observation on our compulsion to repeat traumatic experiences.) Also, we should take note of the gendered language ("butch" and "femme") that is used to designate "perpetrators" and "victims". In this case, lesbian s/m may be understood to be playfully mimicking established gender roles. In any case, the connection between eroticism and violation of body boundaries would seem to lie at the complicated heart of efforts to understand and evaluate this phenomenon. One thing is certain: strident accusations of "politically incorrect" and "anti-feminist" are not going to get us very far. The vigorously nasty responses that have recently been hurled at lesbian defenders and articulators of s/m are nearly as provocative as s/m itself. See the following, also by Lisa Orlando: "Bad Girls and 'Good' Politics," in the Village Voice, Literary Supplement 13, Dec. 1982; and "Coming to Terms with Lesbian S/M," in the Village Voice, 26 July 1983. See also Wendy McKenna, "The Construction of Desire," rev. of Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality, eds. Ann Snitow, et al. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), in The Women's Review of Books 1 (6), pp. 3-5.

³¹This account of human development is meant to be historically and culturally situated. I do not believe that an all-purpose norm of human or moral development is either possible or desirable.

³²See Robert Stoller, Splitting: A Case of Female Masculinity (New York: Delta Publishing co., 1973) for a

32 (cont'd) powerful and disturbing clinical description of the effects on an adult patient of an internalized mother figure who is split. Melanie Klein's description of the earliest split maternal image (good breast/bad breast) and of the ways in which this introjected image enters into wider-ranging and seemingly remote areas, including our attitudes towards nature, is important. See her essay, "Love, Guilt and Reparation," esp. pp. 333-43. Thanks to the work of Dorothy Dinnerstein, the now-obvious connections between the split maternal image and de Beauvoir's analysis of the contradictory and ambivalent depiction of Woman in the West have been spelled out in rich detail.

33 "Love, Guilt and Reparation," p. 306.

34 None of this, of course, is a simple one-way process between child and parent(s). As Nancy Chodorow explains with characteristic care in the first chapter of her book, The Reproduction of Mothering, we must also keep in mind the ways in which parents' attitudes towards their already sexually-differentiated children contribute to the dynamics of parent-child interaction. Empirical evidence for the differential treatment by parents of their children, beginning in infancy, and based on their beliefs and interpretations of gender, exists. It also seems that this differential treatment often carries the unmistakable tenor of seduction, usually heterosexual.

35 Coppélia Kahn, Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 10.

36 For empirical confirmation of this argument see Gilligan's discussion (In a Different Voice) of sex-differentiated responses to the Thematic Apperception Test, where boys tend to be threatened by pictorial scenes of social intimacy, while girls tend to exhibit the same feeling in response to pictures of more distanced human beings.

37 See Ralph R. Greenson, "Dis-Identifying From the Mother: Its Special Importance for the Boy," in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis 49 (1968): 370-74.

38 Robert May makes this point in his important critique of theories of androgyny in ch. 7 of Sex and Fantasy: Patterns of Male and Female Development (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), p. 170: "to settle for being a daddy seems thin stuff indeed when compared with the concrete realities of gestation, birth and nursing."

³⁹H.R. Hayes, The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964); Wolfgang Lederer, The Fear of Women (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968). For an analysis of the fear of women in the Middle East, see Fatima Mernissi, Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society (Cambridge, Ma.: Wiley, Shenkman, 1975).

⁴⁰The missing father syndrome is, of course, not simply a modern nuclear family phenomenon. That it has been statistically correlated with sexually inegalitarian societies lends some support to the psychoanalytic approach offered here, although the correlation (which includes the element of female-dominated childrearing) does not provide any conclusive proof of causal links between the two phenomena. See Peggy R. Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance, Appendix C, pp. 239-247. See also Eli Sagan, Cannibalism, Human Aggression and Cultural Form (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). For some vivid descriptive accounts of male initiation rites, see Mircea Eliade, Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth (New York: Harper and Row, 1958).

⁴¹In Man-Made Language (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), Dale Spender observes a relevant semantic rule in the English language: masculine terms which have become gradually feminized through time are never re-introduced as terms of masculine denotation, except when used in a derogatory fashion against males. Similarly, masculine terms used to describe women are complimentary, whereas the obverse is never true. The sad fate of the protagonist in Herculine Barbin, intro. Michael Foucault (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) also bears witness to the rule that that which has been categorized as feminine cannot be accepted into masculine ranks. Social critics such as Spender interpret this semantic rule in strictly political terms. It seems to me that something else is also going on in the non-transferability of feminine to masculine. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that the masculine category itself is just too vulnerable to risk "pollution".

⁴²See Jean Baker Miller's provocative re-interpretation of this material, which sheds a more positive light on women's attunement to the nuances of their environment (otherwise known as "field dependency") and on their abilities to sustain multiple and complex social ties in Toward A New Psychology of Women. Her suggestion that the classically conceived Freudian ego may be more appropriate as a standard for the masculine subject adds further grist to the mill. For a comparable argument

42 (cont'd) relating to moral development, see Gilligan, In a Different Voice.

43 This attempt to draw out some of the problematic features of masculine identity should not be misconstrued as issuing out of an approach that takes feminine identity as unproblematic or necessarily superior to masculine identity. Rather, these features are part of what becomes noticeable from a "feminine" point of view. See Gilligan, In a Different Voice for an approach that explores the ways in which masculinity and femininity may be brought to bear on each other in mutually critical and helpful ways.

44 Nancy Chodorow, "On The Reproduction of Mothering: A Methodological Debate," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 6 (3): 502-503.

45 T.W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972). Since I originally wrote this chapter, Isaac Balbus' book, Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), has come out. He too finds significant parallels between female-centered parenting and "modes of symbolization". According to Balbus, the "instrumental mode of symbolization", which includes the objectification of nature, prevails as a persistent modern problematic that social theory must engage and attempt to transcend.

46 Evelyn Keller, "Gender and Science," in Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought 1 (3): 409-53; Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love". For a critique of the explanatory abuses of gender theory, see Iris Marion Young, "Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination?" in Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory, ed. Joyce Trebilcock (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 129-46.

47 See Genevieve Lloyd, "Reason, Gender, and Morality in the History of Philosophy," in Social Research 50 (3): 514-536. See also Keller, "Gender and Science".

48 See Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).

49 See Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Woman, Culture and Society, eds. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 67-87. For important critiques of Ortner's mistaken universalization of the female-nature/male-culture opposition, see the collection of

49 (cont'd) essays edited by Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, Nature, Culture and Gender (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), esp. Carol MacCormack's essay, "Nature, Culture and Gender: A Critique," pp. 1-24. For a poetic rendition of the woman-nature connection in Western culture, see Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (New York: Harper and Row, 1978). See also Breger, "Aggression, Death and the Discontents of Civilization," in his Freud's Unfinished Journey, pp. 107-128.

50 See Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature," in Heresies #13 4 (1), pp. 12-16.

51 See Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age (New York: Scribner's, 1973): "No single man, we must remember, would usually take charge of the land, any more than a single man would often be found at the head of a workshop in the city. The master of a family was expected to be a householder Marriage, we must insist, and it is one of the rules which gave its character to the society of our ancestors, was entry to full membership, in the enfolding countryside, as well as in the scattered urban centres." (p. 12)

52 See Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape (New York: Bantam Books, 1976; Simon and Schuster, 1976), esp. ch. 2.

53 Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction.

54 See May, Sex and Fantasy, for the argument that theories of androgyny reflect men's desires to repudiate and appropriate for themselves maternal powers. See also Janice Raymond, The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979) for a similar analysis applied to the technology of sex-change operations.

55 See O'Brien's provocative and critical analysis of Hegel's masculine bias, in The Politics of Reproduction, pp. 24-25.

56 See Sigmund Freud, "On Negation," in The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XIX, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), pp. 245-239, for his important exploration of this psycho-intellectual dynamic.

57 See Breger, Freud's Unfinished Journey pp. 22-24, for a discussion of the world view of the modern state. Breger argues that this view includes the joint extolling of

57 (cont'd) masculine virtues and the central notion of man-against-nature.

58 O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction, p. 62.

59 See Sara Ruddick's important essay, "Maternal Thinking," in Feminist Studies 6 (2): 342-367, for some helpful hints. See also Smith's discussion of her experience of time and agency in "A Sociology for Women"; and Julia Kristeva, "Women's time," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 7 (1): 13-35.

60 O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction, p. 184.

61 For a fascinating example of men's creative, helpful and non-dominating efforts to take part in the biological process of reproduction, see Mead's discussion of Arapesh men in Sex and Temperament. According to her account, Arapesh men believe that they have an active and vital role to play in the growth of the fetus: they must "feed" it by having regular sexual intercourse with their wives for a designated period of time after the women become pregnant. The most striking example of their involvement in reproduction is conveyed by Mead's anecdote of an Arapesh response to her comments on the handsome features of a certain man: "Yeeees? But you should have seen him before he had so many children." Not surprisingly, Mead's Arapesh men were also involved in child-care.

62 "Masculinity" is being used here in the historically and culturally specific sense (not necessarily limited to industrial capitalism) of the outcome of a process of gender identity formation and acquisition undergone by males and secured within a social and symbolic context that includes all or most of the following factors: primary care of infants and children provided by a single female mother and/or group of females; general lack of intimate contact between fathers and young offspring; a social structure organized in terms of a sexual division of labor, male dominance in certain key sectors of the economy, and highly articulated cultural expressions of gender differences and male superiority. See the following anthropological works for helpful discussions of the context for masculinity: Sagan, Cannibalism; and John Whiting and Irving Child, Child Training and Personality: A Cross-Cultural Study (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953). See also Balbus, Marxism and Domination for his effort to historicize Dinnerstein's analysis of the effects of female-dominated child care.

⁶³It has also, of course, failed to make sense to certain men, as the Romantic revolt against post-Enlightenment rationalism suggests. A full accounting of Romanticism is beyond the scope of this work. At this point, I am inclined to argue that much of Romantic thinking failed to transcend the dichotomous framework it was rebelling against. See M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1971); Perry Miller, The American Transcendentalists (New York: Doubleday, 1957); and Charles Taylor, Hegel (Cambridge: University Press, 1974), esp. ch. 1.

⁶⁴Much of this description is indebted to O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction; and Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking".

⁶⁵See Carlos Fuentes, "Writing in Time," in Democracy 2 (1): 61-74, for a provocative treatment, from a Third World perspective, of Western conceptions of time. See also Kristeva, "Woman's Time".

⁶⁶See Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).

⁶⁷Mead's analysis of the Arapesh in Sex and Temperament suggests that some men, at least, feel much more connected, biologically speaking, to their offspring. See n. 61 above.

⁶⁸We might also note that men often seem to harbor distrust of and jealousy towards newborns as challengers to their previously undisturbed access to wives as sexual cohorts. See, for example, David Hunt's Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) which documents Henri IV's deliberate distancing of his wife and newborn son. Hunt's explanation of the elite practice of sending newborns out to wet-nurses is also compelling in this respect: ". . . women were not the prime movers in the hiring of nurses. In any case, the final authority in important family matters did not rest with them Almost all doctors who begged women to breastfeed their own children recognized at some point in their argument that the paterfamilias was perhaps the more important party to be persuaded. Putting a baby out to nurse had the effect of leaving the mother at the disposal of her mate. If the child remained on his [sic] mother's breast, the husband would then find himself in the position of competing for the attention and loyalty of his wife." (p. 106)

⁶⁹As a general characterization, this argument neither seeks nor requires an unsympathetic denial of many genuinely nurturant fathers. Despite their increasing numbers, they continue to be the exceptions which prove, rather than deny, the existing and prevalent rule. The argument concerning relative male distance from offspring should not be construed as a denial of paternal love, either. The important point concerns the qualitative differences between the psychological orientations to and forms of parenting engaged by mothers and fathers. See Diane Ehrensaft, "When Men and Women Mother," in Socialist Review 49 (Jan-Feb. 1980), pp. 37-73.

⁷⁰Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love," pp. 148-149.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 150.

⁷²O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction, p. 33.

⁷³For helpful amplifications of this theme see the following: Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love"; Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering; Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur; Nancy Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (New York and London: Longman, 1983) esp. ch. 7; May, Sex and Fantasy; Sagan, Cannibalism.

⁷⁴This is not to suggest that women have been nothing but unwitting and passive victims in the historical elaboration of familial and sexual organization. Women have often used the family and their sexuality as a source of covert power. See the discussion in ch. 2 of Margaret Stacey and Marion Price, Women, Power, and Politics (London and New York: Tavistock, 1981). On the other hand, an apparatus of intimidation and physical force has operated to maintain the domination of men over women. See the following: G.J. Barker-Benfield, The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Kathleen Barry, Female Sexual Slavery (New York: Avon Books, 1979); Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape; Cambridge Women's Studies Group, ed., Women in Society: Interdisciplinary Essays (London: Virago Press, 1981), esp. sec. 2 "Definition and Coercion" and sec. 3 "Politics, Sexuality, Choice"; Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology; Andrea Dworkin, Woman Hating (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1974); Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979); Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977); Mary

74 (cont'd) Wollesntonecraft, Maria or The Wrongs of Woman, intro. Moira Ferguson (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975).

75 My approach here presumes two important orientations towards the specified relationships between knowledge, language, and reality. The first is that "knowledge" (what can be known and how it can be known) is materially situated in particular ways of life. (This is not to say that it is determined, in a one-way linear fashion, by ways of life.) For an appreciation of this point we are indebted to a host of thinkers, including Karl Marx, Karl Mannheim, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Peter Winch. Jane Flax articulates this position admirably in her essay, "Mother-Daughter Relationships". The second is that categories of language do not passively reflect the givens of an established reality, but help to constitute the objects of perception and hence, help to constitute "reality" itself. See Benjamin Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality (Cambridge, Ma.: The M.I.T. Press, 1956). On this view, language does not simply describe, it also engages in the active interpretation and construction of reality. For a feminist utilization of this conception of language, with important implications for questions of feminist politics and strategy, see Dale Spender, Man-Made Language. See also Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Feminist Discourse and Its Discontents: Language, Power and Meaning," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 7 (3),: 603-621.

76 See the following: Lorene Clarke and Lynda Lange, eds., The Sexism of Social and Political Theory: Women and Reproduction From Plato to Nietzsche (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Mary Mahowald, Philosophy of Woman: Classical to Current Concepts (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1978); Martha Lee Osborne, ed., Woman in Western Thought (New York: Random House, 1979).

77 Guess, The Idea of a Critical Theory, p. 10.

78 Vivian Gornick, "Toward a Definition of the Female Sensibility," in her Essays in Feminism (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), pp. 113-114.

C H A P T E R I I I

HOBBIAN (HU)MAN

He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself, not this or that particular man; but mankind; which though it be hard to do, harder than to learn any language or science; yet when I shall have set down my own reading orderly and perspicuously, the pains left another, will be only to consider, if he also find not the same in himself.

Thomas Hobbes, Introduction to Leviathan

Introduction

Hobbes is most famous, of course, for his Leviathan, the grand masterwork in which he sought to provide a comprehensive scientific theory of civil society for a radically changing time.¹ He is perhaps best known for his notorious yet compelling description of the state of nature, in which life is grimly portrayed as a war of all against all, where insecurity and fear are the primary constants. His effort was to deduce a theory of legitimate, uncontested and stable civil authority from what he saw as a set of fairly dismal facts of the human condition. In doing so, he rejected both divine right and majority choice theories of political authority, arguing instead for a secular civil authority that would be made capable of withstanding the vagaries of competing and always private

interests. The legitimacy of this authority was based by Hobbes on the quasi-democratic hypothetical consent of all rational and right-thinking citizens who, according to Hobbes, would freely agree to such authority on the basis of their rational recognition of the requirements for the satisfaction of their desires for life and security. This initially democratic basis of civil authority (which explains Hobbes's status as a modern liberal political theorist) could not, however, be renegotiated, since men's (and Hobbes did mean "men") unruly passions were untrustworthy. Hence, Hobbes's civil authority is fully sovereign and self-generating over time. It must be, since it rules over an unsteadily harnessed state of nature.

Why do we continue to read Hobbes today? Aside from historical interest, what makes him an important political thinker for our time? MacPherson has argued that Hobbes provides the first and freshest portrait of bourgeois, propertarian man.² Others see his principles actively at work in contemporary American politics, which preserve and perpetuate Hobbesian notions of ruthless individualism, transactional relations between individuals and among interest groups, a civil authority whose sole function is that of policeman, and a view of politics as nothing but conflict management.³ For some, Hobbes is the crucial connecting link between the political thought of the Renaissance and that of modern liberal democracy.⁴

MacPherson has also suggested that we are drawn to Hobbes because his state of nature lurks in the horrifying scenario of nuclear war and its socio-political aftermath.⁵

I would add yet another: Hobbes's thought reflects and perpetuates a distinctively masculinist orientation to the realm of politics that continues to be male-dominated and governed by masculinist presumptions in our own time. To the extent that this masculinist orientation dovetails with other aspects of Hobbes's contemporary relevance, feminist criticisms of his work promise to illuminate Hobbesian features of contemporary social life in politically helpful ways.

A Male Standpoint

We can begin with a simple question. Was Hobbes writing about humankind or men? While his theory seems to be addressed to humanity in general, it is clear that Hobbes was writing for a male audience and from a male point of view. Few English women of the 1650's were literate⁶ and it seems that the occasional queens of the past were the exceptions which proved the standard rule that women were either unfit or less fit than men for civil affairs. Hobbes would have had little reason to imagine that the women of his time would study and discuss his theory, much less be in a position to implement it. And while his theory of

sovereign rule did not exclude female authority, this says more about Hobbes's theory of authority, succession and obedience than indicating any particular generosity towards women as citizens and rulers. Hobbes's deliberate under-description of the sovereign ruler leaves the question of sexual identity quite open. But this must be understood as a side effect of his attempt to sever the question of legitimate authority and obedience due to that authority from the personal characteristics of the sovereign authority.

Hobbes's overly facile account of the historical emergence of paternal authority in De Cive and Leviathan suggests that he was neither perturbed by nor curious about women's civil inequality to men. What makes this specifically noteworthy is his discussion of original maternal authority and his description of the radical equality between all persons in the state of nature, where personal differences in wit and strength are cancelled out by the simpler and more devastating ability of anybody to eliminate an opponent through murder. Hence, in his discussion of the problem of succession of sovereign authority, Hobbes writes, with no apparent discomfort: "Among children the males carry the pre-eminence in the beginning perhaps, because for the most part, they are fitter for the administration of greater matters, but specially of wars."⁷ (How males got to be fitter is the question Hobbes never asks. Given his portrayal of radical

equality in the state of nature, it is a question we are entitled to ask him.)

A few scattered remarks in Hobbes's work suggest more definitively that he did assume a male standpoint as, for example, in this curious, if not depressing, treatment of same-sex (between men) and heterosexual (man to woman) love:

Moreover, the love, whereby man loves man, is understood in two ways; and good will appertains to both. But it is called one kind of love when we wish ourselves well, and another when we wish well to others. Therefore a male neighbor is usually loved one way, a female another; for in loving the former, we seek his good, in loving the latter, our own.⁸

In The Citizen, Hobbes uses subjects, sons and servants in relation to their respective sovereigns, fathers and masters to discuss authority, obedience and liberty: ". . . no man, whether subject, son, or servant is so hindered by the punishments appointed by the city, the father, or the lord, how cruel soever, but that he may do all things and make use of all means necessary to the preservation of his life and health." (p. 216) This implicit exclusion of women--as wives, daughters, mothers, servants or civil subjects--is recapitulated, incredibly enough, in his discussion of the family, where we would expect to find females, if nowhere else: "A father, with his sons and servants, grown into a civil person by virtue of his paternal jurisdiction, is called a family." (p. 217) Female servants notwithstanding (we will give Hobbes the benefit of the doubt

here), where have the daughters and wives gone? Women, together with children, do get special notice in On Man and again in Leviathan for their unique propensity for crying, which Hobbes attributes to the fact that they "have the least hope in themselves and the most in friends."⁹

(Presumably, women cry in order to elicit sympathy and aid for themselves.) They are joined by cattle in Leviathan as those possessions which men in the state of nature stand to lose in those inevitable skirmishes with other men:

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory.

The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them . . . (p. 81).

This excerpt in particular betrays the actual meaning embedded within a supposedly generic use of "mankind". It leaves little doubt that Hobbes's "man" is not only propertarian, but also male.

These last two examples are provocative for what they suggest about Hobbes's implicit exemption of women from the lifeways and standards of a civil order built on the foundation of a state of nature. However, he never develops this insight nor does he explicitly consider some of the ways in which women might force a reconsideration of his depiction of human nature. Rather, females occupy a kind of

nether zone, a category of persons who can be generally located under the rubric of humanity and human nature but who are also excluded, by implicit logic and meaning, as well as explicitly, in his writings.

Would Hobbes have women look into themselves as a test and confirmation of his theory of human nature?¹⁰ Probably not. Such a question, it is obvious, would have made little sense within the context of Hobbes's time. Today, however, in keeping with the spirit of Hobbes's maxim that we "read mankind in ourselves," such a task is an important part of the effort to come to critical terms with the Hobbesian vision of a civil order built on the foundation of "human" passions and requirements.

The important issue here, of course, is not whether Hobbes meant to include or exclude women in his studies of human nature and political life. conceivably, a pro forma inclusion of women would not automatically close the search for masculinist ideology in his work. Conversely, the exclusion of women does not automatically imply the presence of masculinist ideology in his work. However, the evidence for an uncritically and unreflectively assumed male subject as the standard bearer for all citizens certainly invites further exploration with a view towards looking for the man in "man". Such a search must begin with Hobbes's account of the passions.

The Passions

The temptation to portray Hobbes as a Grand Inquisitor intent on repressing the dangerous and unruly passions of men in the interests of a secure civil peace is difficult to resist.¹¹ Hobbes himself often contributes to this view as, for example, when he writes in Leviathan that "the passions unguided, are for the most part mere madness." (p. 48) Yielding to such temptation, however, generates an overly facile and misleading account of Hobbes's political theory; it does little to advance the quest for a genuine engagement with the substance and spirit of his work.

Hobbes is a dedicated student of the passions. Not only does he take them seriously, but he refuses to pass moral judgement upon them. They are what they are: neither good nor evil in and of themselves or within the state of nature. "The desires, and other passions of man, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions, that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them." (Leviathan, p. 83) Of special significance is the fact that within Hobbes's account some of the passions constitute a tangible foundation for human reason and are the point of origin for state of nature attempts to secure peace. The passion for life and a reason motivated in large part by an instinctual and lusty curiosity about the world of causes and effects converge in the state of nature to

produce the enlightened self-interest through which men come to appreciate the dictates of right reason and to understand the requirements for a lasting peace and felicitous life.

If nature has made man unfit for society, it has also provided the means for man to create an artificial representation and enforcement of the naturally situated dictates of right reason which are presumably available to all rational minds. For though the "perturbations of mind," that is, emotions such as fear, anger and covetousness, impede the acquisition of knowledge, "there is no man who is not sometimes in a quiet mind." (The Citizen, p. 148)

Hobbes's grand Leviathan is "artificial" only in the sense of being created by men. It is no more "unnatural" than a work of art.

Curiosity, defined by Hobbes as "a lust of the mind," which "exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure," (Leviathan, p. 35) is, along with reason, what distinguishes men from animals. We would also do well to consider Hobbes's own self-attributed passion for lustily conceived intellectual activity, which he described in vivid and sensuous terms: ". . . how great a pleasure it is to the mind of man to be ravished in the vigorous and perpetual embraces of the most beautiful world."¹²

If he calls for a harnessing of the passions in civil society, such an arrangement is designed to guarantee some security for a portion of their satisfaction against the

certitude of their non-satisfaction in a state of nature characterized by "an incessant war of all against all." He has no blue-print for the elimination or repression of the passions in civil society although he does argue for their artificial control: ". . . laws were not invented to take away, but to direct men's actions; even as nature ordained the banks, not to stay, but to guide the course of the stream." (The Citizen, p. 268) It is precisely because he takes the passions so seriously that his prescriptions for civil society seem so stringent. Yet, his controls are purely external; there is no hint in his works of a desire to tamper with the passions themselves. Of course, this leads to a purely pragmatic politics and to his vision of a civil order denuded of ethical or personal discourse.¹³

But if Hobbes's ideal society leaves no room for public discourse on matters of conscience, at least he has the good grace to leave conscience and the realm of desire alone.¹⁴

Hobbes's work, then, presents an invitation to consider the passions in their full breadth. It is on this terrain that we must initially search for hints of an identifiably masculine outlook. the question that we bring to Hobbes is this: Is masculinity inscribed within his account of the passions? Because the passions are the building blocks of his resolute-compositive method, contributing to his extensive treatments of human nature, the state of nature, civil authority and obligation, they provide the logical

starting point for any inquiry into his conception of politics.

Man is portrayed by Hobbes as a kind of desiring machine. The relevant point is not so much whether Hobbes believed that this portrayal was literally true. Rather, it is that for Hobbes, the language pertaining to the movements of a desiring machine was the only way to scientifically apprehend human nature.¹⁵ Hobbes's attempt to develop a scientific method of description and explanation for what we now call the social sciences is made manifest in his painstaking step-by-step reconstruction of man, which begins with the smallest bits of usable information which are then combined into ever more complex formulae. These bits name the elementary motions of a body towards or away from various objects. (For Hobbes, what is called "sense" is nothing but the sensible apprehension of motions to which we give various names, such as "sight", "sound", etc. If we want to make linguistic and logical sense out of perceptions, Hobbes insisted, we must stop talking as if the qualities of perception actually inhered in the objects of perception. This was metaphysical gobbledy-gook which he had no interest in sustaining.) Hence, Hobbes begins his catalogue of the simple passions with appetite or desire, and aversion, which designate movement towards or away from other moving objects which are perceived to cause pleasure or pain. His subsequent cataloguing and definition of those

passions which comprised the linguistic fare of his time is built on the foundation of aversive or appetitive motion. Love is but another name for desire when the desired object is present, approachable, and attainable. Contempt is "nothing else but an immobility . . . of the heart, in resisting the action of certain things." (Leviathan, p. 32) Finally, the more complex passions such as courage, ambition, the passion of love, jealousy, and admiration reflect such things as the perceived likelihood of their attainment, the objects which are loved or hated, the simpler passions in various combinations, and their various temporal and spatial relationships to each other and to their objects. Laughter and weeping, for example, are both "sudden motions" prompted by sudden "dejection" or "glory" in the face of unexpected pleasure or pain.

Hobbes's approach to the passions is an analytic one in which he seeks to give his nominalism full play: he seeks to provide a rigorous means of defining standard terms of everyday language such that his subsequent discussion of human nature and civil society, along with the anticipated objections of critics, will not be muddled by imprecise thinking. For "the light of human minds is perspicuous words, but by exact definition first snuffed and purged from ambiguity . . ." (Leviathan, pp. 29-30). What is especially striking about his catalogue of the passions is the attempt to radically simplify the various emotional yearnings and

torments of the heart and mind.

While Hobbes's subsequent account of human nature is undoubtedly pessimistic, it is important to bear in mind that his catalogue of the passions contains a balanced itemization of passions which we would label as "good" in the sense of being conducive to sociability. Courage, benevolence, magnanimity, good nature (good will) and even kindness find their way into the account of the human passions which Hobbes lays out in Leviathan.¹⁶ While life in the state of nature may be "nasty, mean, brutish and short," human beings are by no means all nasty. Unfortunately, the nasties, however few, set the pace for everyone else in a zero sum game where every winner implies a loser.

Those who would refute Hobbes by pointing out various features of human behavior or emotion which are conducive to peace are taking the wrong tack. Hobbes's point is not that human beings are especially evil or deliberately anti-social. It is rather that we inevitably get into each other's way. For appetitive machines that engage incessantly in the pursuit and maximization of pleasure cannot help bumping into and impeding the motion of each other.

The noteworthy aspect of Hobbes's chronicle of the passions, for our purposes, is not that it paints an ugly portrait of human nature. Rather, it is that it presents

and requires a view of desire and motivation which is strictly self-originating and self-controlled within the bounds of a clearly delineated ego. Objects of desire derive only from individual will. Commonality of desire--for example, the universal fear and avoidance of death--figures only as a sum total of individual desires bound in external allegiance to a shared object. What is markedly absent here is the notion of types of desire constituted socially or intersubjectively--for example, the desire for community which is kindled and explored within a social context. Objects of desire for Hobbes can only pertain to individual yearnings for satisfaction. And those of us who might invoke persuasion, as a counter-example to Hobbes's ultra-individualized conception of desire, which might open the way towards a recognition of intersubjectively secured values and desires, will have to contend with the Hobbesian retort that persuasion is nothing but the displacement of one will by another.

In the Hobbesian world, desire is a private and individual affair, some of whose outward effects must be checked by civil authority. But desire itself has no place of substance in the political arena of discourse and law-making. Hobbes's egoism "is only the individuality of a creature shut up, without hope of immediate release, within the world of his own imagination. Man is, by nature, the victim of solipsism; he is an individuae substantiae

distinguished by incommunicability."¹⁷ What communication there is takes place as a result of agreement on the definition of terms. Like the "discourse" of a contract, Hobbes's nominalist notion of communication is remarkably antiseptic. Hence, Hobbes's nominalist epistemology and his egoism are fundamentally connected.

Hobbes's approach to the passions generates his treatment of the human subject in relation to rather than with others. His rendition of the primary play of ego-centered desire is recapitulated in his account of social intercourse, described vividly by Michael Oakeshott:

Between birth and death, the self as imagination and will is an indestructible unity, whose relations with other individuals are purely external. Individuals may be collected together, may be added, may be substituted for one another or made to represent one another, but can never modify one another or compose a whole in which their individuality is lost. Every reason is individualized, and becomes merely the reasoning of an individual without power or authority to oblige acceptance by others: to convince a man is not to enjoy a common understanding with him, but to displace his reason by yours.¹⁸

At the same time, Hobbes's thoroughly inviolable ego is threatened by the fear and distinct possibility of ultimate dissolution--namely, death at the hands of a social opponent. This stark picture provides the components for Hobbes's depiction of a civil order which is either governed by the strong hand of authority (an inviolable ego in the ultimate sense) or reduced to a state of internal dissension (signifying death for civil authority as well as for

particular citizens.) Clearly evident here is a thorough going preoccupation with the integrity of a self that is strictly delineated and self-contained, a potential victim of similarly constructed egos. Hobbes's own presentation of his Leviathan as "an artificial man" makes the connection between a civil order as organism-mechanism and the individual as organism-mechanism quite evident.

Norman Jacobson has suggested that "We still read Leviathan after three centuries . . . because we have all experienced the threat to the self implicit in the dread of personal annihilation."¹⁹ Jacobson's observation could be further refined by asking whether this threat of personal annihilation is not also significantly tinged with a specifically masculine sense of selfhood. I would suggest that what we find in Hobbes's account is a vital concern with the survival of a self conceived in masculine terms. The strict differentiation of self from others, identity conceived in exclusionary terms, and perceived threats to an ego thus conceived which will be minimally displaced and maximally dissolved by an invader all recapitulate issues encountered and constructed in the securing of masculine identity vis à vis a female maternal presence. These themes receive their fullest treatment in Hobbes's state of nature--that imaginary zone which represents an intermediary state of reconstruction from the rudimentary building blocks of human nature to the completed architecture of civil

society. In the state of nature, Hobbes's egoism carries the day. Furthermore, its masculine dimension is underscored by a radical atomism built in part on the buried foundation of denied maternity.

The State of Nature

In The Citizen, where Hobbes first elaborated in a systematic fashion those aspects of the state of nature which would make his prescriptions for civil society in Leviathan so welcome and reasonable, he asks us to "consider men as if but even now sprung out of the earth, and suddenly, like mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kinds of engagement to each other." (Italics mine, p. 205.) Although Hobbes does not specifically repeat this imaginative directive in Leviathan, it is obviously at work in the shadows of his description of the state of nature there.²⁰ The mushroom is a charming and ingenious metaphorical choice;²¹ it works in ways that "cabbages" or "maple trees" would not, conveying a host of images and associations that are worth extracting for brief perusal. Mushrooms do seem to spring up overnight; they grow rapidly in the wild and require no special tending. (Rapid growth eliminates "maple trees"; no tending eliminates "cabbages".) In his state of nature conception, Hobbes wants to eliminate factors such as socialization, education and other cultural means of "cultivating" human beings,

removing those "secondary" features of human behavior and motivation which might be mistakenly attributed to first nature. His insistence that "nature has made man unfit for society" requires a careful distinguishing of learned behaviors appropriate to peaceful social life from man's innate disposition.²² Another feature of mushrooms is that they grow in clusters (not so with maple trees); hence, Hobbes is able to slip in a picture of human beings in close proximity to each other. The image of mushrooms, as opposed to that of solitary and stately trees, reminds us that human beings will inevitably confront each other in disputes over desired goods that are always inevitably limited, since gain and glory require a relative surplus of accumulated goods. Man in the state of nature may be a radical individual but, like the mushroom, he is not solitary. Finally, mushrooms reproduce quietly, invisibly, and asexually: spores are scattered by the wind and land haphazardly, sprouting up when temperature and moisture conditions are right. This feature of the metaphorical image allows us to accept that much more quietly one of the most incredible features of Hobbes's hypothetical state of nature. And it is this: that men are not born of, much less nurtured by, women, or anyone else for that matter. In the process of extracting an abstract man for rational perusal, Hobbes has also expunged human reproduction and early nurturance--two of the most basic and typically female-identified features of

distinctively human life--from his account of basic human nature. Such a strategy ensures that Hobbes can present a thoroughly atomistic subject, one whose individual rights--sparsely conceived--clearly precede any obligation to belong to civil society. With the help of the mushroom metaphor, Hobbes's atomism affirms the self-sufficiency of man alone in the crowded midst of other men.

The point here is not whether Hobbes's state of nature is realistic. No state of nature construct is going to be realistic if, by "realistic", we mean conforming to the contours of life as we know and cherish it. For state of nature constructs are intended to make us more self-conscious about the unreflectively accepted particularities of our life-forms. They could not do this if they simply reproduced social organization as it existed. But we do need to ask, what is the point of including and excluding particular features of contemporary life? Is our understanding of the human condition enhanced or handicapped by the simplifications provided by the theorist? We are entitled to query Hobbes on his fully formed and un-mothered men precisely because his individualism rests securely on it. And also, because it violates some pretty essential features of the human condition. Just as a state of nature populated by immortal creatures would be too off the mark to be useful in helping us come to grips with our predicaments in this life, so too does a state of nature populated by

mushroom-like men throw out too much of distinctively human requirements and possibilities. Eliminating mothers also makes it that much easier to read "males" into "men", a train of thinking that Hobbes has already facilitated by including wives as part of the property which state of nature man must struggle to preserve against encroachment and theft.²³

The mushroom imagery--in its unmistakable denial of human sexuality, reproduction and nurturance--makes that much more plausible a central tenet of Hobbes's theory of civil authority, obligation to that authority, and rights. As Charles Taylor argues, the doctrine of the primacy of rights relies on an atomistic conception of the individual in the sense of affirming "the self-sufficiency of man alone."²⁴ Self-sufficiency here refers, not to the ability to survive alone in the wilderness, but rather, to the denial of the notion that characteristically human capacities need particular social or life forms in which to develop. In the state of nature scene being considered here, which we might subtitle the Case of the Missing Mother, the issue is not whether infants would survive untended in the world;²⁵ it concerns instead the ways in which early maternal and parental care provide a social, intersubjective context for the development of particular human capacities in children--emotive, social and cognitive capacities--which are presupposed in Hobbes's state of

nature man who is capable of implementing compacts and contracts as well as of deducing the dictates of right reason from his natural circumstances. Hobbes's metaphor, of course, aims at avoiding any such discussion of the etiology of such capacities. In providing us with fully sprung men and tracing out their hypothetical social exchanges, Hobbes keeps his schedule of rights to a bare minimum: the right to life, maximum pleasure so long as it does not interfere with the pleasure or rights of others, and maximum freedom from pain. He makes social obligation a purely pragmatic affair, external to the identity of the subject, one that is derived from natural right and hence, is secondary to it. Hobbes's bare bones schedule of rights contributes to his analysis of the right to revolt only in the case of threats to life and to his curious discussion of liberty as minimum interference with our movements.²⁶

The Hobbesian state of nature is a device aimed at stripping bare the requirements and materials of civil society so that the political theorist can, by rational means premised on the resolute-compositive method (a kind of political sciency geometry), establish the full force of the pragmatic need for a civil order governed by irrefutable authority. Such a civil order, argues Hobbes, is mandated by Nature, and its role is purely a restraining one. In civil society, the atomistic individuals of the state of nature remain unchanged (still mushroom-like) except for

their contracted allegiance to a singular civil authority brought about by the sum of their individual fears of injury, loss of property, and untimely death. Death, that radical equalizer in the state of nature, is transposed into the singular power to punish by the sovereign authority. And fear, which in the state of nature kept men at odds with each other, becomes the social gluten of the civil order.

In sum, Hobbes's civil society has no transformative effect on its body politic. His grand artifice consists of a recombination--clever, but not especially creative--of the given elements of the state of nature. These essential elements are natural human beings atomistically conceived along masculine lines. This masculine tenor may be found, first, in Hobbes's conception of a clearly unified and discrete ego, one that is unassailable except in combative terms, and approachable only on the terms of contracted and nominalist exchanges. It is an ego constituted in strict either/or terms of total integrity unto itself or total disintegration at the hands of a similarly constructed opposing ego. We can also discern masculinity at work in the fantasy pattern which underlies his state of nature: men magically sprung like mushrooms, unmothered and unfathered.²⁷ While such a fantasy deals a blow to parenthood and the organic notion of generational continuity, it strikes especially hard at the maternal contribution, whose denial is uniquely remarkable and

difficult to implement since it is so biologically and socially apparent. Hobbes's omniscient and self-sprung ego has no dues owed to others except those which we "freely" and individually contract.²⁸

Hobbes's civil order, where social relations are formalized and particular roles are assumable by interchangeable because ultimately similar human beings, assumes distinctly masculine characteristics. At the heart of Hobbes's conception of the civil order is a particular notion of identity, a particular notion of the human subject. An identity that is spontaneously conceived and solipsistically self-constituted requires an all-out repudiation of organic and interpersonal factors. Hence the denial of the maternal contribution. Within the psychoanalytic frame of reference, masculinity is achieved at the cost of a denial of femininity in oneself. To the extent that an internalized sense of femininity derives, in significant measure, from an introjected version of the mother, the achievement of masculinity may require the denial of maternal contribution to one's life and identity. If this is achieved at the individual level of personal identity, extending it to a generalized view of humanity is a small step. We cannot be sure that this characterization correctly or adequately captures the development and origins of Hobbes's thought. On firmer ground, however, we can more comfortably suggest that Hobbes's work may have resonated

with just such a set of meanings in the minds of subsequent readers; that part of the appeal and sheer power of Hobbes's analysis can be traced to this psychological dimension of his theory.

Civil Authority

Hobbes's denial of the mother, with its unmistakable ramifications on his portrayal of atomistic identity and contractual social intercourse, is also refracted in his theory of legitimate authority and obedience. As the inaugurator of a liberal tradition which deauthorizes individuals in the name of an abstract individual, breaking the more traditional associations between authority, persons and their unique (divinely ordained) attributes, Hobbes presented a radically new, and to some, disturbing interpretation of authority as simultaneously arbitrary and absolute.²⁹ It was arbitrary in the sense that the question of who might be invested with civil authority was effectively inconsequential for Hobbes. Legitimate authority and its proper exercise had little to do with personal attributes, expertise, or status. What mattered for Hobbes was only that a strong, central and uncontested form of authority be identifiably located in some one person or executive body and that the problem of succession be abstractly settled ahead of its required implementation. In

throwing out divine right and democratic majority choice together, Hobbes made enemies out of two opposing camps--traditionalists and libertarians. Small wonder that he portrayed himself as a solitary and heroic fighter in the midst of hostile opponents.

This deauthorization of individuals, pursued by Hobbes at the expense of divinely and democratically sanctioned authority, rests squarely on a prior deauthorization of the mother. The connecting link is the depersonalization of authority. Maternal authority embodies a view of authority and obligation to which Hobbes's scheme is throughly opposed. Not only is maternal authority indelibly personal, it also stands in a complex relation to its subjects, one that cannot be characterized in the simple linear terms of commandments and prescriptions with merely behavioral consequences (i.e., consequences that are external to the identity of the behaving agent). Parental authority is at least partially introjected. (The strength of such introjection, of course, is significantly dependent on the qualitative strength and intimacy of parent-child relations.) For this reason, our relation to it cannot be cast in simple contractarian terms. That Hobbes attempted to portray parental authority in precisely this fashion suggests that he understood the significant difficulties that parental authority posed for his theory of civil authority and civic obligation.³⁰ Hobbes treats the

relation between parent and child and sovereign and subject in the same essential way: "the preserved oweth all to the preserver." The terms of allegiance and obedience are strictly external to the preconstituted identities of the participants.

The Leviathan is effectively composed of a body politic of social orphans who have reared and acculturated themselves, whose desires are situated within and reflect nothing else but independently generated movement. Disagreements are likely to erupt and--because there are no conceivable means for adjudicating between competing desires--there must be a locus of authority which can pronounce on such disputes. Such pronouncements must be obeyed, not because they are correct or in our best interests, but simply because they reflect the voice of civil authority. The prime directive, after all, is peace; and justice refers simply to a correspondence to the written law. Norman Jacobson's clever and vivid image of the voice of Hobbes's sovereign authority coming through to us via a telephone receiver clamped to our ears conveys this characteristic feature of Hobbesian authority. We are forced to listen but "free" to obey or disobey (although we ought to be willing to accept the price of disobedience). Whatever the response, however, we are essentially unchanged by the process. Our relation to sovereign authority, like our relations to fellow human beings, takes place within a

behavioral panorama peopled by strictly differentiated individuals whose highest civic achievement is mutual accomodation.

Having explored the substance of Hobbes's political theory with a view to uncovering a masculine substructure, we now turn to Hobbes's style and what Sheldon Wolin has termed the "informing intention" of Hobbes's work.³¹ Not only do intention and style affect the substance of thought generally, but in Hobbes's case especially they bear directly on our exploration of the masculinist stamp of his work.

The Heroic Intellectual

In stylistic terms and in terms of the often strained relation between his "talk" and his "walk"--between his avowed philosophy of "right method" and his actual implementation of that method--Hobbes is a fascinating patchwork of contrasts. To begin with, we should note that his sceptical and nominalist epistemology coexists with a genuine respect for the lessons of experience. When Hobbes argues that he would learn more about anatomy and physiology by accompanying a midwife on her rounds than from reading the texts of physicians, or, as in the opening pages of Leviathan, when he entreats his readers to reflect on their experience as a test of his arguments, he is pursuing a very

different tack than the one contained in his nominalist version of knowledge:

No discourse, whatsoever, can end in absolute knowledge of fact, past or to come. For, as for the knowledge of fact, it is originally, sense; and ever after, memory. And for the knowledge of consequence, which I have said before is called science, it is not absolute, but conditional. No man can know by discourse, that this or that, is, has been, or will be; which is to know absolutely: but only, that if this be, that shall be: which is to know conditionally; and that not the consequence of one thing to another; but of one name of a thing, to another name of the same thing. (Leviathan, p. 40)

An easy, and grossly mistaken interpretation of this epistemological stance would be to depict Hobbes as a timid or humble thinker.³² Forty pages on in Leviathan, Hobbes invokes experience as a measure of the soundness of his argument concerning the distrust that humans harbor against each other.³³ It is a devastating rejoinder to those who would question his account.:

It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that nature should thus dissociate, and render men apt to invade, and destroy one another: and he may therefore, not trusting to this inference, made from the passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he arms himself, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house, he locks his chests; and this when he knows that there be laws, and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow-subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow-citizen, when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? (pp. 82-83)

Another significant contrast may be located between Hobbes's own prescription for right method--a plodding, methodical and rational arrangement of basic definitions and propositions a la Euclidian geometry--and the sheer power of his prose, which is characterized by an imaginative and flamboyant style. Notwithstanding his protests against the improper use of poetic and rhetorical flourishes in a philosophical and scientific enterprise that ought to be soberly dedicated to the careful study of causes and their consequences, Hobbes himself was often a dazzling rhetorician and highly adept at flourishing potent metaphores to convince readers of his right thinking.

(Remember the mushrooms.)

Hobbes's avowed scepticism, which is rescued from a radical solipsistic stance only by his faith in shared common sense experience, contrasts sharply with his argumentative mode, which seeks to demonstrate the air-tight logic and common-sense truth of his arguments. One of his intellectual biographers, Miriam Reik, has this telling observation to offer on the tone of Hobbes's work:

. . . one of the most prominent chracteristics of Hobbes's philosophic impulse [is] the drive toward discovering and building on the simplest, most basic elements of reality, and reasoning about them with such force and directness that his explanations seem to be come almost intellectually coercive.³⁴

A fruitful means of exploring and accounting for this series of interesting incongruities in Hobbes's thought is provided

by Sheldon Wolin's thesis that Hobbes cast himself in the role of epic-theorist. As we will see, many of the features of this epic heroism are also related to masculinity.

Wolin argues that Hobbes had epical intentions in writing Leviathan, intentions that he shares with Plato, Machiavelli, Hegel and Marx, whose collective great works comprise an epic tradition in political theory:

The phrase "epic tradition" refers to a type of political theory which is inspired mainly by the hope of achieving a great and memorable deed through the medium of thought. Other aims that it may have, such as contributing to the existing state of knowledge, formulating a system of logically consistent propositions, or establishing a set of hypotheses for scientific investigation, are distinctly secondary.³⁵

Political theories of the epic mold are intended by their authors as forms of action, where the work itself is the deed, a thought-deed that will hopefully be translated into reality. But if it is not actualized, the residual hope is that the thought, like the written and spoken chronicles of long dead heroes, will endure through time. Theories cast in the epic mold reveal "an attempt to compel admiration and awe for the magnitude of the achievement."³⁶ As such, argues Wolin, the epic theorist casts himself in the role of epic hero rather than that of bard or poet. His aim extends beyond the relatively humble one of logical persuasion to that of astonishing his audience by a remarkable thought-deed. Like the hero of epic poetry, the heroic theorist is a single individual whose exploits

surpass those of other men and whose talents and strengths are strictly human (essentially self-made).³⁷ Just as divine intervention on behalf of the hero has little substantive room in the tales of epic heroism, so too the epic theorist performs his intellectual feats through the use of his unique and natural human brain power and imagination. Finally, the hero of epic poetry and the heroic theorist share another significant trait: their achievements are bound up with the stuff of manhood. As C.M. Bowra has written:

Heroes are the champions of man's ambition to pass beyond the oppressive limits of human frailty to a fuller and more vivid life, to win as far as possible a self-sufficient manhood, which refuses to admit that anything is too difficult for it, and is content even in failing provided that it has made every effort of which it is capable.³⁸

The theme of self-sufficiency recapitulates one of the most distinctive psychological features of masculinity. To the extent that masculine identity is bound up with a repudiation of the mother, vigorous self-sufficiency emerges as a kind of defensive reaction-formation against memories of dependence and the early symbiotic relation. Hobbes's atomistic individualism also invokes this image of self-sufficiency, as we have seen, which is strengthened by the effective displacement of mothers from the state of nature. We encounter it in yet another form in the figure of the heroic subject.

The epic hero achieves immortality by surpassing the

standards of achievement set by others. Thus, competition is an essential feature of epic heroism. It is this competitive and individualistic quality of action--competition directed at the select few who have set the highest intellectual standards--which marks the style of Hobbes's approach. We find it in his Autobiography as well as in Leviathan. Hobbes never argued with any but the most prominent and formidable recognized intellects: among them Aristotle and the best mathematicians of his time. Furthermore, these disputes were cast by Hobbes into some of the most vivid combative terminology ever written, as this excerpt from his Autobiography reveals plainly:

. . . I brought out another little book on Principles Here my victory was acknowledged by all. In other fields my opponents were doing their best to hide their grievous wounds. Their spirits were flagging and I pressed home the assault on my flagging foes, and scaled to topmost pinnacles of geometry Wallis enters the fray against me, and in the eyes of the algebraists and theologians I am worsted. And now the whole host of Wallisians, confident of victory, was led out of their camp. But when I saw them deploying on treacherous ground, encumbered with roots thick-set, troublesome and tenacious, I resolved on fight, and in one moment scattered, slaughtered, routed countless foes.³⁹

We also find an interesting and relevant complaint inscribed in Hobbes's criticism of too much attention and respect directed towards the thinkers of antiquity: "competition of praise, inclineth to a reverence of antiquity. For men contend with the living; not with the dead; to these ascribing more than due, that they may

obscure the glory of the other." (Leviathan, p. 64) Hobbes wanted to shine forth in his day, unimpeded by the ghosts of the past who attracted attention to themselves and therefore detracted from the attention and glory that Hobbes sought. As would-be epic theorist, Hobbes himself is in the midst of the competitions for power, gain and glory which he depicted so vividly.

Leviathan opens with the image of Hobbes as a Ulysses figure carefully maneuvering between the Scylla and Charybdis of liberty and authority: "For in a way beset with those that contend, on the one side for too great liberty, and on the other side for too much authority, 'tis hard to pass between the points of both unwounded." ("Dedication to Francis Godolphin", p. 2) We should bear in mind that Hobbes's characterization of his enterprise here is not entirely fanciful. Many were the unlucky victims of the political disputes of his time. And Hobbes himself was lucky to have survived the political upheavals of seventeenth century England.⁴⁰ However, Hobbes's sense of risk here goes beyond the arena of immediate political intrigue to that of intellectual risk as well, as he reveals so engagingly in his Autobiography. Heroic honor, of course, is predicated on the pursuit of risk.⁴¹ And the ultimate risk is loss of life, to which most heroes inevitably succumb, often prematurely, always bravely and gloriously, if sometimes from the view of hindsight,

foolishly. The casting of heroic honor in these terms, labelled by Marina Warner as "our necrophiliac culture's ideology of heroism,"⁴² has tended to exclude females who, as the anthropological record suggests, have been less willing than men to risk their lives in ultimate confrontations.⁴³ This is not to say that women have been historically unwilling to risk their lives. Individual women have died heroically, often in political resistance struggles against oppression. And we also know that mothers have risked death on behalf of their children. But these are better understood as last-ditch efforts. The willingness to risk life would seem to be less a constitutive feature of femininity and more an instrumental means of protecting and preserving life.

The strong connections between heroism, masculinity and the willingness to risk life are unmistakable.⁴⁴ These connections are further strengthened if we stop to ponder the gender-specific dimensions of the heroic quest for immortality. As Mary O'Brien has argued, men's alienated relationship to reproduction, manifested most clearly in the uncertainties of paternity, is carried over into their conceptions of time: "Men have always sought principles of continuity outside of natural continuity."⁴⁵ Among the many cultural forms of temporal continuity instituted by men, within which we may include patrilineal descent and the regenerative succession of political authority embodied in

the state, heroic immortality is especially noteworthy. It defies the biological pronouncements of death, decay, and ultimate defeat; provides a tangible sense of generational continuity over time for the male "family" of heroes and their admirers; and, above all, assures men of an uncontested role in their "reproduction" through time. Like Hobbes's state of nature man, the immortal hero is self-made and lives in a motherless world.

Hobbes's heroism is housed, appropriately enough, within dangerous territory--the state of nature. This territory serves to dramatically enhance the heroic dimensions of his work:

Epic heroes move in a world of dark and occult forces; they encounter great perils and horrors, sometimes at the hands of nature, sometimes by the machinations of malevolent powers; they are constantly in the midst of violent death and widespread destruction; and yet by a superhuman effort, which stretches the human will to its limits, they succeed nonetheless.⁴⁶

"Violent death" and "widespread destruction" appropriately describe the England of the Civil Wars as well as Hobbes's state of nature. His theoretical "feat" was to rescue us from an existence that would otherwise be "nasty, mean, brutish and short." This "salvation" is made possible by the theorist's courage in exploring the dark and dangerous terrain of the state of nature, which he makes available for all to see in its full horror. Against this backdrop of miserable existence, Hobbes's creation of an "artificial"

Leviathan out of the very components of state of nature life is rendered into a remarkable achievement.

Along with his courage, Hobbes wields the hero's requisite weapon which is both the emblem and instrument of his power. Hobbes's special power is knowledge; and his weapon, as Wolin tells us, is "right method":

Rational method is not a weapon easily fashioned or easily mastered, especially in political matters. The prolonged preparation, constant practice, and dedication which it demands are analogous to the long apprenticeship and severe trials which a knight had to undergo before he was declared fit for chivalric tests.⁴⁷

It is Hobbes's heroic use of a deductive method cast in a sober, plodding, and ultra-rational terminology which helps to account for the incongruity between his avowed philosophy of method and his implementation of that method. Under such circumstances, Hobbes-as-heroic-theorist and Hobbes-as-scientific-philosopher are bound to be caught in a paradoxical relationship to each other. When Hobbes's political geometry is employed in a battleground environment, incongruous, as well as exciting, things are like to result. This is the stuff of Hobbes's achievement. If he had been more consistent, enacting his method to the letter of the law, we would not continue to read him and to be provoked by his analysis of the requirements of and possibilities for civil society.

Like the curiously strained yet compelling notion of 'the war to end all wars', Hobbes's heroic enterprise is

paradoxically aimed at eliminating future heroes by creating a civil order in which heroism would have no legitimate space. Strictly bound in allegiance to a central ruler, citizens of his Leviathan would be effectively stripped of all heroic motivation, transformed into wimps. Hobbes's aim is to create the risk-free society. Heroism is necessarily sacrificed to peace and stability. And the choice as Hobbes presents it is overwhelmingly tempting:

Out of this state (of civil society), every man hath such a right to all, as yet he can enjoy nothing; in it, each one securely enjoys his limited right. Out of it, any man may rightly spoil or kill another; in it, none but one. Out of it, we are protected by our own forces; in it, by the power of all. Out of it, no man is sure of the fruit of his labours; in it, all men are. Lastly, out of it, there is a domain of passions, war, fear, poverty, slovenliness, solitude, barbarism, ignorance, cruelty; in it the dominion of reason, peace, security, riches, decency, society, elegancy, science and benevolence. (The Citizen, p. 222)

For obvious reasons, Hobbes believes he has made us an offer we can't refuse.

Hobbes's all-or-nothing choice, between a chaotic and violent state of nature or a predictable and peaceful civil order which is made so by the unconditional obedience of citizens to the political sovereign, points to a solution which conveniently leaves Hobbes as the last hero. The heroic dismantling of the requisite conditions of heroism is an altogether remarkable feat, one from which Hobbes could expect to derive uncontested future praise and admiration.

Conclusion

Hobbes's political theory has been subjected to a number of criticisms, many of which center directly on his treatment of human nature and argue that he failed to provide a convincing account of generalized humanity.⁴⁸ This failure becomes all the more evident when Hobbes is read as a masculine thinker. Masculinity inhabits his work throughout a remarkably broad range of levels, from his unselfconscious adoption of a male standpoint in his prose, to his depiction of a motherless state of nature, to his atomistic portrayal of the human subject in that state and in civil society, to his heroic conception of his own work. The substance and style of Hobbes's work, which significantly includes a specific notion of the human subject in various capacities--state of nature man, civil subject, and heroic intellectual--betrays a specifically masculine cast, one that ignores and debases the female presence in and contribution to social life. As such, Hobbes's political theory is distinctively flawed in newly apparent ways which are both disturbing and instructive.

The most significant finding involves the denial of the maternal contribution. This denial, as I have tried to show, is logically central to and required by Hobbes's atomistic account of human nature, social interaction, and civic life. In other words, the denial of the mother here

is not an incidental feature of Hobbes's theory; it saturates his analysis throughout. Along with the denial of the maternal contribution, the heroic dimensions of Hobbes's style also point convincingly in the direction of masculinity. Hobbes's sense of himself as a heroic intellectual actor and his depiction of the state of nature have quite a bit in common. Significantly, the threat of personal annihilation in the state of nature and the promise of its elimination in civil society share with the heroic conception of risk a highly individualized and masculinized sense of selfhood. A self conceived along such lines is simultaneously vulnerable to attack and capable of heroic feats in a dangerous world. Hobbes's feat was to cast himself as the last hero by proposing a solution to a predicament that was more masculine than human in tenor. The external and inviolable authority of the sovereign would replace the social anarchy of a world populated by motherless self-sprung men.

A portion of Hobbes's genius thus might be said to include the unwitting exploration of a masculine politics, one that is premised on a distinctly gendered and distorted sense of identity. It is a negative politics that is grim and instrumentally limited in its abilities to transform the human condition. Hobbes's abstract man is a creature who is self-possessed and radically solitary in a crowded and inhospitable world, whose relations with others are

unavoidably contractual, and whose freedom consists in the absence of impediments to the attainment of privately generated and understood desires. Abstract man thus bears the tell-tale signs of a masculinity in extremis: identity through opposition, denial of reciprocity, repudiation of the mother in oneself and in relation to oneself, a constitutional inability/refusal to recognize what might be termed dialectical connectedness. Hobbes's genius and courage was to face the momentous and uncomfortable truth of this masculine revelation. His failure was the inability to recognize it as a half-truth.

FOOTNOTES

¹A shortened version of this chapter appears as "Masculinity as Ideology in Political Theory: Hobbesian Man Considered," in Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy, a special issue of Women's Studies International Forum 6 (6): 633-644. I would like to thank the reviewers, Jane Flax and Nancy Hartsock, for their critical and encouraging comments.

²C.B. MacPherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

³Frank Coleman, Hobbes and America: Exploring the Constitutinal Roots (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

⁴Albert O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Norman Jacobson, Pride and Solace: The Functions and Limits of Political Theory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁵MacPherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism.

⁶Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973).

⁷Thomas Hobbes, The Citizen: Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society, in Man and Citizen: Thomas Hobbes's 'De Homine' and 'De Cive', ed. Bernard Gert (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), p. 219.

⁸Thomas Hobbes, On Man, in Man and Citizen: Thomas Hobbes's 'De Homine' and 'De Cive', p. 60.

⁹Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁰". . . whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does think, opine, reason, fear, &c. and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts and passions of all other men upon the like occasions." Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.), p. 6.

¹¹For an example of an interpretation that tends in this direction, see Jacobson, Pride and Solace.

¹²"Author's Epistle," English Works, Vol. 1, cited in Miriam Reik, The Golden Lands of Thomas Hobbes (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1977), p. 80. This sexual imagery, of course, plays into the Baconian feminization of nature.

¹³For a critical interpretation of Hobbes along these lines, see Jean Bethke Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 108-116.

¹⁴Bentham and the interfering clinical gaze were not far behind. Part of what makes Hobbes seem so historically distant is his sense that the political has only to do with behavior. On the other hand, this is a classic early exposition of a liberal conception of politics which must keep its hands off the private man. See Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York: Random House, 1979).

¹⁵See Michael Oakeshott, "Introduction" to his edition of Leviathan, and "The Moral Life in the Writings of Thomas Hobbes," in his Rationalism in Politics (London: Methuen, 1962), pp. 248-300.

¹⁶It is interesting that Hobbes chose to eliminate "compassion" from the Leviathan version of human passions. He provides a rather extensive definition in On Man which is worth quoting: "To grieve because of another's evil, that is, to feel another's pain and to suffer with him, that is, to imagine that another's evil could happen to oneself, is called compassion." It is highly doubtful that Hobbes forgot to put this in Leviathan, given the close overlap between the two sections. Obviously, he had his reasons for keeping it out. Perhaps it undercut the political message he was trying to get across. Perhaps he had trouble explaining, in terms of motion, the desire or ability to empathize. We might also note that compassion flies in the face of an atomistic conception of man, which is a major cornerstone of his theory.

¹⁷Oakeshott, Introduction to Leviathan, p. liv.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. lv-lvi.

¹⁹Jacobson, Pride and Solace, p. 59.

²⁰Given the close overlap between the state of nature

20 (cont'd) sections in The Citizen and in Leviathan, I think it is fair to argue that the mushroom metaphor survives in Leviathan and provides important clues to the style and train of Hobbes's thoughts on the state of nature.

21 Strictly speaking, this is a simile rather than a metaphor. Nonetheless, I would argue that mushrooms work as metaphorical image. If "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another," then surely the metaphorical cast of Hobbes's phrasing will be granted. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 5.

22 In The Citizen, Hobbes devotes a lengthy footnote to this issue, apparently anticipating popular disagreement with his unsavory formulation. It may be found in the famous section entitled "Of the State of Men Without Civil Society," p. 110 in the edition cited here.

23 In fairness to Hobbes, it should be pointed out that he anticipated objections to his formulation and specifically addressed the social needs of infants in the previously cited footnote (n. 22 above). "Therefore I must more plainly say, that it is true indeed, that to man by nature, or as man, that is, as soon as he is born, solitude is an enemy; for infants have need of others to help them live Wherefore I deny not that men (even nature compelling) desire to come together [However], it is one thing to desire, another to be in capacity fit for what we desire."

Because of Hobbes's individually cast notion of desire, however, this response does not meet the objection addressed here; namely, that the care of infants and children invokes the question of intersubjectively constituted and secured capacities which, while eminently "natural" and "human", require a social context. Hobbes's notion of child-care here is strictly physical. And his state of nature account presupposes socially constituted and secured capacities, while it ignores their genesis. In effect, Hobbes gets to have his cake and eat it too.

24 Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in Power, Possessions and Freedom: Essays in Honor of C.B. MacPherson, ed. Alkis Kontos (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 41.

25 Hobbes never intends self-sufficiency in this sense either. See fn. 23 above.

²⁶See Hobbes's curious and strained, if not downright nasty discussion of the "liberty" of the servant in The Citizen, p. 216, for a clear example of how a minimum schedule of rights lends itself to a ridiculous-bordering-on-the-absurd analysis of how we are all, master and servant, similarly "free".

²⁷While no attempt is being made here to psycho-analyze Hobbes himself, it is worth mentioning that his father abandoned the family when Hobbes was a young child and that he was subsequently supported by a paternal uncle. One cannot help wondering whether Hobbes's denial of the maternal contribution reflects in some measure his need to overcompensate for his negligent father.

²⁸Hobbes does argue that we are indebted to our parents for our physical survival as youngsters. This, however, is fashioned in contract-like terms. Whoever rears the child is entitled to obedience in exchange for provisions for physical survival. The parent-child relation, for Hobbes, is one of life or death. It's that simple.

²⁹For this discussion of authority in liberalism and the specific notion of "deauthorization", I am indebted to Zelda Bronstein, "Psychoanalysis Without the Father," in Humanities in Society 3 (2): 199-212.

³⁰See fns. 23 and 28 above.

³¹Sheldon S. Wolin, Hobbes and the Epic Tradition of Political Theory (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. 4.

³²Hobbes was perfectly willing to portray and conduct himself as a timid man as, for example, in his self-imposed exile to France when it looked as if he might antagonize some important civil authorities with his publications. His delightful autobiographical account of the circumstances of his birth also shows this quite plainly:

I have no reason to be ashamed of my birthplace, but of the evils of the time I do complain, and of all the troubles that came to birth along with me. For the rumour ran, spreading alarm through our town, that the Armada was bringing the day of doom to our race. Thus my mother was big with such fear that she brought twins to birth, myself and fear at the same time.

Hobbes, "Autobiography," trans. B. Farrington, in the

32 (cont'd) Rationalist Annual 1958, cited in Wolin, Hobbes and the Epic Tradition, p. 50. Hobbes's self-professed timidity of action, however, contrasts sharply with his style of thought, which he executed and described in terms of war-like combat.

33 One version of the opposition to Hobbes's account of human nature was the less-than-honest means of fomenting humorous stories about Hobbes as a fearful and paranoid man, as related by his admirer Aubrey:

His work was attended with Envy, which threw several aspersions and false reports on him. For instance, one (common) was that he was afraid to lye alone at night in his Chamber; I have often heard him say that he was not afraid of Sprights, but afraid of being knockt on the head for five or ten pounds, which rogues might think he had in his chamber; and several other tales, as untrue.

Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), p. 156.

34 Reik, The Golden Lands of Thomas Hobbes, p. 71.

35 Wolin, Hobbes and the Epic Tradition, p. 4.

36 Ibid., p. 5.

37 C.M. Bowra argues for the individualism of the hero and for the epic stress on his uniquely human capacities. See his Heroic Poetry (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), chs. 1 and 3; From Virgil to Milton (London: MacMillan and Co., 1945), ch. 1.

38 Heroic Poetry, p. 4. See also Marina Warner, Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism (New York: Vintage Books, 1981) for added confirmation of the masculine dimensions of heroism. Her study of the history of Joan's heroic image reveals that Joan's story was trapped within a masculine lexicon of meaning. Joan's image as we know it today is the result of conventional classification systems for female types in addition to the standard heroic fare. Joan's insistence on wearing male clothing suggests that she understood the masculine terms of heroism, while her self-professed virginity gave her access to a specifically female form of virtue. Both images also signify a denial of sexual difference. Male dress, argues Warner, usurps the functions of men (Joan's captors understood this all too well in forcing her to wear female attire) even as it affirms the supremacy of the masculine heroic image. And virginity signifies a denial of the specifically feminine.

38 (cont'd)"Ironically, Joan's life, probably one of the most heroic a woman has ever led, is a tribute to the male principle, a homage to the male sphere of action." (p. 155)

39"Autobiography", p. 16.

40Hobbes's remarkable longevity is one highly notable biographical feature distinguishing him from the hero who must usually die prematurely.

41C.M. Bowra argues that during times of social stress and change what counts in cultural estimates of heroic men "is not so much their power to destroy as their willingness to die." From Virgil to Milton, p. 10.

42Joan of Arc, p. 272.

43See Peggy R. Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): "If there is a basic difference between the sexes, other than the differences associated with human reproductivity, it is that women as a group have not willingly faced death in violent conflict." (pp. 210-11)

One of the most notable exceptions to Sanday's formulation concerning women and their willingness to risk death would be the scores of women who took part in the self-chosen martyrdom of the early Christians. While the willingness, if not ecstasy, at the prospect of "dying for Christ" cannot be denied these women, the fact that their heroism was invariably cast in masculine molds by subsequent interpretations is important to bear in mind. See Warner's discussion in chs. 7 and 11 of Joan of Arc. See also my review of Kristeva's analysis of Christianity in Appendix B.

44This suggests that female heroes, rather than being simply and deliberately "hidden from history", are automatically excluded because their activities cannot be captured or framed within the existing lexicon of heroic meaning, which is distinctly masculine. See Warner's Prologue to her Joan of Arc, pp. 3-10. See also the fictionalized account of Penelope's interpretation of her husband Ulysses' heroic exploits, both in terms of what he actually accomplished, and what he missed at home while he was gone: Sara Maitland, "Penelope," in Tales I Tell My Mother: A Collection of Feminist Short Stories, eds. Zoe Fairbairns, et al. (London and West Nyack: The Journeyman Press, 1978), pp. 146-158.

⁴⁵Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 33.

⁴⁶Wolin, Hobbes and the Epic Tradition, p. 20.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁸See the following: Jean B. Elshtain, "Methodological Sophistication and Conceptual Confusion: A Critique of Mainstream Political Science," in The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge, eds. Julia Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 229-249; Alasdair MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics (New York: MacMillan, 1966), pp. 130-140; C.B. MacPherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism; K.R. Minogue, "Hobbes and the Just Man," in Hobbes and Rousseau: A Collection of Critical Essays, eds. Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 66-84; Taylor, "Atomism".

CHAPTER IV

J.S. MILL: REASSESSING THE LIBERALISM-FEMINISM RELATION

What has been the opinion of mankind, has been the opinion of persons of all tempers and dispositions, of all partialities and prepossessions, of all varieties in position, in education, in opportunities of observation and inquiry. No one inquirer is all this: every inquirer is either young or old, rich or poor, sickly or healthy, married or unmarried, meditative or active, a poet or a logician, an ancient or a modern, a man or a woman; Every circumstance which gives a character to the life of a human being carries with it its particular biases--its peculiar facilities for perceiving some things, and for missing or forgetting others. But, from points of view different from his, different things are perceptible.

John Stuart Mill, "Bentham"

Were there no improvement to be hoped for, life would not be the less an unceasing struggle against causes of deterioration; as it even now is.
John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government

Introduction

In the company of political theorists, John Stuart Mill is emphatically not among those who make the blood boil; in contrast to Hobbes and Marx, he neither communicates nor elicits passion. Neither is he a systems-builder or self-styled hero. In reading Mill, we can imagine sitting down to afternoon tea with him in a Victorian parlor and discussing, ever so calmly, politely and rationally, the

topic at hand, most probably culled from the recent store of controversial events. No theatrics, no yelling, minimal body gestures: in short, a "civilized" conversation.

As a rational and soft-spoken persuader, Mill practices a style markedly and deliberately different from that of his direct predecessors Jeremy Bentham and James Mill.¹ Urging the cultivation of "the power by which one human being enters into the mind and circumstances of another,"² he invokes a vision of truth made possible only by "combining the points of view of all the fractional truths."³ Although Mill effectively failed to live up to this standard, we can still appreciate its humbling influence on his style and approach. Sometimes it is tempting to condemn him for his wishy-washiness, to dismiss his brand of tolerance as the intellectual stance of the privileged and comfortable bourgeoisie, masking significant political and economic interests.⁴ At other moments, one is prompted to praise him for his humility in the face of the multifarious complexity of social and political life.⁵ Under different circumstances yet, some of us cannot help but be flabbergasted at his own arrogant presumptions of privileged access to an unproblematic truth.⁶ We are less inclined to forgive this intellectual child prodigy his logical and political lapses into inconsistency and myopia. Perhaps this is the price he must pay for his intellectual style and standards, for his

optimistic advocacy of the powers of rational intellect, for his own plodding and systematic attempts to preserve logical rigor.

As a defender of tolerance and champion of individual liberty, Mill articulated principles which comprise a significant portion of the political ideological fabric in the United States today.⁷ As such, he is a less exotic thinker, more easily taken for granted, and more often taken to task for existing implementations of his principles than other political thinkers. On the one hand, we are the privileged beneficiaries of his carefully worked out principles of tolerance, democracy and individual rights, most especially as these relate to freedom of expression. On the other, we are his troubled heirs, especially insofar as Mill represents "the heart of liberalism."⁸ The crisis of liberalism, stretching from the regressive turn to fundamentalist Christianity among Americans who are desperate for meaning and guidance in a secular age, to tensions within the feminist movement⁹, to the current crisis of the welfare state¹⁰, revolves around the formulation of the relationship between the individual and society. And it is this troubled relationship which lies at the heart of much of Mill's inconsistency.

One doesn't have to be antagonistic to Mill's work to note his often troubling inconsistency. Even his admirer Hobhouse described him as "the easiest person in the world

to convict of inconsistency, incompleteness, and lack of rounded system."¹¹ Since Mill portrays himself as a man of "no system", as a practitioner of "practical eclecticism", we are neither obliged nor entitled to fault him for lack of explicit systemic amplification and coherence. We are, however, entitled to query his various works and positions in reference to each other. It is in this sense only that the issue of inconsistency in Mill's work can and ought to be addressed.¹²

The contradictory strands of elite rule and fully representative democracy in Considerations on Representative Government are especially perplexing, although not necessarily irresolvable.¹³ Mill's abstract defense of liberty, tolerance and self-rule, which coexists with his disdain for the "ignorance", "deficiency of mental cultivations" and "degradation" of the masses has a significant parallel in the inconsistency between Mill as an epistemological pluralist and monist, with totalitarian tendencies that accompany the latter. By "totalitarian" is meant that Mill envisions a singular world of shared opinions and values which also happen to be his. His repeated invocations of a world inhabited by the necessary multiplicity of partial truths, explored most eloquently in his essay on "Bentham", contrasts sharply with his implied vision of a future world of rational unanimity where singular Truth will prevail.¹⁴ If we stop to consider

Mill's empiricism, however, this contradiction fades to a certain extent. For Mill, truths are partial with respect to an as-yet undeciphered or only partially deciphered empirical totality, which is bound to be made eventually transparent by means of intellectual conflict and exploration. Mill's truth is not a truth to be created (like Marx's), but a truth that corresponds to a pre-discovered reality. Finally, some people (the educated) are more likely than others (the uneducated) to have access to truth. Hence, Mill's fears of populist mediocrity and his defense of tolerance are both predicated on the optimistic assumption of an attainable and generalizable truth.

While an appreciation of Mill's empiricism helps to resituate the apparent conflict between his democratic and elitist, pluralistic and totalitarian tendencies, it cannot resolve the problems that such inconsistencies pose for the practical implementation of Mill's principles. Contemporary disputes over the proper extensions and limitations of tolerance, concerning how one can simultaneously uphold tolerance and specific ethical values, are a prime case in point. Our perplexity in the face of the "right" of the Ku Klux Klan to hold public parades and meetings and current disputes over issues of free expression and consumer choice in the debates around pornography attest to the unresolved difficulties inherent in many of Mill's principles. Mill's

vigorous stand against relativism and unrestricted tolerance notwithstanding, he failed to provide the principled means for the adjudication of competing claims between the freedoms of individuals and between the freedom of individuals and the interests of society. This failure, however, ought to be understood as a larger failure of the liberal paradigm, rather than as the personal failure of Mill.¹⁵

Turning our attention to Mill's individualism, we observe its contrast to his ideal model of public spiritedness, which is exemplified in his own political and intellectual activities. Mill himself embodies one among several instances where his communitarian and individualist tendencies collide. We see in his retention of a modified Utilitarianism the effort to simultaneously preserve the integrity of the self-interested individual and to encourage the development of a creature capable of understanding his self-interest in social terms as well.¹⁶ Mill's prescriptions for civil society in On Liberty aim, paradoxically, at securing the greatest freedom for the individual as a self-interested and egoistic creature, so that he (and I do mean "he") will eventually evolve into a civic-minded subject.¹⁷ Depending on which of the various interpreters of Mill we choose to rely, his individualism may be viewed as a logical precursor to socialism¹⁸, a sensible blend of diverse tendencies in a complicated human

subject¹⁹, or as the ultimate defense of atomistically and solipsistically conceived subjectivity.²⁰

These inconsistencies in Mill's thought have led, understandably, to a wide array of competing and diverse interpretations. Our task here is not to investigate these extant studies in depth, nor is it to attempt a new resolution of Mill's variegated thought. Having taken notice of some of the critical interpretations of Mill's work, we will let them serve as a contextual backdrop, so that we can go on to explore Mill in terms of the gendered features of his work. Within the frame of this inquiry, we will return to several themes that have been touched on here: Mill's epistemology, his often confusing politics, and his individualism.

The specific question that informs this investigation of Mill is the following: Can masculine ideology be found in his work? This question is especially provocative in the case of Mill because of his avowed feminism. Mill provides an ideal testing ground for the proposition that masculine ideology is not simply a function of or equivalent to overt attitudes towards women.²¹ I will argue that Mill's feminism, although radical for its time, is essentially flawed, and that this is a direct outcome of certain masculine dimensions of his theory which, in turn, are centrally related to some of the basic tenets of liberalism. In many ways, then, this analysis of Mill is

applicable to liberal theory in general, although we should be careful not to collapse the two. Mill's thought must be understood on its own terms as well as being a major piece of the multifaceted liberal tradition.²²

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and also distinguish this project from the important work of Bruce Mazlish, in which he develops a psychohistorical analysis of James and John Stuart Mill.²³ While some of Mazlish's insights will be utilized, the analysis of this chapter is emphatically not a psychohistory of John Stuart Mill. Certainly, Mill's relationship with his father and his ambivalent attitudes towards women are fascinating and suggestive. However, for the purposes of this study, it would be a mistake to rely primarily or exclusively on particular aspects of Mill's personality and life-history. As I will argue, Mill's thought partakes of a much larger configuration (we have already encountered a portion of it in Hobbes) than the idiosyncratic compass of his particular life-experience. And that is precisely why his work merits critical feminist scrutiny.

Mill's World-View

Buried among the pages of otherwise dry political analysis in Considerations on Representative Government are some of the most telling statements Mill has to offer

concerning his felt experience as social observer and participant. Here we are given a brief glimpse at Mill's sense of placement in the overall scheme of nature, history and society. His Weltanschauung teems with sluggish and hostile decay threatening without letup against a vulnerable but vigorous counterforce in the form of human (Western) civilization. Mill's language in these textual irruptions is uncharacteristically raw and vivid. Some of the key terms in these irruptions (which function as a kind of violent or forceful intrusion on the text, given their contrasting tone to Mill's usual prose style and especially insofar as they are not required by the manifest structure of his argument on representative government) are "decay", "deterioration", "indolence" and "anarchy"; counterposed to these is a vocabulary of "activity", "energy", "courage", and "initiative". Mill effectively depicts a world order that is horizontally divided between two radically distinct and opposed dimensions. When read in conjunction with his essay on "Nature", this material provides crucial insight into Mill's thought-world.²⁴ What we can glean from these writings illuminates the contours of an emotional substructure in which gender and cognitive experience are intimately linked.²⁵

The key passages under consideration take place within the frame of Mill's discussion of Order and Progress as two popularly conceived opposed criteria of good government.

Mill goes to inordinate lengths in arguing that the two criteria are not really distinct measures of different kinds of government, but that Order should be a sub-category of Progress, since "the agencies which tend to preserve the social good which already exists are the very same which promote the increase of it."²⁶ Order and Progress, comprised of similar qualities--"industry", "enterprise", and "courage"--and differentiated only with respect to their preservation or advancement of the social good, are then contrasted to the deadly specter of decay:

If there is anything certain in human affairs, it is that valuable acquisitions are only to be retained by the continuation of the same energies which gained them. Things left to take care of themselves inevitably decay. (Considerations on Representative Government (CRG), p. 19)

And, "the same beliefs, feelings, institutions and practices are so much required to prevent society from retrograding as to produce a further advance." (CRG, p. 22) From this point on, Mill has his excuse or "cue" for the remarkable passage which follows and merits quotation in full:

. . . we ought not to forget that there is an incessant and everflowing current of human affairs toward the worse, consisting of all the follies, all the vices, all the negligences, indolences, and supinenesses of mankind; which is only controlled and kept from sweeping all before it by the exertions which some persons constantly, and others by fits, put forth in the direction of good and worthy objects. It gives a very insufficient idea of the importance of the strivings which take place to improve and elevate human nature and life to suppose that their chief value consists in the amount of actual improvement realized by their means, and that the consequence of their cessations would

merely be that we should remain as we are. A very small diminution of those exertions would not only put a stop to improvement, but would turn the general tendency of things toward deterioration which, once begun, would proceed with increasing rapidity and hence become more and more difficult to check, until it reached a state often seen in history, and in which large portions of mankind even now grovel--when hardly anything short of a superhuman power seems sufficient to turn the tide and give fresh commencement to the upward movement. (CRG, pp. 22-23)

Here lies Mill's world-view. Immorality is equated with passivity, passivity with decay; evil can only be controlled by constant exertion. All it takes is a diminution of such exertions for things to fall apart, and quickly at that. Once civilization begins to unravel, regression will proceed exponentially. Reversing the tide takes a superhuman effort; the previous level or intensity of exertion will not do. Downward movement threatens incessantly; upward movements can only be maintained through vigilant and vigorous efforts. There is an unbearable sense of striving and tension here in Mill's depiction of a dichotomous world structured in terms of two radically opposed zones. Life is a constant struggle against the quicksand of regression as the insistent but invisible forces of decay suck and tug persistently at our civilized (in Mill's case, Victorian) hems. A primal, slimy specter of political chaos and social debauchery seethes and leers from the outskirts of moral civilized society.

Decay threatens not only from without, but also from

within civilized life, in the form of the passive personality. Mill divides human beings into two basic characters: "the active or the passive type: that which struggles against evils or that which endures them; that which bends to circumstances or that which endeavors to make circumstances bend to itself." (CRG, p. 47) Further on, intellect stands as the distinguishing mark between the active and the passive character. For obvious reasons, only the active-educated should have access to democratic political power. In the meantime, Mill advocates the education-activisation of the uneducated so that they can eventually take part in the civilized and rational work of political decision-making.

Mill's description of "the character which improves human life" as "that which struggles with natural powers and tendencies, not that which gives way to them," (CRG, p. 48) leads us into a consideration of the essay on "Nature". What, specifically, is it that the improving character is struggling against?

In the essay on "Nature" Mill establishes his firm stand against the Romantic notion that human beings ought to imitate Nature. For Mill, such a doctrine is irrational and immoral; it is also immoral precisely because it is irrational. To the extent that we are natural, says Mill, such a notion is tautological. But to the extent that the "natural" denotes an arena of pre- or non-human activity

(i.e., an arena of non-intervention by human agency), it avoids facing the fact that all worthy human action involves an altering of nature for the better. "If the artificial is not better than the natural, to what ends are all the arts of life? To dig, to plough, to build, to wear clothes, are direct infringements of the injunction to follow nature."²⁷ Our duty, says Mill:

is to cooperate with the beneficent powers, not by imitating but by perpetually striving to amend the course of nature--and bringing that part of it over which we can exercise control, more nearly into conformity with a high standard of justice and goodness. ("Nature", p. 488)

In this revealing and fascinating essay, one of Mill's last projects, he invokes an essentially Baconian view of a nature that must be instrumentally harnessed:

Though we cannot emancipate ourselves from the laws of nature as a whole, we can escape from any particular law of nature, if we are able to draw ourselves from the circumstances in which it acts. Though we can do nothing except through the laws of nature, we can use one law to counteract another. According to Bacon's maxim, we can obey nature in such a manner as to command it. ("Nature", p. 455)

And it is abundantly clear, from Mill's engrossing and frightening description of nature, that it must be commanded. A more horrible account would be hard to come by:

Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones, like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her [sic] exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve. (p. 463)

This characterization is extended to include animal life and the realm of human instincts as well. Mill refers to "the odious scene of violence and tyranny which is exhibited by the rest of the animal kingdom" (p. 482), and invokes cleanliness as "a triumph over instinct, one of the most radical of the moral distinctions between human beings and most of the lower animals". (p. 476) "The truth is that there is hardly a single point of excellence belonging to human character, which is not decidedly repugnant to the untutored feelings of human nature." (p. 475) "Nearly every respectable attribute of humanity is the result not of instinct, but of a victory over instinct . . ." (p. 474).

Clearly, Mill intends to debunk the pastoral romantic view of a benign Nature. In his zealous efforts, he goes so far as to portray Nature as the worst kind of vindictive criminal. "In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are nature's everyday performances." (p. 462) But of course, this is an absurd portrayal, since Nature--as Mill could well appreciate--has no motives. Mill's explicit argument that the category of the "natural" should contain no favorable presumptions is backed up, paradoxically, by the implicit claim that the "natural" contains a good many unfavorable presumptions. Mill meant to argue that the category has no presumptions. But that is significantly not the actual strategy of the essay on Nature.

At a latent level, Mill's prose communicates something altogether different than what he may have consciously intended as part of his logical argument. "Nature" in Mill's account is an evil, malevolent and destructive force, a far cry from a category having no preemptive value. "She" stands in sharp contrast to the morality and rationality of the civilized order. And it is in large part because of this dichotomous contrast that Nature lurks as such a devastating threat.

Once we appreciate the full force of Mill's bizarre depiction of Nature, the portrayal of civilized life in Considerations on Representative Government as a perpetual and tension-filled striving against the forces of decay becomes all the more intelligible. These forces of decay and destruction are the forces of nature. The "negligence", "indolence", and "supineness" of human beings is precisely what we exhibit in the absence of "artificial" discipline. These are the threatening features of an unfettered human nature. Discipline and self-control, which figure prominently throughout Mill's work, represent the harnessing of nature within the individual.²⁸ Civilization can only proceed by means of constant self-control on the part of the human species.

Given Mill's dichotomous rendering of a world radically divided between the forces of Nature and Culture, an essential and unavoidable association is preserved between

them as well. Hence, the work of civilization involves the deliberate undermining or harnessing of the powers of nature. Society is civilized precisely to the extent that nature is repressed. To the degree that they may be counterposed to brute nature, activities and societies are deemed "rational". In short, Mill's conception of nature is not incidental to his conception of culture and, by extension, to his conception of politics as cultured activity.

Finally, we should take brief note of Mill's presumptions of a singular phenomenal world, one that in principle would be eventually amenable to a single structure of explanation. For the time being, we need only note that Mill's epistemology suggests that he viewed his stance in relation to the social world as essentially equivalent to the stance of the scientist-observer in relation to the natural world. This empiricist stance presumes a strict differentiation between the subject and object of knowledge. For obvious reasons, and with further implications which will be explored in the next section on Mill's method, this differentiation is vitally enhanced by Mill's portrayal of a gross and criminal nature which is thereby all the more easily objectified.

Mill's rendition of nature, then, may be explored on several levels: 1) as a description which is significant and fascinating in and of itself; 2) as a key negative

feature of his portrayal of social and civic life; 3) as a cornerstone of his epistemology.

Mill's relationship to nature is characterized in the terms of distance and horror. Let us also take note of the specification of nature as a female in Mill's prose. His relationship to a feminized, vindictive and objectified nature can be explored in a number of ways. We could speculate on the quality and conditions of his unusually bookish and emotionally starved childhood; investigate the intellectual and personal legacy of his father--who often sounds like a nasty character straight out of a Dickens novel--along with the inherited intellectual framework of his empiricism, which can be clearly traced to Bacon. A closer examination of his empiricism, which will follow shortly, goes a long way towards explicating Mill's distance from nature and the dichotomous pattern of thinking which accompanies this stance. As for the horror and disgust, some is clearly attributable to Victorian ideology, while we can also approach it as a logical, cognitive, and emotional accompaniment to his empirical standpoint. Both features of Mill's relationship to nature--the distance and the horror--are also susceptible to interpretation on the basis of gender. They clearly embody a masculine version of experience.

Why should nature be experienced in such threatening ways? And why should a political thinker's views on nature

be important to the understanding of his political theory? An adequate answer to these questions must take account of the complexities of human culture and the creation of meaning. Anthropology suggests that "nature" occupies a key place in the cosmologies of many human societies. To some extent, the characterization of "nature" has to do with the felt experience of the actual environment: is it harsh, or gentle? abundant or miserly in its resources?²⁹ To another extent, the depiction of "nature" helps to produce a specific orientation to and perception of that environment.³⁰ Finally, the category is often used as a key symbolic principle of order and differentiation.³¹ This is why we should be interested in the political thinker's treatment and sense of nature. Mill's portrayal of nature is a paradigmatic element of an overall world-view, contributing to and constituting his understanding of distinctively human activity, including categories for judging the excellence or deficiencies of those activities which significantly include political practices.

Psychoanalysis and cultural anthropology help us to understand the psychological origins and social ramifications of "nature" as a symbolic category which carries significant import. A society's view of nature and the environment of infancy are likely to be closely connected.³² This covers a broad range of linked phenomena, ranging from adult perceptions of infants as a

drain on precious few resources, with obvious ramifications on the feeding of infants and on those infants' subsequent feelings about "nature", to the discomfort experienced by adults of certain cultures in the face of unsocialized infants.³³ Whatever the specifics may be--harsh or gentle, flexible or exacting--the infant's experience of his or her first environment is likely to set the stage for his or her consequent perceptions of nature. If the first environment is a female-dominated one, the nature-female association is also likely to be strengthened.³⁴

Louis Breger has termed the modern world-view of the West, "which sees the human species as special, as set off from the natural world, as constructing its own environment as a protection against what is felt to be a hostile, grudging Nature," the "man-against-nature" view.³⁵ He contrasts it with the "human-within-nature" world view, where impulses, emotions and fantasies "are felt as potentially harmonious with social life."³⁶ To the extent that women are linked up with nature and excluded from an androcentric portrayal of "civilized" Western humanity, Breger's gender-specific terminology is deliberate and appropriate. He describes the emotional components of this world view in the following way:

Repeated experiences of frustration, insufficient nourishment, disrupted attachment, constricted autonomy and harsh discipline lead to the perception of the world and of other persons--and the environment more

generally--as untrustworthy, dangerous, punitive, ungiving; in short, as enemies with which one must struggle. A similar orientation towards one's own nature results from the experience typical of the modern world. That is, repeated frustrations, punishments and inconsistent gratification create feelings of anxiety and guilt about one's own hunger, sensual-sexual urges, autonomous strivings and anger at the authority; these too come to be experienced as enemies that one must combat in order to survive.³⁷

What we have here is a world-view that clearly predates Mill's lifespan even as it took on its most virulent formulation in the Victorian ideology of Mill's time. We can also appreciate the ways in which Mill's upbringing at the hands of his father must have further enhanced Mill's sensitivity to the components of a world-view fearful of nature and intent on dominating her. By all accounts, James Mill was a stern father who himself embodied and articulated an ascetic, if hypocritical, distaste for 'things of the flesh'.³⁸

We have already discussed in Chapter II some of the psychoanalytic formulations of gender acquisition which are relevant to this discussion of the gendered features of Mill's world view, particularly as they concern "nature". To recapitulate briefly: emphasis was placed on the pre-Oedipal mother-child configuration and separation-individuation dynamics. Special attention was paid to the ramifications of separation from a mother who is anatomically and eventually genderedly "like" her female offspring and "unlike" her male offspring. The negative

articulation of masculinity vis-à-vis the pre-posed maternal presence was also discussed. This issues, as we saw, in a tendency for the masculine neonate to objectify the mother, to imagine and to treat her as a (m)other. Dinnerstein's discussion of the primitive identification of the primal maternal surround with nature will be especially germane here. Finally, masculine tendencies towards excessive and objectified, and feminine tendencies towards underdeveloped delineation from the mother-world are also significant in the context of this discussion.

The description of reality that Mill's portrayal of nature offers echoes in many ways distinctive features of the process of masculine identity formation enacted within the context of female-dominated childrearing. A dehumanized nature becomes, like the dehumanized mother, the very measure of a civilized "human" identity to which it is negatively counterposed. What we have here, as the psychoanalytic literature amply suggests, is not simply a series of parallel or analogic dynamics.³⁹ The recognizable themes of feminized nature, naturalized mother and masculinized objective cognitive stance all suggest a complex web of intricately related dynamics of separation-individuation.

"Our over-personification of nature," writes Dinnerstein, "is inseparable from our underpersonification of women."⁴⁰ The quasi-human status of women stems in

large part from our infantile immersion in a mother-world where the mother is also the first representative of nature. It is the combination of two things--the various traumas associated with that inevitably disappointing and increasingly threatening immersion, and our attempts to escape that immersion with the help of the father--which help to constitute women's curious status, along with the over-personification and objectification of nature. Because the terms of immersion (ultimate bliss and primordial threat of death to a dependent and emerging self) and escape are gendered, because the father steps in as gallant rescuer, we are thereby enabled to maintain certain primitive emotions and gendered associations. Given the gendered structure of modern Western culture, we may permanently sidestep an adult confrontation or mediation with a primordial (m)other whose human subjectivity is difficult to acknowledge. To the extent that the primordial (m)other is equated with nature, feelings directed at each are likely to partake of the same emotional imagery. For those who are born into cultures where such imagery is already extant in the social milieu, such primordial associations are further strengthened and legitimized. Unconscious feelings about mother (and, by extension, women) and nature are likely to center around the dual strands of unresolved desire and horror. Woman, like nature, poses a terrifying threat to autonomy. And this threat, experienced by children of both sexes, is amplified

for the boy child, given the gendered specification of masculinity as that which is "not-mother".

The (perhaps universal) human need for a "quasi-human source of richness and target of greedy rage"⁴¹ becomes localized in a gendered-female embodiment. To the extent that this embodiment is enabled to maintain an apparently self-sufficient existence; that is, to the extent that it becomes one of two terms in a dichotomous rendering of Male/Female, Culture/Nature, Reason/Passion, it becomes simultaneously more threatening and less amenable to dialectical query and mediation. The sexual division of labor in childrearing, along with the genderized dichotomous symbolic culture of the modern West, allows us to maintain what Dinnerstein describes as "the murderous infantilism of our relation to nature" and women.⁴²

Within this emotional and symbolic frame of meaning, maternal and natural re-engulfment become the constitutive threats to masculinity and "civilization". And the dangers of re-engulfment are compounded by the strict boundedness of masculinity and civilization thus conceived. Here we have an early intimation of how Mill's individualism and preoccupation with autonomy are simultaneously masculinist and intimately related to his portrayal of nature:

The cultural definitions of masculine as what can never appear feminine, and of autonomy as what can never be relaxed, conspire to reinforce the child's earliest associations of female with the pleasures and dangers of merging, and male with both the comfort and the

loneliness of separateness. The boy's internal anxiety about both self and gender is here echoed by the cultural anxiety; together they can lead to postures of exaggerated autonomy and masculinity which can--indeed which may be designed to--defend against that anxiety and the longing which generates it.⁴³

The primal terror of maternal re-engulfment which signals the "death" of the masculine neonate is recapitulated in Mill's association of nature with death. This association is further strengthened in the context of Mill's description of sex as "that clumsy provision which she [nature] has made for that perpetual renewal of animal life, rendered necessary by the prompt termination she puts to it in every individual instance." ("Nature", p. 463) This is not simply an instance of quaint Victorian language designed to avoid the explicit description of sex; it also weds sex to death. As for the wonders of reproduction: "no human being ever comes into the world but another is literally stretched on the rack for hours or days, not unfrequently issuing in death." ("Nature", p. 463) So much for nature's claim to the successive reproduction and replenishment of life.⁴⁴

As we have seen, the equation of nature with death is fully evident in Mill's portrayal of nature's threatened re-engulfment of civilized life. Civilization, like the masculine ego, must be constantly defended in the form of vigorous efforts designed to widen the gap between Nature and Culture. Nature vindictively makes up the distance, and the deadly race is on. Similarly with masculinity, creeping

intimations of feminine encroachment will not be tolerated.

The trauma of dependence on the mother takes its conscious and manifest form in the adult's compulsion to overcome dependence on nature. ". . . infantile rage in the face of the independent will of the mother culminates in the 'adult' drive to annul the independence of, i.e., to dominate, nature."⁴⁵ The domination of nature is an expression, then, of a denial of dependence on the mother. Hostility toward the mother is redirected toward the natural world. As Isaac Balbus writes: "The mother that does not matter reappears in the form of a nature that is reduced to mere matter."⁴⁶

Within Mill's empiricist frame, to which we shall shortly turn, nature is reduced to mere matter: it is the objectified substance of the scientist's explorations. However, in the essay on "Nature", it assumes a stupendously subjective form. Each version represents the flip side of a singular coin: nature objectified from a masculine standpoint. Mill's criminal, sadistic and vindictive nature may be understood in part as a projection of his own unresolved feelings toward the mother. These projections, in turn, serve to justify the domination of external and internal nature. Mill's corporeal asceticism may be firmly situated within this scheme (which, we must stress, he did not invent on his own.) His identification of sex and sexuality with death underscores the civilized Western

denial of the body. If, as Isaac Balbus has put it in his re-phrasing of Norman O. Brown's thesis in Life Against Death, "To embrace one's own mortality is to be able to affirm one's own flesh,"⁴⁷ Mill expresses the simultaneous and related denial of sexuality and death by allying them with each other and relegating them to the foreign and distant reaches of Nature.

We might also pause to consider Mill's insistence on the malleability of human nature in this context.⁴⁸ Nature is so awful that if human nature were not malleable, all would be lost. Our malleability is the only hope for a progressive improvement in the lot of humankind. Secondly, our abilities to manipulate nature--including our own--constitute the very mark of our humanity. (We have already commented on Mill's repeated insistence on self-control and self-discipline.) It is in this double sense that the malleability of human nature, a central tenet of James Mill's theory of associationism (an early version of behaviorism) which his son retained, figures so prominently in Mill's social theory. Dennis Wrong's comments on the oversocialized conception of man in modern sociological theory are applicable to Mill.⁴⁹ Mill's stress on the malleability of human nature, coupled with his fear of nature, promotes an image of the human subject who is disembodied and conscience-driven, and little more. Ironically, it is this impoverished and disembodied subject

who both motivates and handicaps Mill's feminism, as we will see.

In this opening section on Mill's world view, special attention has been paid to his vivid description of a malevolent and intrusive Nature as found in selections from Considerations on Representative Government and "Nature". Since Mill does not present a systematic grand design for his political writings, it makes sense to explore his views on nature as a way of getting at his view of the larger scheme of life. Furthermore, given the remarkable paucity of information concerning the emotional dimensions of his work, these writings are all the more precious for what they reveal about Mill's felt experience as an intellectual and about his sense of place in the order of things.

Mill's depiction of nature and the human struggle against that nature opens the way for a more selected focus on the masculinist dimensions of his thought. We have already discovered several significant clues in his world-view, the most notable being his dichotomous rendition of a vile and imposing nature counterposed to rational, civilized life. As I have argued, this paradigm partakes of cognitive and emotional imagery which has been identified as part of the masculine identity securing process. In subsequent sections of the chapter, which will examine Mill's intellectual style and epistemology, his psychology and concept of the individual, his politics and his feminism,

we will find further evidence for the masculinist dimensions of his work, including the echoes of a Welstanshauung that is significantly organized in terms of an unstable and antagonistic relation between Culture and Nature, Reason and Passion.

Mill's Style and Method

One of the most outstanding features of Mill's intellectual style is his rationalism. His praise of Coleridge notwithstanding, all of his work (including the essay on Coleridge) is characterized by an abiding commitment to and optimism concerning the powers of reason. These powers are often counterposed by Mill to passion and instinct. Careful comparison between his essays on Bentham and Coleridge suggests that Mill was capable of criticizing rationalism in its most virulent and limited form in Bentham, but unable to enact such criticism in his own work.⁵⁰ Ironically, it is in his essay on Bentham rather than the one on Coleridge that Mill comes closest to a passionate refutation of the limits of utilitarian rationalism:

Knowing so little of human feelings, he [Bentham] knew still less of the influences by which those feelings are formed: all the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of eternal things upon the mind, escaped him; and no one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception

either of the agencies by which human conduct is, or of those by which it should be, influenced. ("Bentham", p. 23)

The essay on Coleridge, to which we turn expecting even more, is the less revealing. Mill gives a kind of half-hearted lip service to Coleridge's revolt against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. His real aim is to subsume Coleridge's intuitive idealist insights within the frame of a sensationalist theory of knowledge. The redeeming intellectual value of Coleridge for Mill turns out to be his ability to improve and deepen the empirical resources for the investigation of human nature and conduct.

Mill, then, assumes a critical but reformist stance towards rationalism only in relation to its most excessive practitioners. From an adversarial position, he is capable of detecting the imperfections and limits of a method to which he is inextricably bound. As a practitioner of that method, however, Mill fails to embody such a critique. His best effort is to soften the edges, to round out the description of the narrowly self-interested individual who is the calculator of a limited number of utilities.

Ironically, it is in the essay on Bentham that Mill comes closest to articulating the very sort of criticism that could be levelled against his own work:

The field of man's nature and life cannot be too much worked, or in too many directions; until every clod is turned up, the work is imperfect: no whole truth is possible but by combining the points of view of all the

fractional truths, nor, therefore, until it has been fully seen what each fractional truth can do by itself. (p. 25)

There are portions of the essay where Mill's description of the differing standpoints of different observers (whose differences consist of differences in life circumstances) comes perilously close to challenging his presumption of a singular truth. It would be a mistake, however, to rely extensively on these and related passages for an adequate understanding of Mill's style and method. The Mill of "Bentham" is the nagging but undeveloped voice of a thinker who was drawn to romantic intuitionism while effectively managing his distance from it. Coleridge's "oscillation" was useful precisely to the extent that it could enrich Bentham's "slender stock of premises" concerning human nature. What might have been a genuine dialogue between two radically different thinkers is rendered into an accomodation that imposes much more heavily on Coleridge than on Bentham.

In spite of his avowed appreciation of Coleridge as an antidote to Bentham's single-minded pursuit of "half-truths", and even though he attributed his mental breakdown to "the dissolving influence of analysis,"⁵¹ Mill never divested himself of a fundamental commitment to reasoned empirical analysis, which was predicated on an optimistic appraisal of reason. Reason, not love, and certainly not instinct or emotion, would conquer all.

Michael Oakeshott's description of the Rationalist comes remarkably close to capturing the essential flavor of Mill's intellectual style:

His mental habit is at once skeptical and optimistic: skeptical, because there is no opinion, no habit, no belief, nothing so firmly rooted or so widely held that he hesitates to question it and to judge it by what he calls his 'reason'; optimistic, because the Rationalist never doubts the power of his 'reason' (when properly applied) to determine the worth of a thing, the truth of an opinion or the propriety of an action. Moreover, he is fortified by a belief in a 'reason' common to all mankind, a common power of rational consideration, which is the ground and inspiration of argument But besides this, which gives the Rationalist a touch of intellectual equalitarianism, he is something also of an individualist, finding it difficult to believe that anyone who can think honestly and clearly will think differently from himself.⁵²

Mill is indeed a sceptic, notoriously dismissive of popular opinion, intuitive knowledge and "irrational" belief. Like Oakeshott's Rationalist, Mill is both an egalitarian and an elitist. If reason confers similar capacities on all human beings (and we need to acknowledge Mill's inclusion of women here), binding them together into the fellowship of humanity, it also promotes a kind of intellectual arrogance in Mill. His world is significantly divided between the intellectual have's and have-not's. As Oakeshott has put it, the Rationalist "finds it difficult to believe that anyone who can think honestly and clearly will think differently from himself." Mill's description of his young Benthamite period, where "What we principally thought

of, was to alter people's opinions; to make them believe according to the evidence, and know what was their real interest,"⁵³ remains applicable to his later work as well, despite his repudiation in the Autobiography of the arrogance of this youthful stance. It is particularly evident in On the Subjection of Women.

Notably, Mill shares with Oakeshott's Rationalist "an ominous interest in education." As Considerations on Representative Government makes abundantly clear, this emphasis on education is tied in with an emphasis on competence and technique and is closely related to the Rationalist project of reconstructing society along lines that are deemed to be 'rational' to the extent that they provide technical solutions to perceived problems. Technical, rather practical knowledge wins the day, setting the stage for a politics of public administration. Mill advocates a group of bureaucratic implementors, separated from (protected from) electoral politics and a democratic assembly, whose job it is to carry out the preferences of the voters as they see fit. Considerations on Representative Government anticipates the practical separation of politics and technique which we witness in its full flowering today. (A prime case in point is the extant opinion, articulated by President Reagan, that the American people should leave the complicated business of international arms negotiations policy to the experts.)

Mill wants the business of government taken out of politics; the popular assembly should be limited in its functions to ratifying the proposals of professionals or sending them back to the drawing board. Mill relies heavily on the criteria of efficiency and competence to develop the case against pure democracy.⁵⁴ The "instructed minority", having access to the knowledge of what counts as "general" (as opposed to particular and "sinister") interests, is that group which is entitled to vote.

Mill's rationalism comes to bear most fully on his politics via the criterion of competence which is an essential prerequisite of the right to vote. Competence is achieved through education, which Mill would like to see extended to as many persons as possible. It is the faith that all will eventually come to "see the light" already apprehended by the few--rather than a vision of mutual transformation among inter-subjectively, but also differently, constituted human beings--that informs Mill's education requirement, along with his defense of tolerance. Democracy, like reason, is in opposition to and is therefore vulnerable to, challenges from the irrational sphere, embodied in the uneducated rabble.

To the extent that Bacon and Descartes provide the early intimations of what, according to Oakeshott, would later emerge as the distinct Rationalist character, Mill's empiricist connection to Bacon (a connection that was both

direct and mediated through James Mill and Jeremy Bentham) is significant and helpful in thinking through the connections between his attitudes towards nature, his rationalist style, his empiricist epistemology, and his politics. For Mill, all scientific explanation is fundamentally of the same kind. Explanation within the physical sciences and the moral sciences (meaning the study of the laws of the mind as well as of matter, and not what we might take it to mean as normative theory) takes on an effectively similar causal pattern. Explanation in terms of motives and intentions is equivalent for Mill to the scientific explanation of physical causation. Free will, for Mill, is an antecedent or intervening cause. Hence, human behavior is explicable and still "free". "This . . . means," writes Alan Ryan, "that there is no ultimate difference in the causal status of persons and rocks; in both cases, things could and would have been different if, and only if, the antecedent causes had been different."⁵⁵

Mill's empiricism in the "moral sciences" took the specific form of methodological individualism. According to Steven Lukes, the doctrine of methodological individualism involves the notion that "facts about society and social phenomena are to be explained solely in terms of facts about individuals."⁵⁶ Mill exemplifies methodological individualism in his repudiation of the law of the Chemical Mixture of Effects (whereby chemical substances interact to

produce qualitatively different substances), embracing instead the scientific model of the physics of his time. (Mill's use of natural science metaphors is a telling reminder that his view of the logic of explanation in the social sciences is that it is not essentially different from explanation in the natural sciences. While other social theorists, notably Marx and Freud, share with Mill a belief in a systematic scientific grand design, their conceptions of scientific knowledge take different forms.)⁵⁷ For Mill, laws governing society exemplify the principle of the Composition of Forces. The analogy in physics is that final effects can be calculated by determining the individual effect of each contributing force, which adds up to the final product. Alan Ryan describes Mill's view of social life as exemplifying "the mechanical interaction of individuals, not their blending into something new."⁵⁸ Mill himself makes his method abundantly clear in these excerpts from his System of Logic:

The laws of the phenomena of society are, and can be, nothing but the laws of the actions and passions of men united together in the social state. Men, however, in a state of society, are still men; their actions and passions are obedient to the laws of individual human nature. Men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance with different properties.⁵⁹

". . . human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from and may be resolved into the laws of the individual man."⁶⁰

As an epistemological doctrine, this version of methodological individualism is premised on a host of specific assumptions concerning the human being in a social context. It presumes the integrity of an inviolable ego, one that cannot be qualitatively transformed through its relations with others: social dynamics are ultimately reducible to the behaviors and intentions of individuals. Methodological individualism effectively denies that qualitative changes may be produced within an intersubjective context which, while constituted by discrete flesh and blood creatures in relation to each other, is not quantitatively reducible to its constituent and discrete parts.⁶³ We recognize at once the masculine features of this human subject at the heart of methodological individualism, with his clearly demarcated ego boundaries and transactional relations with other men. The "laws of the individual man" prevail in social interaction and are the building blocks of social explanation. No "field dependent" creatures these, to muck up explanations with questions about quantity-to-quality shifts, inter- and intra-subjective nuances and meanings, or the dissolving subject-object interface. All activity and its meaning is derived from "the individual", as a discrete subject of behavior and object of scientific inquiry.⁶²

Methodological individualism presumes the cognitive capacity for objectivity as the central defining feature of

its objects of inquiry (human beings) and subjects of inquiry (scientists and social observers). The presumptive ideal at work here is that of an objective cognitive stance situated in protected relation to an external and objectifiable reality.

Evelyn Keller's inquiry into "the processess by which the capacity for scientific thought develops, and the ways in which those processes are intertwined with emotional and sexual development,"⁶³ has set a helpful precedent for the consideration of the gendered features of Mill's methodological individualism. Arguing that the cognitive capacity for objectivity is acquired along with the process of identity formation as a function of the child's capacity for distinguishing self from not-self, Keller explores the gendered features of that version of empiricist science modelled on the presumptive ideal of an objectivized cognitive stance situated in relation to an alien nature.⁶⁴ This version of science, traceable to Bacon, "bears the imprint of its genderization not only in the ways it is used, but in the very description of reality it offers--even in the relation of the scientist to that description."⁶⁵

The description of self and reality contained within methodological individualism may be traced etiologically to the earlier process of identity acquisition. (Such an etiology would presumably exist for any epistemological

scheme.) This reconstruction is premised on the argument that cognitive and emotional development and processes are not radically distinct, but vitally related to each other in mutually constitutive ways.⁶⁶ If we pause to consider the dynamics of separation-individuation, we notice the seeds of potential cognitive orientations that exist in that crucial oppositional dynamic between mother and neonate:

In the extrication of self from mother, the mother, beginning as the first and most primitive subject, emerges, by a process of effective negations, as the first object. The very processes (both cognitive and emotional) which remind us of that first bond become colored by their association with the woman who is, and forever remains, the archetypal female. Correspondingly, those of delineation and objectification are colored by their origins in the process of separation from mother: they become marked, as it were, as "not-mother". The mother becomes an object, and the child a subject, by a process which becomes itself an expression of opposition to and negation of "mother".⁶⁷

Such a dynamic holds a variety of potential consequences, ranging from various forms of reconciliation with the primal (m)other, to extreme alienation from her. As a particular cognitive stance, methodological individualism bears the tell-tale signs of an unmediated struggle with the mother. The radical differentiation of subject and object, whose constituent failure is a disallowance of "that vital element of ambiguity at the interface between subject and object,"⁶⁸ survives in methodological individualism's strict differentiation between its objects of inquiry and between those objects and the scientists who study them.

What makes the objectivist-individualist empiricist stance distinctively masculine? Presumably, children of both sexes must engage in a self-other struggle with the maternal caretaker and have similar needs for autonomy. To some extent, autonomy becomes a gendered term for children of both sexes who are reared primarily by a female mother because it signifies a positional stance that is "not-mother's". Autonomy and objectivity become effectively masculinized for all children. Even further, this masculinization of autonomy and objectivity is strengthened for boys "to the extent that boys rest their very sexual identity on an opposition to what is both experienced and defined as feminine."⁶⁹ Hence, "the development of their gender identity is likely to accentuate the process of separation,"⁷⁰ as we saw in Chapter II. Unlike girls, who must re-negotiate their relationship to a mother who is both "like" and "unlike" them, boys are not as prompted to do this. The structure of the situation (familial and social in the broader sense) effectively gives them the distance and the incentive to avoid this challenge. The notion of objectivity which is "rooted in the premise that the object can and should be totally removed from our description of the object,"⁷¹ recapitulates the primal subject-object split and perpetuates latent gendered associations of masculinized objectivity and feminized object.

Mill's empiricism and his methodological individualism

partake, along with his fearful and tension-filled account of civilization's antagonistic relationship to nature, of a cognitive orientation and corresponding emotional structure which have been linked to masculinity.⁷² That his Weltanschauung and his method are thus intimately linked should come as no surprise, particularly insofar as they share a common version of the human subject. The human subject thus conceived sets the agenda for an appropriate methodology for analysis and observation, and vice versa. That is, methodological individualism helps to constitute its object of inquiry. This object is undeniably masculine, most notably in his strict ego boundary differentiation and in his radical separation from a nature that must be disciplined within the self and harnessed for the work of civilization. Mill's version of the human subject is also masculine by virtue of his horrific vulnerability. The revolt of nature threatens without respite, reenforcing the need for clear-cut differentiation, absolute autonomy, and uncluttered identity. Mill's political theory, to which we now turn in greater detail, is concerned with precisely these issues.

Mill's Individual and the Quest for Liberty

The kind of man that liberalism requires, wrote L.T. Hobhouse, is one who can "discipline himself," whose

capacities for "the development of will, of personality, of self-control, or whatever we please to call that central harmonizing power which makes us capable of directing our own lives,"⁷³ have been developed and secured. That Hobhouse, a socialist, and one of Mill's most generous interpreters, should reiterate the themes of discipline and self-control is indicative of the strength and centrality of these qualities to Mill's conception of the individual. (These themes are also indicative of the influence of Victorian conceptions of morality on Mill and Hobhouse.) It is the capacity for discipline and self-control which, in fact, makes us moral and individual. Without such developed capacities, nature would gobble us up into her chaotic and amoral (or is it immoral?) vortex. We are individuals precisely to the extent that we stand over instinct, to the degree that we set the pace and the course for the orderly progression of our lives. Individuality and morality are thus inversely related to instinct.⁷⁴

This scheme is reiterated in Mill's idealist version of a history which is propelled by ideas. "It is what men think that determines how they act."⁷⁵ Those of us who would respond to Mill by suggesting that it is how humans live that shapes how and what they think, would be treated to Mill's partial and qualified agreement with this argument. The "convictions of the average man are in much greater degree determined by their personal position than by

reason," but to this extent they are both inferior and vulnerable to the ideas of others, notably those of "the united authority of the instructed."⁷⁶ Mill wants thought to be "freed" from its material bounds. Materially situated ideas are suspect because they invariably express partial interests. The particular is bogus; generalizable truth is what we must seek.

Hence, Mill's focus in On Liberty on freedom of thought and his correspondingly less developed focus on economic and other practical forms of freedom may be understood in relation to 1) his conception of the ascetic (disembodied) individual and intellect, and 2) his account of the causative relationship between ideas and events of the real world. Insofar as his sociology of knowledge is concerned, Mill is not a materialist. This is amply confirmed by his curious inability to appreciate the possibility that the ideas of "the instructed minority" might simultaneously reflect and perpetuate specific economic and political interests. It is the tyranny of the majority which, according to Mill, ought to be feared, most notably because it is an uneducated and uncultivated majority and, by extension, all too wedded to material and partial and therefore "sinister" interests.⁷⁷

Hence, Mill's discussion of "liberty" ranges primarily over the territory of inner (private) consciousness and its expression. This consciousness inhabits and defines a

singular individual who must be "sovereign" "over himself, over his own body and mind."⁷⁸ The only warrant for intervention in the liberty of this individual is the threatened liberty of another similarly constituted individual. "The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs . . ."⁷⁹ Such a conception of liberty presumes, as Mill acknowledges, that there is an arena of belief and action which is purely "self-regarding". "To individuality should belong the part of life in which it is chiefly the individual that is interested; to society, the part which clearly interests society." "Each will receive its proper share if each has that which more particularly concerns it."⁸⁰ Through a process of circular reasoning which relies on deceptively self-evident principles, this formulation effectively begs the question of the public-private distinction upon which it rests.⁸¹ Furthermore, "society" may stand for the collective interests of the whole; but it is always specific individuals and groups who decide what it is that "society" should concern itself with.

Over and above issues concerning the specific content of each delimited sphere, however, is the nagging question of the division itself which, on closer examination, makes remarkably little sense. As Hobhouse understood clearly enough: "there are no actions which may not directly or

indirectly affect others . . . even if there were they would not cease to be matters of concern to others."⁸² The distinction between individual and society, private and public, also presumes a division within the individual himself in terms of private and social life, an equally problematic, if pervasive and generally accepted, demarcation. While such a demarcation works with fairly innocent activities (e.g., what varieties of flowers to plant in my garden), the boundary is easily dissolved by the issues that matter--sexuality, consumer habits, and childrearing practices are only a few. Ironically, it is on this essentially flawed framework that many feminists continue to rely, particularly in the area of reproductive rights.⁸³

At the conclusion of On Liberty, Mill leaves us with two equally unhelpful principles: 1) the individual is not accountable to society for acts which concern himself only, and 2) he is accountable for those acts affecting others. Between the easy extremes on either side of this formulation--what color shirt I decide to wear on a particular day; murder--lies a massive area of grey. Most "private" decisions simply cannot be cast in terms that have ramifications only for the individual concerned. An interesting example in this respect concerns the response of Americans to recent news about birth-control policy in China. Our response to that enforced policy, often issuing

in late-term abortions for pregnant women and strong social sanctions against couples who would like to have more than one child, is bracketed by the ideological framework with which we interpret the issue. On the one hand, it is viewed as a gross violation of "private rights". On the other, the social consequences of an unenforced population policy are so gruesome (millions would literally starve) that the "private rights" of couples take on the appearance of extreme selfishness. Is this a "private" issue or a "social" one? Put in these terms, there is just no way to make sense out of and to formulate judgements about the Chinese experience. To opt for one characterization or the other would put us in a position that would all-too-quickly become indefensible.

It is all too easy to poke holes into Mill's formulation and defense of tolerance predicated on a public-private distinction. (This is not to say that a refurbished theory of tolerance is a clear-cut and easy task.) The same could be said for his model of the human subject--a strangely disembodied, hyper-rationalistic, sober maximizer of interests, ideally a conscience-driven do-gooder. We have already commented on the contrast between the individualist and collectivist tendencies in Mill. He was obviously not a gratification-pursuing utilitarian maximizer of selfish interests. In fact, he was deeply committed to furthering the long-term interests of his society. And he urged others

to do the same. At the same time, we need to keep in mind that he engaged in this social work as an "independent center of consciousness."⁸⁴ We need somehow to maneuver a position in relation to Mill which is respectful of his commitments and labors and critically aware of the necessary structural components of his theory.

As opposed to the common portrayal of Mill's liberalism as a paradigm which celebrates the atomistic individual and judges him to be free to the extent that he is unencumbered by social relations and uncontracted duties, Graeme Duncan emphasizes "his conception of man as an essentially social animal, to whose natural and customary attachment to his fellows is added, as civilization develops, rational perceptions of his actual and necessary links with them."⁸⁵ "Liberty," writes Duncan:

is interpreted by him as a source of social duty and common enterprise. Mill's version of society may seem, at times, to be thin . . . but he had no notion of the individual striding alone, without any sense of social obligation and concern.⁸⁶

Duncan's sympathetic defense of Mill provides a refreshing and thought-provoking antidote to simplistic portrayals of Mill's individualism. However, there is a misleading tendency on his part to collapse Mill's preferences into the actual logic of his theory. Mill certainly does interject a social conception of man in various writings. These interjections, however, do not automatically resolve the question of Mill's atomistic conception of the human

subject. It is difficult to imagine how his prescriptions for liberty and tolerance in On Liberty could actually work without such a subject. Mill's preferences could very well be at odds with his theory. In this case, we would need to understand him as a tragic intellectual figure. Mill certainly embodied and advocated social obligation and concern. But he did this in a strikingly solitary way. Notably, he gives little evidence for his own sense of deep embeddedness within a social context. "Social feeling" for Mill partakes of an essentially prescriptive rather than descriptive orientation. As such, it may be understood in one of two ways: 1) as an "artificial" component of de-natured humanity which is added on to an originally atomistic subject, or 2) as a rational extension of our original egoism, such that I am able to perceive "my" interests in the interests of others.⁸⁷ In neither case is Mill's methodologically individualist subject deeply transformed. His social relations and interests continue to be predicated on a subject who is essentially atomistic.

In his concern with autonomy, which significantly mirrored his own sense of autonomous intelligence, Mill elaborated a series of defensive prescriptions and maneuvers for the individual besieged by the mediocrity and censorship of the majority. While we can appreciate Mill's concern with the integrity of the individual swimming against the popular tide, we can also marvel at his disregard for the

components of collective social well-being. We can also situate such apparent disregard within the frame of the model of the physical composition of forces. As a methodological individualist, Mill could well assume that the guaranteed protection and well-being of the individual would yield social well being as an automatic and axiomatic consequence.

Our task here is not to reformulate a viable theory of tolerance and liberty for a differently constituted individual. (If it were, we would have to proceed on the basis of a much "thicker" and "deeper" understanding of the individual as a socially constituted subject.) Instead, we have the more manageable quest for the masculine features of Mill's individual. There is no need to belabor what should, by now, be an obvious point. It is one that has received ample confirmation in our prior exploration of Mill's world-view and methodology: Mill's defense of tolerance and definition of liberty rely on a conception of a clearly demarcated, field-independent subject. Such a subject is effectively and affectively capable of maintaining a discrete sense of identity vis à vis fellow human beings and his society, to whom and to which he is cautiously related. Such an identity, as Mill understood clearly, stood to be threatened in the absence of a self/not-self demarcation and by means of incursion into its "space" by the undifferentiated mob. On Liberty may be understood to

provide such a demarcation and consequent protection.

In short, On Liberty is preoccupied with the liberty of a well-differentiated masculine subject who requires a protected zone of thought, expression and action for his survival and well-being as a masculine subject. Within this zone, the liberal masculine subject is constituted as a self-sufficient and sovereign entity. It is from this zone that he ventures into the social world. In the absence of specific exceptions, this individual must be protected. The burden of proof effectively falls on those who would curtail this individual, as Mill's language makes clear: "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty or action of any of their number is self-protection."⁸⁸ The social relations of Mill's subject are to be negotiated within the frame of an abstract morality of rights. At the center of this moral scheme is an individual who is not to be encroached on unless he happens to be invading the space of another individual.

Mill's political morality of rights may be usefully counterposed to a different moral structure, one that has been identified as a specifically feminine morality. As the research of Carol Gilligan suggests, women proceed with a morality of (sometimes competing) responsibilities to others, wherein moral decisions are related to the specifics of situations, and are motivated by the injunction to avoid

or to minimize human hurt.⁸⁹ When we place Mill against this context-dependent scheme, his abstract morality of rights, centering around an antagonistic relationship between the individual and society, assumes a specifiably masculine aura. One cannot help but be struck by the vast differences between a morality predicated on self-preservation and one that proceeds by means on complex adjudication between competing relationships and responsibilities.

Finally, it is precisely such an abstract morality of rights which fuelled and limited Mill's feminist project. Mill's feminism, to which we now turn, is inhabited by a masculine subject who cannot help but subvert the very liberation of women which Mill so gallantly fought for. Mill's paradoxical feminism recapitulates, in a new form, the tragic features of On Liberty, whereby Mill's vision of the just society was effectively bracketed by his deeply embedded theoretical and methodological assumptions. That these assumptions partake of a distinctively masculinist substance and orientation could not help but problematize his feminism.

Mill's Feminism

Mill's renascent claim to fame as the only liberal thinker to have applied the tenets of individual rights to

women is often invoked not only in terms of praise for Mill's singular achievement⁹⁰, but also in terms of incredulity. How, we might well wonder, could a political theory which effectively secularized the ground of human dignity, made individuals the masters and architects of their destinies, and developed abstract and general principles of individual rights have failed to concern itself with the sexual double standard? Usually ignored, women occasionally came into view in liberal theory as subordinate exceptions rather than as equal participants. Various justifications for the differential treatment of men and women invariably fell back on reproductive biology, less developed intellectual and moral capacities in women than in men, the sexual division of labor, and the marriage relation.⁹¹ To some extent, Mill also fell into aspects of this pattern, even as he tried to apply the tenets of his liberalism to women. Mill is unique in his attempt to situate women consistently within the frame of liberal rights. However, the pre-Mill failure of liberal political theory to systematically incorporate women should not be all that surprising to us. This failure attests, in significant ways, to the androcentric conception of the human subject at the very heart of that theory, and not simply to men's need to re-legitimize the social inferiority of women. On the basis of the analysis of Hobbes offered in the preceding chapter, we are in a position to appreciate the inherited

masculinist features of liberal discourse that may well have insinuated themselves into Mill's feminist enterprise.

We have just explored several of the ways in which masculinism inhabits Mill's framework at various levels. This suggests that Mill's feminist endeavor should be doubly acclaimed and doubly scrutinized, since it is neither the simple logical fruition of previously undeveloped possibilities in liberal theory, nor an unproblematic reformist inclusion of women as a previously excluded group. We are already in a position to question the 'add women and stir' formulation, the assumption that women could be included within the liberal framework without significantly altering that framework. At a latent level, Mill's feminism is the tortured outcome of a system of ideas which was constitutionally unable to accommodate women as women, as sex-specific and gendered creatures. Women are dealt with in the terms of exceptional and masculine individualism. Once again, as we will see, Mill's preferences turn out to be at odds with his theory. His feminism is a kind of distorted compromise-formation. To the extent that they are masculinizable, women are accommodated within Mill's framework. When they are not--notably in their embodied capacities as wives and mothers--Mill's liberal feminism utterly fails them. In a sense, the price of liberal feminist liberation is trans-sexualism.⁹² Women must be disembodied, de-sexed,

de-gendered, and made over into the image of middle- and upper-class men if they are to benefit from the promises of liberalism as Mill envisions them. They are "free" to the extent that they are enabled to emulate men. Mill's feminism attempts precisely such an enabling. As such, it fails women just at the point that female specificity and "difference" cannot be ignored.

Mill's feminism in On the Subjection of Women is fuelled by the attempt to resolve the contradiction posed by the observation that "the social subordination of women . . . stands out as an isolated fact in modern social institutions."⁹³ Within the frame of market relations, as Mill clearly understood:

human beings are no longer born to their place in life and chained down by an inexorable bond to the place they are born to, but are free to employ their faculties, and such favorable chances as offer, to achieve the lot which may appear to them most desirable. (p. 32)

Sexual inequality for Mill is an antique feudal relic in a modern world where human beings act as the rational calculators of chosen utilities. Perceptions of women's nature have legitimated their exclusion from this modern conception of the subject. Mill is perhaps at his best in his discussion of women's nature, which, he argues "rests with women themselves--to be decided by their own experience and by the use of their own faculties." (p. 43) He understands that prevalent conceptions of women's nature are

the products of a male imagination, and that discussion of that nature in the hands of men can serve no honest purpose. "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing." (p. 38) Female "nature", argues Mill, has been produced within a kind of greenhouse environment where women have been limited by social conventions and rules such that their consequent behavior has been used as "proof" of this nature. If nature prevents women from doing certain things, such limits will emerge in the course of time. In the meantime, there is no need to prevent women from doing what they cannot do and no justification for barring them from what they can:

. . . the knowledge which men can acquire of women even as they have been and are, without reference to what they might be, is wretchedly imperfect and superficial, and always will be so, until women themselves have told all that they have to tell. (p. 42)

What Mill did not anticipate is that what women had to tell might throw his entire philosophical and political framework into question.

We can certainly appreciate Mill's politicization of the marriage relation, which anticipated the later slogan of Second Wave feminists, 'the personal is political': "no slave is a slave to the same lengths, and in so full a sense of the word, as a wife is." (p. 48)⁹⁴ Woman's legal position within marriage, where her legal rights are subsumed under those of her husband, paves the way for

bondage as a possibility within every marriage, argued Mill, although every husband will not necessarily avail himself of such despotic opportunity. Men's open entitlement to the exercise of unlimited authority corrupted men as it impinged on women.

Mill argues for legal reforms so that married persons will be equal before the law. He argues for the equal and voluntary association of marriage partners as a substitute for patriarchal authority and feminized submission to that authority. However, his discussion of the politics of decision-making within the marriage relation is seriously marred by two flaws: his failure to deal with the political implications of a sexual division of labor and unpaid housework, and his curious discussion of the frequent age-differential between husband and wife as a legitimate reason for the husband's prerogative in decision-making. Mill's abstract principles dissolve in the face of the specificities of household and family life.

Although he advocates "ceasing to make sex a disqualification for privileges," (p. 112) he seriously impinges on the vocational and professional aspirations of women by arguing that the woman who marries has effectively chosen a 'profession' as mistress of her husband's (!) household:

Like a man when he chooses a profession, so, when a woman marries, it may in general be understood that she makes choice of the management of a household, and the

bringing up of a family, as the first call upon her exertions, during as many years of her life as may be required for the purpose; and that she renounces, not all other objects and occupations, but all which are not consistent with the requirements of this. (p. 68)

The analogy that Mill draws between the housewife and "a man when he chooses a profession" borders on the absurd, given the limited singularity of "choice" for the married woman.

While Mill understands in one sense that "the power of earning is essential to the dignity of a woman, if she has not independent property," (p. 67) this historically-specific need for an independent source of income suddenly disappears for the woman who has committed herself to an "equal" contract of marriage. Mill is unable or unwilling to question the sexual division of labor within the household,⁹⁵ and uncritically assumes that legal equality is primary, while economic parity is its derivative. He tried to preserve an arena of choice for the married woman when he wrote that "the utmost latitude ought to exist for the adaptation of general rules to individual suitabilities," (p. 68) but such latitude rests, significantly, on "due provision" being made for her functions as "mistress of the family". (Such "due provision", of course, would fall primarily to working-class and single middle-class women.) Since Mill couches this discussion in terms of the exceptionally talented woman, we are left with the distinct impression that most women would opt for the duties of

housemistress. We must take Mill at his word when he writes: "If there is anything vitally important to the happiness of human beings, it is that they should relish their habitual pursuit." (p. 126) He assumes that most women will "relish" their "chosen" profession as housewives. Without such an assumption, Mill would have had to radically re-think the social relations of family life, along with the relationship between family structure and socio-economic organization.

In response to the popular argument that the family, like a society, requires a government and some ultimate ruler, Mill invokes instead the image of a voluntary association or business partnership. On the basis of the partnership model, he argues that final decisions do not automatically rest with the male. However:

The real practical decision of affairs, to whichever may be given the legal authority, will greatly depend, as it even now does, upon comparative qualification. The mere fact that he is usually the eldest, will in most cases give the preponderance to the man; at least until they both attain a time of life at which the difference in their eyes is of no importance. There will naturally also be a more potential voice on the side, whichever it is, that brings the means of support. (pp. 58-59)

Mill's lip service here to the logical possibility that the wife might be the familial means of support is belied by his discussion of women's "choice" of housewifely duties. And his discussion of the wisdom of age totally sidesteps an engagement with the question concerning why younger women

marry older men. In spite of his sincere attempts to dislodge male authority, Mill's discussion has actually strengthened it in a newly legitimate form. Authority is only apparently de-sexed. Age and income, still clearly tied to the husband, and unquestioned as gender-specific attributes, become the new justifications for differential power within the marriage relation. The underlying logic of this account is unmistakable: the woman who wants to reap liberalism's benefits had better not marry.⁹⁶

On this account, liberal feminist theory as articulated by Mill cannot accommodate the wife and mother. When you apply a theory of individual rights to women, what comes out at the other end is the corporate feminist, the career woman who can compete effectively in the world of aspiring middle and upper-class men.⁹⁷ Contemporary efforts to salvage the female in the terms of liberally construed "freedom" have produced the "Enjouli" superwoman, who can bring home the bacon, fry it up, and still be sexy for her husband at the end of a double-work day. Not surprisingly, such a mindset has also created a "post-feminist" generation of young women, who see themselves as benefitting from the legal and economic battles of their older sisters, but no longer required to act the "militant" part of their forerunners, because the obstacles to their freedom, legally and economically conceived, have been removed.⁹⁸ These developments bear witness to the profound failure of liberal

feminism.

The singular failure of Mill's feminism consists, in part, of the larger failure of his political theory, which effectively ignored the political dimensions of structural economic inequality and assumed that legal change would spearhead social change. Such an approach is consistent with the notion that it is ideas that make history. Working class women are not helped in Mill's account of bourgeois family life, although Mill does take yet another opportunity to disparage working class men, this time in terms of their treatment of women. Notably missing here is a discussion of bourgeois male exploitation of working class women in the rampant prostitution industry of the times, a phenomenon that Mill could not likely have been unaware of.⁹⁹ In a similar vein, he was unable to appreciate the possibility that a political history might have preceded the very sexual division of labor which he took for granted. Finally, it never occurred to him, just as it seems to have escaped the attention of contemporary "post-feminists", that the subjection of women might be more than an outdated anachronism.

Mill's failure to think through these issues could well be the result of the understandable limits of human criticism. And yet, he is relentless in his critical excavation of the taken-for-granted. Over and over, he entreats his readers to rethink the unreflectively accepted

beliefs of their lives. Mill carries an interesting variety of blind spots himself. Why does his feminism falter in its specific fashion? Our answer must look beyond an assessment of the limits of liberalism to a reconsideration of Mill's thought as a masculine phenomenon.

Simply put, Mill's feminism collapses on the terrain of "difference". It fails at precisely the point where women's activities are not directly mediated by the abstract hand of the market, where their activities consist of an interchange with the realm of nature. Mill's feminism collapses on the terrain of the household. Given his terror of nature, he is unwilling to acknowledge this feature of women's work and even more unwilling to make men bear any of the messy responsibilities associated with it. This interpretation of Mill's feminism is strengthened in the context of his curiously ambivalent attitudes towards the women in his life. On the one hand, there is his mother, who is systematically denied. On the other, Harriet Taylor is blown all out of proportion as the unheralded genius of the age. These attitudes, I would argue, underline Mill's inability as a political theorist to understand the situation of women.

In the absence of commonly held knowledge about human biological reproduction, one could read Mill's Autobiography and assume that his father bore him: "I was born in London, on the 20th of May, 1806, and was the eldest son of James

Mill, the author of the History of British India. (p. 2)
 Mill utterly fails to acknowledge his mother's existence, much less the difficult circumstances of her life. The lingering question is whether Mill's mother was denied because she was a mother, or because she wasn't seen as being mentally brilliant. It seems fair to suggest that the two perceptions are inextricably linked. It is in On the Subjection of Women, rather than the Autobiography, that Mill provides us with a brief glimpse into his feelings about his mother:

A man who is married to a woman his inferior in intelligence finds her a perpetual dead weight, or, worse than a dead weight, a drag, upon every aspiration of his to be better than public opinion requires him to be. It is hardly possible for one who is in these bonds, to attain exalted virtue. If he differs in his opinion from the mass--if he sees truths which have not yet dawned on them, or if, feeling in his heart truths which they nominally recognize, he would like to act up to those truths more conscientiously than the generality of mankind--to all such thoughts and desires, marriage is the heaviest of drawbacks, unless he be so fortunate as to have a wife as much above the common level as he himself is. (p. 114)

Mill's abstract description here fits perfectly with accounts of James Mill's feelings about his wife, which were not kept discrete.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Harriet Mill was a living reminder of James Mill's failure to live up to his own ideal of sexual asceticism. The same man who viewed "the physical relation and its adjuncts" as "a perversion of the imagination and feelings . . . one of the deepest seated and more pervading evils in the human mind,"¹⁰¹ managed to

father nine children. Harriet Mill must have stood as a constant source of mortification to her husband and eldest son, a pregnant reminder of her husband's human-all-too-human desires which had little legitimate space within the frame of his rational utilitarianism. Notice that J.S. Mill's description leaves us feeling terribly sorry for the lofty husband and rather peeved with the dead-weight wife. Notice too the striking parallels between his rendition of Nature's drag effect on civilization (explored in the first section of this chapter) and the wife's retardation of her husband's noble aspirations: "Worse than a dead weight, a drag." Once again, we encounter the detectable connections between a feminized nature set in opposition to a masculinized civilization.

And then there is Harriet Taylor who, conveniently enough, comes to represent for Mill everything that his mother was not. To make things even more convenient, she is married to another man. She and Mill pursued an ascetic and deep friendship for twenty years before they finally married after the death of her first husband. Their marriage, from Mill's point of view, was a marriage of minds, above all else. They shared an interest in feminism which Taylor, to her credit, developed more radically and systematically than he did.¹⁰² Harriet Taylor's feminism and other intellectual accomplishments notwithstanding, it seems clear

the Mill overrated her gifts.¹⁰³ It has also been suggested that Mill found her easier to worship from afar.¹⁰⁴ Harriet Taylor's de-sexualization and over-exaggerated intellectual acumen would seem to be related much in the same way as his mother's unavoidable sexuality is tied in with her reported simple-mindedness. To suggest this is by no means to fail to understand or appreciate the Victorian sensibility of the times.¹⁰⁵

What is of concern here is that Mill seems to have had some personal difficulties in dealing with women as flesh and blood and brain creatures combined. Instead, he resorts to split images, denying a mother that surely existed and eulogizing a brain that probably did not. The issue here, of course, is not Mill's personal attitudes towards women. These observations are little more than icing on the cake. But they do substantiate our sense of dis-ease with Mill's feminism as a practical and desirable model of emancipation for women. And that is because it avoids the lot of most women. Mill's denial of his mother haunts On the Subjection of Women while his exaggerated portrayal of Harriet Taylor reminds us of our average unexceptionalness.

Mill's feminism is a feminism for the exceptional woman, as Zillah Eisenstein argues.¹⁰⁶ But I would add that she is exceptional in terms that go beyond those of class and educational privilege. The exceptional woman, within the terms set by Mill, is effectively re-gendered. For the

terms of her exceptional talent and drive are masculine terms. To the extent that they imply the conquest of inner and outer nature, an individualized and objective cognitive stance, a clear demarcation between self and not-self, between autonomous individuality and collective identity, the terms of liberal individualism are indelibly masculine.

This is why Mill's feminism, along with the larger body of his liberal theory, so fails feminists, including those who would claim, among other things, a maternal identity and practice.¹⁰⁷ Such imagery cannot but be problematic for those women who would prefer not to make the transsexual switch, for those who understand that the realm of the banal--of everyday life--is at least as instructive and as ennobling as that of extraordinary effort and achievement as defined by masculine culture.¹⁰⁸ Within this frame of analysis, we might recall the reported statement of an anti-E.R.A. woman who was quoted as saying, "I don't care to be a person."¹⁰⁹ The liberal feminist response to such a statement would, of course, be one of incredulity. (She must be kidding.) This statement, however, may carry more insight than first meets the eye. For this woman's anti-feminism might well be motivated by her sense of violated dignity implied by a liberal feminism housing an abstract Everyman as its subject.¹¹⁰ Contemporary liberal feminism is the progeny of Mill's feminism, an assimilative feminism which preempts the critical possibilities of a

feminism that would have us re-think the terms of human excellence and achievement even as we question the gender-based allocation of differential burdens and benefits. Small wonder that it has elicited the hostility of women as well as of men.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Mill's feminism, not surprisingly, is a paradoxical feminism. While his theorization of a status for women based on the liberal conception of individual rights enabled him to oppose the kind of thinking which legitimized female inferiority in the name of their reduced capacities for reason, his "feminism" effectively writes women out as sexed and gendered creatures. In extending his claims for the protection of liberal man to liberal woman, Mill unwittingly enacts the masculine prerogative of privileged identity. For the unitary disembodied subject housed by liberal theory is no abstract subject, appearances to the contrary. His motivation to separate from nature; to observe a "methodologically individualist" terrain; to cultivate a disembodied reason; to protect himself and similarly constituted others from incursion into private "space"; to formulate abstract principles of rights which can be applied, context-blind, to any scene of social conflict--all of this may be traced to a substratum of

experiences, fears and needs which are masculine.

For all of his genuine desires to enter into the mind and circumstances of others, for all of his discomfort with utilitarian rationalism, Mill could not get beyond the gendered terrain of his philosophical enterprise. What he did achieve, however, is not insignificant. He pushed the liberal enterprise as far as it might go, and perhaps a little farther. The paradoxes generated by his efforts, captured most strikingly in the disparity between his ethical vision of socially concerned individuals working for the improvement in social conditions of their "fellow" citizens and his conception of the isolated liberal subject, are our paradoxes still. To the extent that they are transcendable, the clues for such a project lie in Mill. Feminists should neither ignore him nor uncritically adopt his framework for women's emancipation. To pursue the former course would be to ignore our political culture; to adopt the latter would effectively preempt "womanly thinking".¹¹²

FOOTNOTES

¹See "Bentham," in The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill: Ethical, Political and Religious, ed. Marshall Cohen (New York: Random House, 1961). See also Bruce Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 47-145 for a description of James Mill.

²"Bentham," p. 22.

³Ibid., p. 25.

⁴Herbert Marcuse's "Repressive Tolerance," in A Critique of Pure Tolerance (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 1970), pp. 81-117 promotes such an interpretation.

⁵Mill's "Bentham" essay is most likely to engender this response.

⁶This is the Mill of Considerations on Representative Government, ed. Curran V. Shields (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1958).

⁷On Liberty provides the classic exposition of these ideas.

⁸L.T. Hobhouse, Liberalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 63-73.

⁹Zillah Eisenstein, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism (New York and London: Longman, 1981). See also Alison Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld; Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983), esp. chs. 3, 7, and 11.

¹⁰Robert Paul Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), esp. pp. 3-50.

¹¹Hobhouse, Liberalism, p. 58.

¹²I am indebted to Graeme Duncan, Marx and Mill: Two Views of Social Conflict and Social Harmony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) for this appraisal of Mill. See also Alan Ryan, J.S. Mill (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) for a similar insistence on understanding Mill as a practical and eclectic thinker and writer.

¹³Compare Currin V. Shields' diatribe against Mill's elitism with Dennis F. Thompson's more sober appraisal of Mill's dual principles of participation and competence: Currin V. Shields, "The Political Thought of John Stuart Mill," in his edition of John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1958), pp. vii-xl; Dennis Thompson, John Stuart Mill and Representative Government (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

¹⁴See, for example, Mill's essay on "Coleridge," in The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill: Ethical, Political and Religious, ed. Marshall Cohen (New York: Random House, 1961), for his account of the progressive improvement in the history of thought, whereby each "oscillation" in the extremes of thought "departs rather less widely from the centre, and an ever-increasing tendency is manifested to settle finally on it." (p. 65)

¹⁵For important critiques of the liberal paradigm, see the following: Eisenstein, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism; Jean Bethke Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature; Michael J. Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism.

¹⁶J.S. Mill, Utilitarianism, ed. Oskar Piest (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957).

¹⁷J.S. Mill, On Liberty, ed. Currin V. Shields (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956).

¹⁸Hobhouse, Liberalism.

¹⁹Duncan, Marx and Mill; Graeme Duncan and John Gray, "The Left Against Mill," in New Essays on John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism, eds. Wesley E. Cooper, et al., Canadian Journal of Philosophy V (Guelph, Ontario: Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy, 1979), pp. 203-229.

²⁰Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism.

²¹See my discussion on pp. 145

²²Duncan, Marx and Mill is especially compelling on the danger of treating liberal political thought as an overly unified body of theory. He also cautions against the overly simple equation of Mill with liberal thought.

²³Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill.

²⁴The term "thought-world" is borrowed from Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill, who describes it as "involving" a thinker's "deepest feelings as well as ratiocinations about 'life'." (p. 9)

²⁵Evelyn Keller's "Gender and Science," in Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought 1 (3): 409-433, was one of the first explorations of significant links between gender and cognitive experience. I am indebted to her work for the general contours and implications of this topic as well as for her discussion of Baconian science, which is readily adaptable to a discussion of Mill's epistemology.

²⁶Considerations on Representative Government, p. 18.

²⁷J.S. Mill, "Nature," in The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill, ed. Marshall Cohen (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 457.

²⁸In the essay on "Coleridge" Mill identifies the main ingredient of education, which he argues is the first condition of permanent political societies, as "restraining discipline":

To train the human being in the habit, and thence the power, of subordinating his personal impulses and aims to what were considered the aims of society; and of adhering, against all temptation, to the course of conduct which those ends prescribed; of controlling in himself all the feelings which were liable to militate against those ends, and encouraging all such as tended towards them. (p. 76)

In the essay on "Nature" he advocates the "starving" of certain instincts by "disuse" so as to "extirpate" them. And in On the Subjection of Women (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1971) he refers to "self-respect, self-help, and self-control which are the essential conditions both of individual prosperity and of social virtue". (p. 112) L.T. Hobhouse described the liberal subject as one who can "discipline himself."

²⁹This experience, of course, is necessarily mediated by those adults who care for children. Much of it will center around feeding practices. See and compare, for example, Mead's discussion of Arapesh feeding in Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (New York: Morrow Quill, 1963) with David Hunt's account of the feeding

29 (cont'd) of infants in early modern France, in Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life In Early Modern France (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

30 See Mead, Sex and Temperament for an appreciation of this point, particularly her discussion of the Arapesh. See also Frederick Turner, Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

31 See Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982; rept. 1970) for an important discussion of the symbolic structural mediation of our experience of the environment, including the ways in which "natural" phenomena such as the body are symbolized to portray human interpretations of their social world.

32 See Mead, Sex and Temperament and Hunt, Parents and Children in History for an appreciation and documentation of this point.

33 See Hunt, Parents and Children in History and Louis Breger, Freud's Unfinished Journey: Conventional and Critical Perspectives in Psychoanalytic Theory (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), ch. 2.

34 For a review and utilization of the literature on this point, see Isaac Balbus, Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), ch. 9. See also Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Nature as Male is to Culture?" in Woman, Culture and Society, eds. Michele Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 678-88. For an important critique of the anthropological generalization of the Nature-Culture construct beyond Western cultures, see the collection of essays edited by Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, Nature, Culture and Gender (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

35 Breger, Freud's Unfinished Journey, p. 21.

36 Ibid., p. 20.

37 Ibid.

38 See Bruce Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill.

39 Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley and

39 (cont'd) Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Melanie Klein, "Love Guilt and Reparation," in Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945 (New York: Dell, 1975), pp. 306-343; Jessica Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love: Rational Violence and Erotic Domination," in Feminist Studies 6 (1): 144-174; Evelyn Keller, "Gender and Science," in Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought 1 (3): 409-433.

⁴⁰Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur, p. 108.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 101.

⁴²Ibid., p. 109.

⁴³Keller, "Gender and Science", p. 426.

⁴⁴I am not arguing for a beneficent view of nature as the corrective antidote to Mill's description. However, Mill's one-sided portrayal is rather distorted. One can, I think, look to nature and see destruction and death, among other things. My comment here is intended to remind us of some of those obvious other things. See the following works for important attempts to reformulate the nature-culture relation: Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Mary Midgely, Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978); Rosemary Ruether, New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (New York: Seabury, 1975); Balbus, Marxism and Domination. For a related discussion of the masculine tendency to read death into sexuality and reproduction, see Nancy Hartsock's interpretation of the theory of George Bataille in her Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (New York and London: Longman, 1983), esp. ch. 7.

⁴⁵Balbus, Marxism and Domination, p. 297.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 300.

⁴⁸See the Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, ed. John Jacob Coss (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1924), pp. 95-96, 191-194.

⁴⁹Denis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," American Sociological Review 26 (2): 183-193.

⁵⁰See Raymond Williams, "Mill on Bentham and Coleridge," in his Culture and Society 1780-1950 (New York: Harper and Row, 1966; rept. 1958), pp. 49-70.

⁵¹Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, p. 97.

⁵²Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," in his Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (London and New York: Methuen, 1962), pp. 1-2.

⁵³Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, p. 65.

⁵⁴See Thompson, John Stuart Mill and Representative Government.

⁵⁵Ryan, J. S. Mill, p. 86.

⁵⁶Steven Lukes, "Methodological Individualism Reconsidered," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Alan Ryan (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 121.

⁵⁷On Freud, see Breger, Freud's Unfinished Journey, ch. 3; and Marie Jahoda, Freud and the Dilemmas of Psychology (New York: Basic Books, 1977), ch. 1. On Marx, see John Mepham and D-H. Ruben, eds., Issues in Marxist Philosophy, 3 vols. (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979), vol. 3: Epistemology, Science, Ideology; and Lucio Colletti, "Marxism: Science or Revolution?" in his From Rousseau to Lenin: Studies in Ideology and Society (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 229-36.

⁵⁸Ryan, J.S. Mill, p. 88.

⁵⁹J.S. Mill, Logic VI, vii, i. Quoted in Ryan, J.S. Mill, p. 87.

⁶⁰Ibid., quoted in Martin Hollis, Models of Man: Philosophical Thoughts on Social Action (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 23-24.

⁶¹Since originally writing this chapter, I have discovered Alison Jaggar's assessment and critique of liberalism along similar lines. See her Feminist Politics and Human Nature, esp. chaps. 3, 7, and 11 for an excellent discussion of liberalism in terms of normative dualism, abstract individualism, and liberal rationality.

⁶²Male critics of liberalism have raised similar objections to its solipsisistically and atomistically conceived subject. See, for example, the following: Richard Norman, "Self and Others: The Inadequacy of Utilitarianism," in New Essays on John Stuart Mill, eds. Wesley E. Cooper, et al. (Guelph, Ontario: Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy, 1979), pp. 181-201; Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice; Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in Power, Possessions and Freedom: Essays in Honor of C.B. MacPherson, ed. Alkis Kontos (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 39-61; and Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism. None of them, to my knowledge, has identified the liberal subject as a masculine subject. Furthermore, none have invoked the maternal experience as a critical counterexample to atomism. (Significantly, Jaggar does.)

To argue, as I attempt here, that Mill's liberalism partakes of masculine ideology, is not to suggest that males are incapable of feeling uncomfortable with and formulating significant critiques of liberalism. They may well, however, find it more difficult than female critics to identify gender-specific components of the theory.

⁶³Keller, "Gender and Science", p. 416.

⁶⁴This version of science has, of course, been disputed by several scientists and philosophers of science, including Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Paul Feyerabend, Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge (London: New Left Books, 1975); and Michael Polanyi, Knowing and Being (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), esp. Part II, and Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). For a helpful review of the literature and disputes in contemporary philosophy of science, see Richard Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), esp. Part I. For a feminist analysis of why the objectivist version may be at odds with the actual practice of science and of how the contemporary dissatisfaction with the logics of justification in science may be a dissatisfaction with modern ways of knowing which are also masculine ways of knowing, see Sandra Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?" in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984), pp. 43-63, and "Why Has the Sex/Gender System Become Visible Only Now?" in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on

64 (cont'd) Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983), pp. 311-324.

65 Keller, "Gender and Science", p. 414.

66 In a variety of distinctive and also related ways, thinkers as diverse as Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, and William Perry have argued for the internal and significant connections between emotional and cognitive development.

67 Keller, "Gender and Science", pp. 422-23.

68 Ibid., p. 420.

69 Ibid., p. 425.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., p. 421.

72 See Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?"

73 Hobhouse, Liberalism, p. 66.

74 Cf. Midgely, Beast and Man for an alternative conception of moral agency that does not require the denigration of instinct and nature.

75 Considerations on Representative Government, p. 14.

76 Ibid., p. 15.

77 See Mill's discussion in Considerations on Representative Government, ch. 6.

78 On Liberty, p. 13.

79 Ibid., p. 16.

80 Ibid., p. 91.

81 See Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman, pp. 132-46.

82 Hobhouse, Liberalism, p. 76.

83 A clear contemporary example of this is the couching of reproductive freedom in the terms of private

83 (cont'd) decision-making and individual ownership of one's body. See Judith Jarvis Thompson, "A Defense of Abortion," in Philosophy and Public Affairs 1 (1), 1971. For a complex exploration of the issues, see Rosalind Petchesky, "Reproductive Freedom: Beyond 'A Woman's Right to Choose'," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 5 (4), Summer 1980: 661-685. For cogent analyses of the ways in which women's experience enables a critical comprehension of the illusory nature of this divide between public and private, see Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology for Women," in The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge, eds. Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 135-188; and Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman, esp. ch. 6.

84 I have adapted this phrase from Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism, as quoted in Duncan, Marx and Mill, p. 273.

85 Duncan, Marx and Mill, p. 273.

86 Ibid., p. 274.

87 In the essay on "Nature", for example, Mill describes our innate capacity for sympathy as an extension of "sympathetic selfishness".

88 On Liberty, p. 13.

89 Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). For some important critiques of Gilligan's work which have recently surfaced and require careful responses, see the following articles in Social Research 50 (3): Lorraine B. Code, "Responsibility and the Epistemic Community: Woman's Place," pp. 537-555; Mary Ann O'Loughlin, "Responsibility and Moral Maturity in the Control of Fertility--or, A Woman's Place Is in the Wrong," pp. 556-575; Owen J. Flanagan, Jr. and Jonathan E. Adler, "Impartiality and Particularity," pp. 576-596; John M. Broughton, "Women's Rationality and Men's Virtues: A Critique of Gender Dualism in Gilligan's Theory of Moral Development," pp. 597-642; Debra Nails, "Social-Scientific Sexism: Gilligan's Mismeasure of Man," pp. 643-664; James C. Walker, "In A Diffident Voice: Cryptoseparatist Analysis of Female Moral Development," pp. 665-695.

90 Mill's achievement is a singular one in relation to the male liberal tradition. We should acknowledge, however, the earlier efforts of Mary Wollstonecraft, in her A Vindication of the Rights of Women, along with the

90 (cont'd) collaborative nature of Mill's mature writings, which were obviously influenced by Harriet Taylor. For an appreciation of this point, see Alice Rossi, "Sentiment and Intellect: The Story of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill," in her edition of Essays on Sex Equality (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 1-64.

91 See Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman, pp. 100-131; Eisenstein, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism, pp. 31-112; and Susan Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 197-202 for helpful discussions of the liberal tradition before Mill. See also Gordon Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

92 See Janice Raymond, The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979).

93 On the Subjection of Women, p. 36.

94 We also need to acknowledge the difficulties and dangers that are posed by the overpoliticization and rationalization of family life. See Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman, esp. ch. 6.

95 Without sounding unduly nasty or nit-picky, I'd like to point out that Mill himself admitted to being totally incompetent when it came to practical 'everyday' affairs. Why wouldn't a man who always lived in a house where women took care of daily life (first, his mother, then Harriet Taylor, finally, his step-daughter, Helen) lack perception on the sexual division of labor? Mill's life made it all too easy for him to assume that women would "choose" this type of work. See Smith, "A Sociology for Women", for a relevant discussion of women's skills in making their labor "invisible". Such invisibility is one of the criteria for doing household labor "well".

96 This should not be construed as a supportive argument or plea for marriage. My point is only that Mill's feminism imparts a very different message than he intended. His failure to criticize the marriage relation sufficiently backfires in the hidden but logical implication that the emancipated woman of liberal feminism is not likely to be a married one.

97 The term "corporate feminist" is Suzanne Gordon's. See her article, "The New Corporate Feminism," in The Nation, 5 February 1983.

⁹⁸At a recent Society for Women in Philosophy conference, several participants in an informal discussion on their female undergraduate students related their students' expectations for their future as adults. A very large proportion of these young women fully expect to be in the \$60,000 and above income bracket, to be happily married, and to have several children.

⁹⁹See Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England (New York: Basic Books, 1974) and My Secret Life, abridged ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1966).

¹⁰⁰See Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill.

¹⁰¹The Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, p. 75.

¹⁰²See Harriet Taylor Mill, "Enfranchisement of Women," in Essays on Sex Equality, ed. Alice S. Rossi (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 89-122.

¹⁰³See the discussion of Harriet Taylor in Jack Stillinger's "Introduction" to his edition of The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's Autobiography (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), pp. 22-28. Cf. Alice Rossi's more sympathetic account in "Sentiment and Intellect". I have no intention of disparaging Harriet Taylor Mill's accomplishments here. What is interesting is Mill's overblown description of her, which would be overblown for any human being.

¹⁰⁴See Stillinger's discussion of their frequent and lengthy separations during married life. But cf. Alice Rossi's explanation for their frequent travels without each other, in her "Sentiment and Intellect."

¹⁰⁵See Rossi, "Sentiment and Intellect" for a sensitive appreciation of this point.

¹⁰⁶Eisenstein, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism, ch. 6.

¹⁰⁷See Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," in Feminist Studies 6 (2): 342-367. For critical extensions and applications of maternal identity to political issues, see Jean B. Elshtain, "Antigone's Daughters," in Democracy 2 (2), pp. 46-59; and Sara Ruddick, "Pacifying the Forces: Drafting Women in the Interests of Peace," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 8 (3): 471-489.

108 For an appreciation of this point, see Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel, 1983), pp. 283-310; and Smith, "A Sociology for Women".

109 Cited in Carolyn G. Heilbrun, ReInventing Womanhood (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), p. 175.

110 See Elizabeth Wolgast, Equality and the Rights of Women (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980) for an especially compelling analysis of the ways in which liberal conceptions of equality force a masculine standard of humanity on women. Wolgast, however, makes the error of equating feminism with liberal feminism. Unfortunately, this promotes an analysis that tends to slide into anti-feminism. For an appreciation of the issues involved here, see Alison Jaggar, "Human Biology in Feminist Theory: Sexual Equality Reconsidered," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984), pp. 21-42.

111 This is by no means to deny other significant sources of hostility to liberal feminism, which are clearly fuelled by misogynist attitudes and a political interest in keeping women in their place. Among the vast array of interpretations of the new conservatism in U.S. politics, see the following: Zillah Eisenstein, "Antifeminism in the Politics and Elections of 1980," in Feminist Studies 7 (2): 187-205; Susan Harding, "Family Reform Movements: Recent Feminism and Its Opposition," in Feminist Studies 7 (1): 57-75; Rosalind P. Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," in Feminist Studies 7 (2): 206-246; Christine R. Riddiough, "Women, Feminism, and the 1980 Elections," in Socialist Review 56 (March-April 1981), pp. 37-54; and Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter, "Sex, Family and the New Right: Anti-Feminism as a Political Force," in Radical America 11 (6): 9-25.

112 This term is Sara Ruddick's from "Maternal Thinking". It is meant to connote styles and types of thinking which inhere in and are generated by women's activities.

C H A P T E R V

KARL MARX: THE POVERTY OF PRODUCTION

We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real-life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology

To regard society as one single subject is . . . to look at it wrongly; speculatively.

Karl Marx, Grundrisse

Introduction

There is a bittersweet irony located at the heart of the attempt to uncover masculine ideology in the theory of Karl Marx. For the thesis of masculinity as ideology is a testament to Marx's materialist method and certain of his categories, even as it calls into critical question the Marxian framework and world view. Significantly, the thesis of masculine ideology poses a fundamental challenge to a theory that failed to take account of its own gendered standpoint. Proceeding from Marx's and Engels' maxim that "consciousness [is determined] by life,"¹ our critical exploration of Marx will advance in two ways: an 'external' feminist standpoint will be brought to bear on a body of work that will also be assessed within the frame of its own outlook and terminology; that is to say, immanently.

Marx presented his theory, in contradistinction to the

productions of the Hegelian idealists and liberal political economists, as a theory about "real individuals, their activity and their material conditions."² While his individuals may well be "real", they are not fully representative of humanity (unless one believes and is prepared to argue that gender is not a significant constituent of life experience, identity, consciousness, knowledge and practice.) What is missing in Marx's social theory, of course, is an explicit account of gender. The criticism levelled by Marx against theoreticians of "society" conceived in the abstract could similarly be applied to his theoretical and empirical accounts of class-identified men. Using Marxian terminology, we could dub this a "speculative" error, one that ignores tangible and significant sources of differences between human beings. If capitalist society is no "single subject", neither is either of its two (or more) constituent classes.³ Ironically, women suffer a similar treatment and fate in the hands of Marx that the proletariat suffered under the rubric of liberal political economy: they are rendered falsely, if at all, and are thereby kept invisible and powerless.

But while it is all too easy, and a bit tiresome at this point, to charge Marx with grand neglect on the issue of gender,⁴ it is less easy to make the case for a masculine ideological structure in his work. This has to do with the

following issues: 1) problems that accompany the attempt to deal with the full scope of Marx's work; 2) certain aspects of Marx's method that have an ambivalent cast, particularly when considered in relation to feminist critiques of other epistemologies to which it is also opposed; 3) the contemporary intersection of Marxism and feminism. Each of these problems will be examined briefly in turn.

We are by now quite familiar with the complex breadth of Marx's work. While attempts to cut certain portions of the published work out of the "essential" Marx seem to do violence to the relevant complexities and sustained vision of the man's work (Althusser comes to mind as the grand culprit here), those who attempt to spell out the unified structure of Marx's entire thought tidy things up too much.⁵ We should be as wary of the attempt to impose a singular unifying structure on Marx's work as of efforts to depict a schizophrenic Marx, one who totally repudiated his youthful analyses of alienation and his debt to Hegel. Jerrold Seigel's recent biography of Marx alerts us to the first danger, while careful reading of the Grundrisse helps us to maneuver around the second.⁶ Like the humanity that he depicted so vividly, Marx was a creature immured in time and place. Measured against the often ridiculously inflated standards of social theory (and we would do well to ponder the possibility of a relationship between these standards and the history of male hegemony in Western social

theory)⁷, he is either brought tumbling down from his throne on high for being less than perfect, idolized and parroted for a totalizing wisdom that no single human could possibly possess, or given satanic attributes and responsibilities for revolutions gone sour. Each of these treatments grants him both too much and too little.⁸

Turning to the second set of problems, we are brought face to face with dialectics. To the extent that dialectics in the hands of Marx represents an attempt to transcend the dichotomies which methodological individualism, among other epistemologies, perpetuates, what does this mean for our assessment of Marx's method? Initially, it would seem, dialectics is more closely allied with a feminine epistemological orientation, most especially in its relational and dialogic orientation.⁹ These issues bring us directly to Hegel's doorstep. Clearly, a feminist assessment of Hegel is long due, although it exceeds the bounds of this particular work.¹⁰ Our focus here will be on Marx's utilization of Hegel's method as he understood it and chose to appropriate it. In the hands of Marx, as I will argue, the dialectic assumes an ambivalent cast, simultaneously questioning and reproducing masculinist epistemological assumptions. This will be especially evident in the dialectical interplay between subject and object which ultimately fails as genuine *Aufhebung*.

The materialist aspect of Marx's method is also situated

ambivalently in relation to feminist critiques of idealist or rationalist methodologies which elevate the brain at the expense of the body.¹¹ Once again, it would seem, Marx's method partakes of a revolt against classically masculine methodology. While this characterization is true to a significant extent, we will also see that Marx's materialist account is seriously flawed through significant errors of omission, which tend to perpetuate masculinist assumptions about the "real" world and to exclude female experiences.

Finally, it is plausible to suggest that it is not only the activist orientation of Marxism, but also its dialectical and materialist elements which account for the widespread contemporary attraction of feminists to Marx. The contemporary intersection of feminism and Marxism makes difficult, but not impossible, the effort to develop a critique of Marxism as a masculine theory. Several significant strands of feminist theory owe Marx quite a large debt: Socialist-Feminists and Freudo-Marxist feminists have incorporated wholesale many of his categories.¹² My own intellectual and political formation within these efforts is inescapable. Furthermore, many of the female heroines revived during feminism's quest for active role models came directly out of socialist and Marxist movements. These activist women furnished rousing proof of our slumbering potential, even as gradually emerging intimations of their maltreatment within the ranks

of "comrades" and their own antipathy to feminism as a "bourgeois" movement began to initiate a round of questioning about the relationship between Marxism, socialism, and feminism that is still going strong.¹³

For these, among other, reasons Marx poses difficulties and challenges not to be found in either Hobbes or Mill. Perhaps feminist scrutiny of his work offers greater promise of intellectual and political benefits. Those of us who identify as radicals in a world of enlarged possibilities and dangerously amplified threats to human happiness and survival¹⁴ must come to terms with Marx as a thinker who attempted to understand the inner workings of capitalist society and thereby reinvigorate humanity's guidance of its future. In reassessing Marx's legacy to radical social theory we are also re-thinking our identity and practice as critical thinkers and radical activists in the present.

Marx's Style

[Communism] is the solution to the riddle of history, and it knows itself to be this solution.

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts

Students of Marx are well aware of the vital relationship between the substance and style of his work. Marx's style could be variously characterized as arrogant, aggressive, ruthless, combative, sarcastic, sneering, relentless, and

brilliant. While some find his style distasteful and oppressive, others view it as the appropriate and complementary voice for the radical critic of a brutal and dehumanizing capitalism. Perhaps more than any other modern social theorist, Marx is the inspiration for critics of "value free" social theory and social science, in spite of his own claims to empirical scientific veracity. Marx's achievement in Capital was to imaginatively adopt the standpoint of the working class and to elaborate an analysis of capitalism from that standpoint.¹⁵ What he managed to produce in so doing was a theory that was simultaneously analytic/descriptive and radically evaluative in an "internal" sense. Classically Marxian terms such as "exploitation", "surplus value", "alienation", "private property", and even "labor" bear witness to this powerful fusion of description and evaluation. Marx's language opens up new vistas of insight even as it commits its users to a critical stance towards the reality revealed behind the façade of bourgeois relations and appearances.

Critics and disciples of Marx would probably agree that his characteristic style was an aggressive one. His typical, polemical mode involved "marking out his own position by eliminating former or potential colleagues from it."¹⁶ Such was also his strategy during those intense periods of private study, research, and note taking that punctuated his chaotic and difficult life. Marx's approach

to an issue was invariably one that proceeded over the toppled carcasses of existing, would-be and sometimes fabricated opponents. It seems that he needed such opponents to get himself going. "From his student days to the time of Capital," writes Jerrold Seigel, "Marx's characteristic mode of defining himself was by opposition, excluding others from the personal space he occupied."¹⁷ We may understand this definitional mode, which is not simply a polemical mode, in two non-exclusive ways. On the one hand, the method bears witness to his Hegelian roots. We could say that Marx's style takes to heart Hegel's distaste for atomistic intellectuals who denied their relational historical and social identities.¹⁸ Additionally, this style employs a type of Hegelian dialectical rationale, whereby Marx developed and finetuned his concepts through confrontational exchanges with other thinkers. On the other hand, there is something disturbing in the style of a theorist who can only create a discursive space for himself by "invading" and "reappropriating" the territory of displaced others. Like Hobbes, Marx evinces a combative, heroic, and hence, masculine style.¹⁹

In speculating on the possible sources of Marx's aggressive style, Jerrold Seigel has suggested that Marx's mother may provide a clue. Seigel argues that Marx's style might have been a reaction against Henriette Marx's intrusive and dominating nurture style. This interpretation

is problematic on several counts, although it contains an important measure of insight.

First, Seigel never manages to convincingly make the case for a maternal style that is either intrusive or dominating. The little evidence that we do have (one letter)²⁰ shows a mother who was solicitous of her son's health and well-being and eventually critical of his inability to support himself and his family. The record also suggests that Marx showed little affection for her during his adult years and visited her infrequently, and then primarily to request money.²¹ We simply do not know enough about Henriette Marx or her relationship to Karl to characterize her as an overbearing mother.

However, we might well ask, when is maternal nurturance within the bourgeois, nuclear family not intrusive and dominating? Seigel slides into the dangerous and contestable tendency of "blaming the mother", whereas the real issue here is a more structural one. That is, the kind of family in which Karl Marx was reared is precisely that modern, intensely affective, nuclear configuration where mothers carry an inordinate amount of responsibility for and power over the lives of young children. Within such a setting, children are likely to perceive their mothers as intrusive and dominating creatures, regardless of the individual capacities for non-intrusive nurturance that specific mothers may or may not have. Such perceptions are

likely to be retained in adulthood, often in unconscious and/or disguised forms. Marx's estranged adult relationship with his mother, coupled with his inflated-romantic courtship to Jenny von Westphalen, suggest that he suffered, like Mill, from an unresolved ambivalence toward the primal, pre-oedipal mother. This ambivalence, as we will see, carries over into his analysis of women's labor under capitalism. But it has precious little to do with the actual woman who mothered him.

The second problem with Seigel's analysis of Marx's aggressive style is that it proceeds as if this style is simply an individual phenomenon, a personality quirk. In other words, Seigel pays little attention to the intellectual tradition within which Marx was embedded. An adversarial, aggressive style is a significant feature of the Western philosophical tradition; furthermore, it may have found in dialectics a particularly hospitable environment, since its conversational form has assumed combative, as well as dialogic features.²² To characterize Marx's aggressive style simply as a feature of his personality is mistaken. This is not to say that Marx had nothing to do with the matter. But his intellectual style could more usefully be recast in terms which acknowledge a pre-existing intellectual stylistic legacy for which he was temperamentally suited, if not gifted.²³

The aggressive, adversarial mode is also larger and more

significant than an individual feature of personality to the extent that it partakes of a masculine cognitive structure and style. We have already commented extensively on this issue in the previous discussion of Hobbes's adversarial style. For Marx, as well as for Hobbes, this adversarial style may be understood, in part, to recapitulate at the level of adult intellectual practice and identity the prior process of struggle for a location and identity vis`a vis the pre-Oedipal mother. This process, as we have already noted in more extensive detail, is marked by a greater sense of opposition, danger and conflict for the boy-child than for the girl-child. Within the experiential and symbolic frame of modern western gendered culture, it comes to be more firmly identified with a masculine identity. In part, it is constitutive of such an identity. The echoes of this earlier struggle for identity ramify in distinctive ways on Marx's intellectual and polemical style, which flourishes in hostile territory and will brook no contenders. Ironically, the radical theorist of species-being and envisions of communist society embodied an intellectual stance and style which contradicted his ontology.²⁴

This problematic, masculinist feature of Marx's style has also had unfortunate consequences for the political history of Marxist movements and may account, in part, for the undeniable fact that "the texture of Marxist thinking degenerates easily into dogma."²⁵ While we can also cite

such factors as the subsequent positivist appropriation of Marx, the progressive teleological historical thrust of the theory, and the sense of privileged standpoint to account for the regressive dogmatism of the theory, the fact that Marx's style often tended to be aggressively monovocal rather than dialogic should not be dismissed. But the really important question here concerns the extent to which Marx's aggressive, masculinist style is bound up with the substance of his theory.

Seigel's analysis is vindicated, then, with the proviso that we substitute the mother of Marx's primary process memory, early experience and specific family structure for his "real" mother, and that we go on to acknowledge that mothers of the former sort lurk in the stylistic tradition of adversarial intellectual discourse and have "helped" (as projections of the masculine imagination) to shape the subtext of that discursive style.

On a final note, we might pause to consider one of Marx's early characterizations of his enterprise in this excerpt from "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction,":

As philosophy finds in the proletariat its material weapons, so the proletariat finds in philosophy its intellectual weapons, and as soon as the lightning bolt of thought has struck deep into the virgin soil of the people, the emancipation of the Germans into men will be completed.²⁶

What we find here is a language of intellectual weaponry and warfare, a phallic and violent metaphorical rendition of

thought as a lightning bolt that will turn emasculated Germans into men, and a latent homosexual imagery which confirms an androcentric conception of political and intellectual activities. The fact that this essay is often held up as the inspirational model for critical social theorists should give us additional pause for thought.

Marx's Method

The two decisive features of Marx's method are dialectics and materialism, which issue in Marx's characteristic and innovative treatment of history and labor. If labor is the "base" of Marx's theory, history is its "superstructure". Each is conceived on its own in dialectical and materialist ways, even as they are similarly related. Marx's methodological debt to Hegel is as difficult to ignore as are his differences from him:

. . . the greatness of Hegel's Phenomenology and its final product, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle, is on the one hand that Hegel conceives of the self-creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as externalization and the transcendence of this externalization. This means, therefore, that he grasps the nature of labor, and understands objective man, true, because real, man as the result of his own labor.²⁷

My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking . . . is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the

human mind, and translated into forms of thought.²⁸

The materialist aspect of Marx's method is the core of his 'inversion' of Hegel. Displacing Geist, Marx relocates dialectics in the laboring activities and relationships of human beings and re-reads history as a panoply of class struggle.²⁹ What Marx retains after discarding Hegel's "mystical shell" is a belief that the material social world is essentially dialectical and that a dialectical mode of inquiry is best suited to understanding such a world. Dialectics is thus an ontology with a corresponding epistemology. Like any other ontology, dialectics cannot be definitively evaluated in scientific or empirical terms. We either believe that reality is essentially change, flux, contradiction; that apparently discrete and disparate objects could be related; that the identities of various objects actually derive from and inhere in their relationships with other objects; that there is a deeper, dialectical level of reality beneath and within the static level of appearances; or we don't. In other words, dialectics either confirms and enriches our experience, provides us with what we feel is explanatory power, or we search elsewhere. Those of us who are persuaded that life is dialectical can attempt to persuade others of the truthfulness and intellectual power of a dialectical methodology; but we will never be able to "prove" it so. On this view, dialectics is no more and no less "metaphysical"

than any other epistemology.

Marx's dialectical method would seem to be most vulnerable in its historical rendition in his hands. Significantly, he shares with Hegel an optimistic view of a progressive unfolding of history. While this unfolding proceeds dialectically, through processes of contradictions and newly formed social entities, it assumes along with Hegel's view a teleological endpoint which is also the basis for judging how far history has come. For Marx this endpoint consists of the self-realization of man, rather than of Geist:

Communism is the positive abolition of private property, of human self-alienation, and thus the real appropriation of human nature through and for man. It is, therefore, the return of man himself as a social, i.e., really human, being, a complete and conscious return which assimilates all the wealth of previous development. Communism as a fully developed naturalism is humanism and as a fully developed humanism is naturalism. It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution to the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution.³⁰

A measure of the centrality and importance of this optimistic reading of history as progress, culminating in the "end of history" may be gained by reflecting on the devastating consequences for Horkheimer and Adorno of German fascism. Their ensuing intellectual crisis was provoked not simply by the horror at hand, but also in their realization that Marx

had left them totally unequipped to deal with this kind of massive 'regression'. Significantly, the turn that they took, in Dialectic of Enlightenment, would have to be assessed in Marxian terms as "ideological".³¹

If we approach dialectics as a theory of process, we see that it confirms and describes certain types of experience in the world, those that are often apprehended in intuitive and preverbal terms. Dialectics speaks to the experience of intimate social relations, the life of the body, the panorama of Nature, and pre- or unconscious modes of thinking, including those found in artistic and religious modes of expression (what Freud called the "oceanic feeling".) It offers a model of development that operates through the conflict of interdependent opposites and whose earliest surviving description may be found in Heraclitus:

War is the father and king of all things
Opposition is good; the fairest harmony comes out of
differents; everything originates in strife We
enter and do not enter the same river, we are and are
not The way up and the way down are one and the
same.³²

Robert Heilbroner describes dialectics as "at bottom an effort to systematize, or to translate into the realm of manageable communicable thought, certain unconscious or pre-conscious modes of apprehending reality, especially social reality."³³ As such, dialectics is often maddeningly elusive in intellectual terms, as well as being susceptible of intellectual abuse. Heraclitus provides an early clue in his invocation of "war" on the one hand, and

"fairest harmony" on the other. Thriving in an atmosphere of ambiguity, contradiction, and flux, dialectics defies "the syntaxes of common sense and logic."³⁴ Hegel

understood this well:

There is absolutely nothing whatever in which we cannot and must not point to contradictions or opposite attributes; and the abstraction made by understanding therefore means a forcible insistence on a single aspect, and a real effort to obscure and remove all consciousness of the other attribute which is involved.³⁵

Whose experience is dialectics most likely to describe? Putting the question a little differently, what kind of experience is most likely to generate a dialectical view of things? (These questions presume: 1) that all epistemologies are founded on some version of ontology, and 2) that ontology recapitulates, in some fashion, particular versions of experience.)³⁶ An ontology of essential changefulness, flux, struggle, opposition, achieved-yet-vulnerable unities is, more likely than not, going to express the experience of those groups of people who are either alienated with a socio-cultural order and are therefore less likely to buy into that order's reified and totalizing image of itself, and/or whose life activities involve qualities and processes of a dialectically described world.³⁷

The affinity between a dialectical ontology and the life of the working class under capitalism was not lost on Marx. His description of labor is especially rich in dialectical imagery, drawing on the process of creative interchange

between laborers and Nature and on the creative process of labor itself, which is simultaneously exploited and denied under capitalism. Throughout the Manuscripts, we see Marx struggling to substitute a dialectical language of things-as-relations for the predominant language of things-as-discrete-objects. This exercise reaches its apex in his liberatory vision of unalienated labor:

Suppose that we had produced in a human manner; each of us would in his production have doubly affirmed himself and his fellow men. I would have: 1) objectified in my production my individuality and its peculiarity and thus both in my activity enjoyed an individual expression of my life and also in looking at the object have had the individual pleasure of realizing that my personality was objective, visible to the senses and thus a power raised beyond all doubt. 2) In your enjoyment or use of my product I would have had the direct enjoyment of realizing that I had both satisfied a human need by my work and also objectified the human essence and therefore fashioned for another human being the object that met his need. 3) I would have been for you the mediator between you and the species and thus been acknowledged and felt by you as a completion of your own essence and a necessary part of yourself and have thus realized that I am confirmed both in your thought and in your love. 4) In my expression of my life I would have fashioned your expression of your life, and thus in my own activity have realized my own essence, my human, my communal essence.³⁸

More recently, feminists have begun to notice a new set of parallels between women's experience and dialectics. Such parallels reside in the biological and social experience of reproduction;³⁹ the nurture of young children;⁴⁰ "women's work";⁴¹ and the experience of women as the objectified "other" in male dominated society.⁴² The

affinities between this last experience and Hegel's rendition of developing self-consciousness in the Master-Slave relationship have been as significant for feminists as they have been for theoreticians of working-class consciousness and liberation. Workers and women, then, for shared and different reasons, are each obvious constituencies for dialectics. While Marx was able to develop a dialectical theory of society and social change from the vantage point of the male worker, he failed to do so for women. This failure is most evident in his virtual non-treatment of women's sex- and gender-specific labor.

But before we turn to a more sustained examination of Marx's analysis of labor, a final note on his method is in order. As an ontology and method, dialectics partakes of a worldview which is simultaneously conflictual and wholistic. That is, its stress on internal relations can either yield an "everything-is-connected" view or an "everything-is-contradiction" view.⁴³ Marx tended, on the whole, to promote the latter formulation, particularly in his political writings. This is especially evident in his view of history, including his theory of class struggle. Within the frame of Marx's utilization of dialectics, the wholistic view is effectively consigned to the arena of "after-the-revolution"--communist society.

The strength of conflict theory lies in its analytic simplicity and in its ability to see through the "civilized"

and "fair" appearance of liberal bourgeois economic relations. Its weakness is manifested in its diminished ability to articulate the complex nuances of social identity.⁴⁴ As a revolutionary theory, Marxism has been notoriously deficient in coming to terms with the agonizingly complex features of social change.⁴⁵ I would argue that this is at least partially the result of a conflict theory which promotes a dichotomous and dualistic view of social reality. Theoretical oversimplification along the lines of "us" and "them" has yielded notorious abuses. Vast numbers of human beings have been "eliminated" in the interests of "politically correct" policy. Cataclysmic theories of change fail to appreciate the embeddedness of beliefs and practices, along with the human need for stability, familiarity, and continuity.⁴⁶

A good part of the problem here may reside with the dialectical starting point. That is, while dialectics purports to be anti-dualistic, it is already, significantly, situated within a dualistic frame which is to be superceded in terms of a warfare model. Someone wins, and someone loses. While opposition need not operate along these lines (see, for example Mary O'Brien's discussion of the opposition of externality and internality)⁴⁷ it certainly takes on these contours within the framework of Marx's model of class relations. Significantly, we will also find it elaborated in his theory of labor as a dialectic between man

and nature.⁴⁸

We can detect in Marx's dichotomous, two-class model of dialectical conflict a masculine cognitive stance, one which parallels the self-other relational struggle for recognition and in some ways enacts the desired omnipotence of a fledgling masculine ego. The notion of privileged standpoint⁴⁹ degenerates into a vision of the omnipotence of an eventually victorious working class and the total demise of the other. Like Hegel's portrayal of a fight to the death between two egos who cannot (yet) tolerate reciprocal acknowledgement, Marx's view of class relations may be viewed as a developmentally retarded account of social relations. That is, it may well be part of a developmental stage of personal identity and socio-political relations, but it fails utterly as a final, comprehensive and satisfactory account. The terms of this failure are both empirical and theoretical. That is, history has not vindicated Marx's expectations of increasingly dichotomized class relations in capitalist societies; and theoretical efforts to understand late capitalism seem to be hampered rather than helped by the two-class model.⁵⁰ Finally, there is something in this model that makes many of us justly uneasy. To the extent that it partakes of and reproduces a gendered outlook on social relations, it cannot accommodate alternative conceptions of social conflict and harmony.⁵¹

Marx's Theory of Labor

[T]he first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history . . . [is] that men must be in an position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating, drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology

Mothers are no more visible within Marx's account of fundamental human activity--labor--than they are in Hobbes's state of nature or Mill's version of liberal civilization. Given his stress on the laboring activities of human beings and the material preconditions for certain forms of distinctively "human" activity, this invisibility is all the more striking in Marx. It contributes, as we will see, to a limited and distorted account of labor. The distortions of this account ramify, in turn, on Marx's conception of "nature", "necessity", and "freedom".

"Marx's procedure was in fact to set out from men's labor and to ignore the specificity of women's labor," writes Nancy Hartsock.⁵² The invisibility of women's labor ramifies in distinctive ways, as we will see, on Marx's account of "human" labor, and helps to account for the difficulties encountered by those who have attempted to add women's work to Marx's frame. In The German Ideology Marx and Engels discuss the history of the division of labor

and locate its first instance in the sexual division of labor in the family.⁵³ They go on to categorize familial relations, including the sexual division of labor, as "natural" relations. Adding insult to injury, they dismiss the social significance of the sexual division of labor by stating that a "real" division of labor only emerges with the division between manual and mental labor. Given Marx's insistence that social relations be de-ontologized and understood in historically specific ways, this is particularly problematic. What Marx and Engels subsequently miss in their focus on the division between "brain" and "hand" is the "heart".⁵⁴ For:

Women's work is of a particular kind--whether menial or requiring the sophisticated skills involved in child care, it always involves personal service. Perhaps to make the nature of this caring, intimate, emotionally demanding labor clear, we should use the ideologically loaded term "love". For without love, without close interpersonal relationships, human beings, and it would seem especially small human beings, cannot survive. This emotionally demanding labor requires that women give something of themselves to the child, to the man. The production of people is thus qualitatively different from the production of things. It requires caring labor--the labor of love.⁵⁵

The real first premise of human existence is that we are born; that some woman has "labored" to bring us into the world. The second premise is that we will be cared for during our early years of biological and emotional vulnerability. And this second premise calls on, but is not exhausted by, Marx's and Engels' first: the production of

the means to satisfy our needs for nourishment, protection and (equally important but unmentioned), social intercourse.

Strangely enough, reproduction enters the scene as the third premise of history: "men [sic], who daily remake their own life, begin to make other men [sic], to propagate their kind: the relationship between man and woman, parents and children, the family."⁵⁶ Marx's and Engels' sense of historical sequence here is strangely, but familiarly, skewed. The starting point for their analysis of the premises of history-making men is the already born and nurtured human being. Not only do mothers not make an appearance until the third act, but they are smuggled in via a patriarchal family. Mothers and fathers enter the Marxian historical scene simultaneously. History and common-sense suggest, however, that "mothers" predated "fathers".⁵⁷

When we do encounter "reproduction" in Marx's economic writings, it is reduced to the quantifiable notion of the value of commodities which we must consume in order to survive from day to day:

The minimum limit of the value of labour-power is determined by the value of the commodities, without the daily supply of which the labourer cannot renew his vital energy, consequently by the value of those means of subsistence that are physically indispensable.⁵⁸

This formulation, of course, writes out the "use-values" produced by women's labor and is also incapable of accounting for the domestic labor of women which is devoted to the conversion of commodity goods into consummable

use-values. (Food is the best example of this.) Given the intimate relationship between women's labor in the recognized labor force and the labor of reproduction in the home, this move is doubly problematic. Marx not only fails to recognize women's work within the home, but he cannot provide us with the tools for understanding sexually segregated labor markets.⁵⁹

Recent attempts to formulate a theory of women's work have shifted from prior efforts to accommodate such a theory within the conceptual framework of Marxian economics, highlighting instead the activity of "caring" as "a labour which ensures life, as much as an emotion which expresses love."⁶⁰ Arguing that the separate analysis of labor and love (through the disciplines of economics and psychology) is problematic for a full understanding of women's caregiving activities, this approach is both phenomenological and structural. That is, it takes seriously the lived experience of women's labor, even as it observes that caring "marks the point at which the relations of capital and gender intersect."⁶¹ The labor of caring for elderly parents, helpless children, handicapped family members, over-worked husbands, etc., is a vital part of women's work life which also translates into the notoriously underpaid arena of "pink collar" work. It may or may not produce use-values, need not entail the consumption of commodities. But it is part of the

life-blood of our production system.⁶² And it has a powerful effect on the work that women do: from the full- or part-time housewife, to the secretary, social worker, nurse, waitress, elementary school teacher, welfare mother, and prostitute.

Within Marx's economic framework, women's labor vanishes and we are left with "a gender-biased account of social production and an incomplete account of the life-processes of human beings."⁶³ This account cannot help affecting Marx's vision of post-capitalist society, where we fish in the morning, hunt in the afternoon, and engage in social criticism after dinner.⁶⁴ Not only has Marx "made the tacit assumption that the usually invisible laborer cooks the meal,"⁶⁵ but he has failed to remember the children, relying instead on dependable, invisible female responsibility for this work.

This issue here is not simply one of exclusion, which could be rectified by including women in the theory. Marx's failure to understand and appreciate reproductive and caring labor directly influences his understanding of "productive" labor. This understanding was perhaps most artfully captured by Marx in his comparison of the architect and the bee.⁶⁶ While this comparison rightfully emphasizes the creative and self-conscious aspects of human labor, it errs in postulating an idealized and over-voluntarist image of human labor. This image issues in Marx's vision of an

unalienated labor which can only be so when it has been emancipated from the realm of necessity. Hence:

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development, this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized men, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis . . .⁶⁷ (Italics mine.)

Necessity--that ineradicable foe--must be diminished as much as possible for a truly "human" history to flourish. Nature and humanity are thus, in some sense, opposed.⁶⁸ On this level, at least, Marx and Mill share a similar orientation with respect to nature. This vision of freedom is, of course, tied in with Marx's sense of history and with his historical sense of progress as a steadily expanding control over nature. The conditions for freedom are the conditions for such control, necessary but not sufficient guarantors of human self-realization. Marx's anticipated "reconciliation" of humanity and nature thus takes place at the dialectical

expense of nature controlled.

If Marx had stopped to seriously consider the labor of mothers, he would have been forced in one of two directions: either to characterize such labor as less-than-human because it is bound to nature (i.e., because it is not subject to full control and because as biological reproductive labor it is animal-like);⁶⁹ or to re-think his account of labor to accommodate reproductive labor, which is influenced by biology and necessity, as well as by culture. Implicitly, I would argue, the former characterization prevails in his analysis of labor. Mary O'Brien's comparison of the mother and the architect introduces some of the more stubborn and interesting features of maternal labor which Marx avoided. They are worth considering in some detail:

To comprehend a self and a world and a task to be done, to work out the way to do it, to act upon this determination, to make something and know that one has made it, to 'reproduce' oneself daily by means of the labour process; all of this is the unity of thinking and doing, the fundamental praxis of production which is embedded in socio-historical modes of production. Reproduction is quite different . . . biological reproduction differs in that it is not an act of rational will. No one denies a motherly imagination, which foresees the child in a variety of ways [F]emale reproductive consciousness knows that a child will be born, knows what a child is, and speculates in general terms about this child's potential. Yet mother and architect are quite different. The woman cannot realize her visions, cannot make them come true, by virtue of the reproductive labor in which she involuntarily engages, if at all. Unlike the architect, her will does not influence the shape of her product. Unlike the bee, she knows that her product, like herself, will have a history. Like the architect, she

knows what she is doing; like the bee, she cannot help what she is doing.⁷⁰

At issue here are questions of control, the human relationship to Nature, and the characterization of identifiably human activities as exclusively rational and self-generative. Stressing the planned, conscious, and purposive dimensions of human labor, Marx counterposes such labor to the realm of Necessity (Nature) and so is constitutionally unable to see women's reproductive labor and its derivatives as human labor. The fact that "productive" labor as such would be impossible without reproductive and caring labor makes this blindspot all the more problematic. Marx has failed to fully specify the preconditions for "human" labor as he sees it. At this point, we could well ask Marx a feminist-inspired version of the question that he put to psychological theories that ignored the history of industry and production: "What should one think of a science [Marxism] whose preconceptions disregarded this large field of man's [sic] labour [maternal labor] and which is not conscious of its incompleteness . . . ?"⁷¹

The differences between productive labor and maternal-caring labor (understood in historically specific terms) also issue in different, gender-based historical consciousnesses. For Marx, congealed labor in the instruments and objects of production provides the umbilical

cord through time by which people remember, identify with, and differentiate themselves from their predecessors. Productive labor is the living (but Marx calls this "dead" labor!) congealed link of species continuity. O'Brien argues that women may be privy to a different sense of historical identity: "women do not apprehend the reality of past ages in a mediation on the probable history of a hammer."⁷² Instead, we see it in our children, who embody, among other things, congealed reproductive labor (not simply our own, but also that of our parents, their parents, etc.). "Marx conflated production and reproduction, analyzes productive labor only, and thus reduces the awareness of species continuity to an economist construction."⁷³

Marx's formulation of historical continuity is also essentially forward-looking and teleological. Hence his rendering of the past as a "tradition of all the dead generations" which "weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."⁷⁴ This sense of time, of the relation of the present to the past, is more likely to emerge out of a standpoint that has been forced to construct an abstract formulation of generational continuity. Nature at least provides an anchoring with the past through the genetic continuity provided through reproduction. Given the overall status of Nature within Marx's theory, however, such continuity must be passed over completely in favor of a

productive labor which anticipates its eventual liberation as a complete rupture with past history.⁷⁵

We can also begin to see how and why Marx's conception of labor and time yields an account of man as an essentially self-creative being: "[F]or socialist man what is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labor and the development of nature for man . . ."⁷⁶ "[S]ocialist man . . . has the observable and irrefutable proof of his self-creation and the process of his origin."⁷⁷ "A being only counts itself as independent when it stands on its own two feet and it stands on its own two feet as long as it owes its existence to itself."⁷⁸ Marx has essentially denied and reappropriated the labor of the mother in his account of self-created man.

Graeme Duncan has been especially, although not critically, sensitive to this voluntarist-liberatory feature of Marx's portrayal of humanity:

Marx's strong concern for human autonomy or freedom, and for man's ultimate self-realization in co-operation with others, underlay his mature as well as his early writing. He envisaged, as the outcome of history, man unconstrained by his social environment, active, versatile, revealing a variety of creative powers, enriched, a whole man.⁷⁹

What is wrong with this account? Nothing, so long as it is not exaggerated and thereby dependent on a denial of women and Necessity. ("Necessity", it should be stressed, is a socially- and historically-specific category. It does not have an invariant or self-evident meaning, aside from some

of the basic requirements of biological life.) But in the hands of Marx, it tends to issue in three distinct problems. First, it relies on an overly plastic view of human nature. Secondly, it is arrogant in the post-Enlightenment tradition. Finally, it recapitulates the denial of mothers which we encountered in his theory of labor.

Marx's account of human nature involves 1) the notion that man "makes himself" and hence, should "revolve around himself as his own true sun", and 2) the notion that the human is, and must be, defined solely in relation to his social, relational setting. Marx provided a significant and much-needed critique of the pre-social individual monad of liberal theory who is constituted as a subject prior to the society in which he lives.⁸⁰ However, his substitute notion of the individual as "the ensemble of social relations" creates a good many problems as well. In both models, furthermore, the individual is "constituted abstractly without every being born."⁸¹ Within Mill's frame, he is constituted as a rational discrete being entitled to rights and whose social relations are negotiated in the "space" which is created and administered by such rights. Within Marx's very different account, the individual is constituted socially, particularly within the frame of his laboring activities, which produce him even as he produces them. But this social construction presupposes

the unacknowledged prior relation to an earlier laborer--the mother.

Robert Heilbroner has been especially acute in describing the hazards of a plastic conception of human nature:

[T]here is a severe price to be paid for a view of the human being as without any definition other than that created by its social setting. For the individual thereupon becomes the expression of social relations binding him or her together with other individuals who are likewise nothing but the creatures of their social existences. We then have a web of social determinates that has no points of anchorage other than in our animal bodies.⁸²

And our animal bodies, within the frame of Marx's analysis, can't tell us very much about ourselves. Dennis Wrong's critique of the oversocialized conception of man⁸³ also anticipates Heilbroner's discomfort with Marx's failure to deal with politics in post-revolutionary society. Wrong's identification of a theoretical partnership between an over-socialized view of man and an over-integrated view of society is substantiated in the fact that politics has become, to use Heilbroner's image, the Achilles' heel of socialism. Marx's collapsed vision of a complementary and trouble-free relationship between the individual and communist society is too seamless to admit political struggle and dialogue over society's means, ends, limits, and possibilities.⁸⁴ That the theorist par excellence of struggle and contradiction should end up with this kind of vision is rather incredible. Or is it? Perhaps Marx

himself embodies the human limit for living with perpetual conflict.

An exaggerated emphasis on man's self-creative abilities is also arrogant. It denies our natural embeddedness and promotes resentment against a Nature that has not made us god-like. It pits the "human" essence against the "natural" backdrop of limiting existence. And it actually anticipates a state of post-embeddedness, where "the individual has ceased to become the object of uncontrolled forces and is instead entirely self-created, ceaselessly going beyond its own limits by means of its creativity, and continuously participating in the movement of its own becoming."⁸⁵

(Italics mine.) In spite of Marx's youthful efforts to synthesize and transcend the dichotomy between Nature and Culture, Necessity and Freedom, these efforts are resolved on behalf of a humanity that appropriates Nature exclusively for its own self-defined interests. Marx also follows in the tradition of post-Enlightenment humanists by defining humanity against animal life:

The animal is immediately one with its vital activity. It is not distinct from it. They are identical. Man makes his vital activity into an object of his will and consciousness. He has a conscious vital activity. He is not immediately identical to any of his characterizations. Conscious vital activity differentiates man immediately from animal vital activity. It is this and this alone that makes man a species-being.⁸⁶ (Italics mine.)

This issues in an instrumental relationship to Nature:

The practical creation of an objective world, the

working over of inorganic nature, is the confirmation of man as a conscious species-being, that is, as a being that relates to the species as to himself and to himself as to the species. It is true that the animal too produces . . . but it only produces what it needs immediately for itself or its offspring; it produces one-sidedly whereas man produces universally; it produces only under the pressure of immediate physical need, whereas man produces freely from physical need and only truly produces when he is thus free; it produces only itself whereas man reproduces the whole of nature

Thus it is in the working over of the objective world that man first really affirms himself as a species-being.⁸⁷ (Italics mine.)

Not incidentally, these themes are also intimately related to the denial of the mother. An exaggerated emphasis on self-creation denies that we were born and nurtured. It denies the bio-social basis for species continuity and projects it exclusively onto the arena of labor. It promotes a view of communism as severing "the umbilical cord of the individual's natural connection with the species."⁸⁸ These themes help us to ponder Mary O'Brien's suggestion that "Underlying the doctrine that man makes history is the undiscussed reality of why he must."⁸⁹ When we deny our first bio-social relationship we deny our own natural embeddedness as physical, vulnerable, animal creatures. We also deny the origins and ground of our sociability as a species. Philosophers such as Marx who wish to articulate and promote this important aspect of distinctively human life are forced to ground it in activities which post-date our first experience of mutual

sociability. When we deny maternal labor and women's labors of caring love, which tend to be more aware of a non-instrumental, cooperative and also difficult relationship with Nature,⁹⁰ we construct a deficient view of "specifically human labor" and of "species life". Without a retrospective appreciation for our bio-social origins, we are all the more likely to join Marx in viewing the past as a pile of "muck".

This denial of the mother in Marx's theory--which is also central to the social acquisition and definition of gendered masculine identity--helps to maintain the domination of women and the domination of nature. Hence, Marxist social theory may be perpetuating problems--some of which it would like to solve, others of which it is unaware--that involve not only half of the human species, but our literal survival as a species. For the domination of nature, as Adorno and Horkheimer came to argue, also entails its revolt.⁹¹

Production and the Domination of Nature

[A]ll objects become for him the objectification of himself.

Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts

In spite of all that has been said thus far, there are intimations in Marx of a yearning for a genuine, mutually reciprocal and transcendent relationship between humanity

and nature. Not surprisingly, this yearning is rendered in the language of male-female relations. (Not surprising, in that the female represents herself as well as nature.) If we can suspend, for a few moments, some of the substantial problems with this excerpt,* we may appreciate it for its insight into the complex, enriching and instructive dimensions of the interface between nature and culture which post-Enlightenment thinking has steadily sought to eliminate⁹²:

The infinite degradation in which man exists for himself is expressed in his relationship to woman as prey and servant of communal lust; for the secret of this relationship finds an unambiguous, decisive, open, and unveiled expression in the relationship of man to woman and the conception of the immediate and natural relationship of the sexes. The immediate, natural, and necessary relationship of human being to human being is the relationship of man to woman. In this natural relationship of the sexes man's relationship to nature is immediately his relationship to man, and his relationship to man is immediately his relationship to nature, his own natural function. Thus, in this relationship is sensuously revealed and reduced to an observable fact how far for man his essence has become nature or nature his become man's human essence. Thus, from this relationship the whole cultural level of man can be judged . . . we can conclude how far man has become a species-being, a human being, and conceives of himself as such; the relationship of man to woman is the most natural relationship of human being to human being. Thus it shows how far the natural behavior

*They include: a prudish distaste for "lust"; a male standpoint: "he" is the referential subject, "she" is the object; the assumption that male-female relations are transparently natural (but we cannot really have expected Marx to know better); and heterosexist assumptions about sexuality (once again, this is not to castigate Marx for what he could not have known, but to remind ourselves.)

of man has become human or how far his human nature has become nature for him. This relationship also shows how far the need of man has become a human need, how far his fellow men as men have become a need, how far in his most individual existence he is at the same time a communal being.⁹³

This is a remarkable piece of writing, most especially in its intimation of the relationship between the status of women and the status of nature in modern western culture. This relationship was subsequently explored by Adorno and Horkheimer in the following terms:

Women have no personal part in the efficiency on which this civilization is based. It is man who has to go out into an unfriendly world, who has to struggle and produce The division of labor imposed upon her by man brought her little that was worthwhile. She became the embodiment of the biological function, the image of nature, the subjugation of which constituted that civilization's title to fame. For millenia men dreamed of acquiring absolute mastery over nature, of converting the cosmos into one immense hunting ground.⁹⁴

Marx seems well aware that the socio-cultural fates of men and women are intimately related; that the degradation of women issues in and reflects the degradation of man.

Another way of saying this is that the 'Woman Question' is also the 'Man Question'. Marx also invokes a vocabulary of nature and necessity in non-pejorative terms, depicting social relations between human beings as natural relations too. (Midgely would approve.) He tells us that the status of women within a culture is an important indicator of that culture's health. And he suggests that cultures can be evaluated in terms of their success or failure in

integrating nature and culture, i.e., that human progress requires a genuine accomodation with nature. Finally, he envisions a harmonious co-existence of individuality and community which may be understood simultaneously in human social terms as well as in terms of the humanity-nature relation. Nowhere in this account do we find nature lurking as a threat or limit. Nowhere in western social theory do we find as intense a yearning for reciprocal accomodation between humanity and nature, men and women.

Unfortunately, this visionary sense of mutual accomodation slides into one of appropriation, as Marx begins to equivocate on the meaning of "participation". The following quote provides a glimpse into the early stages of such a slide:

Labour is . . . a process in which both man and nature participate and in which man of his own accord, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of the body, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants.⁹⁵

Here we see Marx articulating an equivalence between "human will over nature" and "human participation in nature":

Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will over nature, or of human participation in nature.⁹⁶

Finally, this human will attains pre-eminence over a brute nature that has been muted: "All production is

appropriation of Nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society."⁹⁷ In Capital, Marx tells us that:

The labour-process, resolved . . . into its simple elementary factors, is human action with a view to the production of use-values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements, it is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and Nature; it is the ever-lasting nature-imposed condition of human existence, and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase.⁹⁸

But is all of labor the appropriation of nature? Mary O'Brien, in her assessment of the labor of biological reproduction, has suggested otherwise. So too does Murray Bookchin, in arguing that nature also "appropriates" us. He articulates a view of nature as something other and more than the brute, passive object of man's labors:

Marx tried to root humanity's identity and self-discovery in its productive interaction with nature. But I must add that not only does humanity place its imprint on the natural world and transform it, but also nature places its imprint on the human world and transforms it . . . it is not only we who "tame" nature but also nature that "tames" us.⁹⁹

One way of understanding Marx, I would suggest, is to locate him in the tension between the recognition of nature and its domination. This suggests that a full assessment of his social theory must acknowledge the complex contrariness of his thinking.

Marx's social theory is located on what Nancy Hartsock has called "the epistemological terrain of production."

This commits him to a particular set of concepts, including those of "class", "labor", "value", "distribution", "exchange", "profit", and "surplus-value", among others. Recently, the Marxian category of "production" (a highly privileged category) and many of its attendant concepts have come under serious, if not devastating, scrutiny, from the charge that these concepts do not enable an adequate theorization of power and must be resituated within a broader mode of inquiry,¹⁰⁰ to the accusation that Marx's concept of production is the "ultimate possible expression of" "the hubris of domination."¹⁰¹ I would like to maneuver a way between these two assessments by suggesting and attempting to demonstrate two things. First, that the resituation of Marxism within a different and larger epistemological terrain is quite problematic; second, that while Marx's theory is indeed tied in with a dialectic of domination, it is by no means "its ultimate possible expression". We begin by exploring some of the ways in which Marx's category of production contributes to and intensifies the domination of nature.

The problematic of the domination of nature is simultaneously elusive and compelling. It is the kind of problem, like the problem of "alienation" generated by Marx's youthful theory, which we either "see" because of a set of values and interests that we have, or don't "see" because it doesn't fit into our scheme of things, including

our experience of comfort or discomfort with modern culture. In a secular age such as this (and I count myself as a secular thinker; i.e., I do not believe in or acknowledge any kind of 'higher power'), the domination of nature enters the discourse of social theory as a type of theological problem. "Nature" takes the place of "God" as a kind of independent entity or Subject with which we are also vitally related; we are part of nature. Marx's critique and demystification of religion as a falsely objectified projection of human aspirations (actually, it was Feuerbach who did this, but it had an important early influence on Marx) sets the tone for hostile relations between those who view "man" alone as the originator of meaning and those who would look elsewhere as well. A typical Marxist response to the 'domination of nature' problematic would be to ask sarcastically if that means that one should stop weeding the garden. This version of the problem reduces it to one of rational, instrumental policy. Presumably, we avoid ecological disasters (the revolt of nature), which are problematic only to the extent that they impinge on us, by becoming more rational in our utilization of nature. What is feared is an abandonment to the forces of nature. (Look what happens when you don't weed.) The mistake here, in my opinion, is to equate all exchanges with Nature either as instances of domination or as benign and inconsequential. On this view, the issue is not simply one of whether to

weed, but of how to weed. This "how" includes our attitudes to weeds. (But this is going to sound crazy to my Marxist friend, who sees the problem in terms of 'to weed or not to weed'.) Organic gardening, among other practices, provides a tangible example of an orientation to nature which is simultaneously respectful and practical. The fact tht it is appealing to growing numbers of ordinary Americans suggests that it meets a felt need for a different relationship to nature than is commonly afforded. In a similar vein, the recent upsurge of interest in and activism on behalf of "animal rights" also testifies to popular discomfort with an ethos that cannot accord nature respect and dignity. Adorno and Horkheimer were also on to this feature of the problem:

The idea of man in European history is expressed in the way in which he is distinguished from the animal. Animal irrationality is adduced as proof of human dignity The antithesis is still accepted today. The behaviorists only appear to have forgotten it. The fact that they apply to humans the same formulas and findings that, without restraint, they force from defenseless animals in their nauseating physiological laboratories stresses the contrast quite adroitly. The conclusion they draw from mutilated bodies applies not to animals in the free state but to man as he is today.¹⁰²

Nature thus impoverished issues in the self-brutalization of humanity.

Isaac Balbus argues that Marx's concept of production necessarily entails the domination of nature because it requires an "instrumental relationship between humans and their surrounding world."¹⁰³ As the substance of

necessity, nature is humanity's adversary in its quest for self-creative, self-sufficient freedom. "To conceive nature as that which must be bent or transformed by human beings is to conceptualize it as the raw material or the instrument of human labor."¹⁰⁴ When we approach nature on these terms we must assume that it "has no intrinsic worth, no dignity of its own," and therefore that it makes no normative claims on humanity.¹⁰⁵ William Petty's analogy--quoted approvingly by Marx in Capital--that "labour is the father of the material world, the earth is its mother," reinforces the notion that nature provides the passive material substratum for "productive" labor, even as it plays on the sexist depiction of women as "passive", "natural", and therefore less-than-fully "human" creatures.¹⁰⁶ Within this mode of thinking small wonder that mothers and caring-laboring females are rendered invisible in Marx's theory of labor. Like the members of non-objectifying "primitive" cultures who are viewed as child-like and less-than-fully rational by Marx, women are excluded from Marx's account of "human" labor, unless they are working alongside men in the fields or factories. For these reasons, the re-accomodation of women and nature within Marxian theory has potentially devastating consequences.

The Manuscripts offer some initial hope that Marx's portrayal of nature is not as instrumental and objectified as Balbus argues it is. There we find Marx waxing eloquent

on the "humanization of nature" and the "naturalization of man", suggesting an eventual reciprocity between two improperly opposed arenas. While the young Marx was obviously groping, as we have seen, for some means of reconciliation, his subsequent vision of communism effectively renders the "humanization" of nature as its domination by human beings:

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves.¹⁰⁷
(Italics mine.)

Jeremy Shapiro has described communism (approvingly) in this fashion, which is quite similar to Marx's version. It recapitulates the themes of self-created humanity and the domination of nature, while it introduces the notion of "post-embeddedness":

In the state of post-embeddedness depicted by Marx, the individual has ceased to become the object of uncontrolled forces and is instead entirely self-created, ceaselessly going beyond its own limits by means of its creativity, and continuously participating in the movement of its own becoming. (Italics mine.)

The dialectic of history is resolved through completion of the self-transcendence of nature that occurs when embeddedness in nature is overcome and human beings bring the historical process under control.¹⁰⁸
(Italics mine.)

Post-embeddedness is a dangerous and arrogant fiction. It is also misogynist and masculinist. It is dangerous because its blindness elicits the revolt of nature. It is misogynist because it perpetuates a fear of and consequent need to dominate naturalized and hence, "dangerous" women. It is masculine because it issues out of a set of perceptions and needs rooted in a gendered identity negatively fashioned out of opposition to the pre-Oedipal (m)other.

The "revolt of nature" was initially theorized by Adorno and Horkheimer in their reassessment of the Enlightenment. It has been subsequently re-invoked and extended by feminists seeking to articulate a theory of feminist-ecology.¹⁰⁹ What Adorno and Horkheimer saw in the trajectory of Enlightenment thought and practice was a steady "progress" in the domination of nature that was necessarily accompanied by social and affective regression. Paul Connerton provides an encapsulated view of their argument:

The exploitation of external nature for the purpose of freeing men from subjection to it strikes back in the repression of man's instinctual nature. Nature--his own as well as that of the external world--is 'given' to the ego as something that has to be fought and conquered. This means that, in the interest of self-preservation, the self is engaged in constant inner struggle to repress many of its own natural drives. The strain of holding the ego together in this way adheres to it in all stages; and the temptation to lose it has always been present together with the determination to maintain it. This dread of losing the self, which in its extreme form figures as the fear of death and destruction is,

nonetheless, intimately associated with 'a promise of happiness, which threatened civilisation in every moment'. That promise must therefore be suppressed. The intellect must separate itself off from sensuous experience in order to subjugate it. But this coercive separation inevitably impoverishes human potentialities.¹¹⁰

Hence, the domination of nature is simultaneously true and illusory. It is also a dialectic that has been undertaken primarily on behalf of and by men. Women, as Adorno argued, were "not yet entirely in the grasp of society."¹¹¹ They were also implicated in this dialectic in a complex way: as human beings who were thought to be more "natural" than men.

She became the embodiment of the biological function, the image of nature Between her and man there was a difference she could not bridge--a difference imposed by nature, the most humiliating that can exist in a male-dominated society. . . . Where the mastery of nature is the true goal, biological inferiority remains a glaring stigma, the weakness imprinted by nature as a key stimulus to aggression.¹¹²

The domination of nature also issues in a longing to return to it. This return, as Silvia Bovenschen argues, is negotiated through the female: "The biological-natural moments of human existence only appear to have been fully expunged from masculine everyday life: that relationship to inner nature which has not yet been mastered is projected onto women, so that women must pay for the dysfunctionality of man's natural drives."¹¹³

The radical pessimism of Adorno's and Horkheimer's account involves their argument that this dialectic of Enlightenment is inexorable. That is, they pose

objectification as a given of human cognition and practice and they relentlessly ally it with domination. Most attempts to rewrite this dialectic in a less determined and tragic fashion focus on the link between objectification and domination and try to break it. History and Marx are invoked to suggestion alternative conceptions.¹¹⁴ We are already in a position to understand that Marx is not the solution (just as Adorno and Horkheimer did). History, however, still holds clues, particularly if we recall that the history of the European Enlightenment is a gender-specific history. The argument that the fantasy of post-embeddedness is masculine is related to a similar characterization of the dialectic of Enlightenment. As Sandra Harding has argued:

Once we recognize that the history of Western thought is the history of thought by members of a group with a distinctive social experience--namely, men--we are then led to a new set of questions about the social nature of that thought and about the justifiability and reliability of the interpretations of nature and social life emerging from that thought.¹¹⁵

This introduces the possibility that Marx's ontologization of objectification (along with that of Adorno and Horkheimer) has a masculine component.

For children of both sexes, the "world" from which they must differentiate themselves, and in interaction with which they create their own autonomous identity, is in one sense the same "world"--the mother-world. But in another sense it is a very different world for male and female infants: gender-differentiated experiential worlds begin at birth. The masculine "objectifying" personality develops through separation and individuation from a kind of person whom he cannot

become biologically and against whom he must exercise will and control not to become socially. A woman and the whole mother-world become for him the first models for the bodies and worlds of "others"--of persons who are perceived as disconnected from him and against whom, at risk of loosing his painfully attained self-identity, he must in turn maintain a strong sense of separation and control.¹¹⁶

Objectification in the hands of Marx is not only de-problematized. It is held up as the apex of human achievement and liberation which, in the final analysis, is a radically impoverished, solipsistic standard of human possibility and achievement. It is also masculine.

Marx's overall and systematic failure to accomodate nature may help to explain a central tension at the heart of his theory, that between humanistic voluntarism ("man makes himself") and social-structural determinism ("life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life"). While this tension may be artfully combined, as it has been in Alfred Schmidt's rendition of Marx's capitalist society as "a self-made prison of uncomprehended economic determination,"¹¹⁷ or as we find it in Marx's version of history in the "Eighteenth Brumaire"¹¹⁸, it also threatens to erupt in one-sided formulations. Witness the wildly divergent interpretations of Marx, from Eric Fromm's humanistic appropriation, to Althusser's structural reading. We can detect something in Marx's approach to nature which is similar to Mill's fear of an unconstrained and vindictive nature. In Marx's case, however, he had

higher expectations for its taming. Nevertheless, or precisely because of this expectation, nature's domination within the arena of human labor promises a human omnipotence which is eternally threatened. These threats, for Marx, take the form of humanly-undetermined, but still-created, social forms and relations. Not surprisingly, the capitalist version of these forms takes on vitalistic, nature-like, and even female capacities, including dynamically regenerative ones. The banished mother reappears in Marx's portrayal of a capitalism that reproduces and augments itself, while his own intellectual efforts are cast as the contributions of a mid-wife helping to shorten the "birth pangs" of an incipient revolution.¹¹⁹

Is Marx's theory the "ultimate" in post-Enlightenment attempts to dominate nature? This is a difficult question, one that I am inclined to answer negatively because of Marx's latent intimations of a different dialectical interplay between humanity and nature. If we take Marx's failure to consist of "his inability to extend [and maintain] his splendid insight into the epistemological validity of sensuous experience and the sensuousness of the 'man/nature' relationship expressed in labor,"¹²⁰ then the terms of his failure, at least, are preferable to those of others. And if we were to actually search for candidates for the dubious distinction of "ultimate", we would have to consider others: Hobbes, J.S. Mill, Weber, Freud, Sartre

and Habermas are just a few of the potential notables. How do we assess who is more "ultimate" than whom? And how will this help us? "Ultimate" really counts down on the ground rather than on the terrain of the text. From here, we can see with some sad measure of certainty, that Western civilization embodies, perpetuates and extends the "ultimate" (so far at least) expression of the domination of nature: we are truly unsurpassed.

On the other hand, we had better think twice before we attempt to transplant Marx to new epistemological terrain, as Nancy Hartsock suggests. For Marx's epistemological terrain is bound up with an ontological habitat that is in some ways a masculine one. And the knowledge which issues out of this framework is necessarily limited and distorting, not simply in its inability to "see" aspects of gender-differentiated experience and knowledge which call it into question, but also in the very substance of its own horizon. Marx's epistemological commitment to the arena of "production" commits him to an ontological perception of reality which is detectably masculine. As such, it lacks a self-conscious appreciation of its own roots which, within the Marxian view, is the prerequisite of a genuinely critical theory. To a great extent, the "root" that Marx grasped was gender-specific man. As such, his "real connections" were attenuated ones. So too must his "intellectual wealth" be correspondingly diminished.

Ultimately, however, his greatest failure--as a materialist, critical diagnostician of his age, and revolutionary--may well have been his inability to systematically acknowledge the intuitions of his youth, which concern "that deepest substratum of man [sic]--the organism's need to establish and celebrate its spiritual identity with the phenomenal world and the cosmos."¹²¹ Too many of our "sins" and "needs" are still in mute disarray.

Conclusion

To get its sins forgiven, humanity only needs to describe them as they are.

Marx, "A Correspondence of 1843"

A theory will only be realized in a people in so far as it is the realization of what it needs.

Marx, "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction"

An immanent critical assessment of Marx would bring us to his sociology of knowledge, which stresses the rich material and relational substratum of consciousness and knowledge. While Marx looked to that substratum as the arena of labor, he failed to appreciate the implications of the fact that labor is organized on the basis of sex and not simply class. Marx is not simply unaware of the possibility that such a substratum might be gender-differentiated, his

own framework of "desirable belief"¹²² is itself constituted in gender-specific terms. Hence, he has committed a version of the very sins with which his intellectual and political opponents were charged and found guilty: he has generalized a (gender-)specific form of human cognition and elaborated it into a social theory. In short, Marx views social reality in specifically gendered ways. His critique of that reality is correspondingly gendered and gender-blind.

Marx's "real connections" to his social world reflect, in part, the introjected connections of the masculine subject. We find masculine identity at work in his need to 'clear the ground' of intellectual and polemical endeavor. Marx needed "room to move"--a lot of it. Like the subjects of Carol Gilligan's research on gender-differentiated psychological development, Marx joins the ranks with those male respondents who react to pictures of physical proximity between humans with fantasized scenarios of violence designed to widen the space between them.¹²³ Masculine subjects are threatened by intimacy and proximity, largely in virtue of their strict ego boundary construction. On this view, ground clearing is a type of survival strategy.

We also find the memories of masculine identity acquisition echoed in Marx's dichotomous model of antagonistic class relations. Bourgeoisie and proletariat, like mother and son, are intimately, but antagonistically,

related. Each survives at the expense of the other. Ultimately, the health and survival of the latter require the elimination of the former.

Like Hobbes and Mill, Marx has had to banish the mother from his account of social reality. This enables a number of crucial and distinctive turns in his theory: a view of history as forward moving progress, a cataclysmic theory of change, and a view of human labor that is ultra-voluntarist. The first two features of Marx's theory embody what Mary O'Brien has analyzed as the male attempt to re-write history without the generational continuity enacted through mothers.¹²⁴ I would tie this in to a more psychoanalytic and culturally specific account, by situating these features as the outcome of the masculine turn away from the mother. The voluntarist account of labor is enabled and enhanced by the missing mother because it does not have to take account of her labor as activity which is not neatly voluntarist. Marx's voluntarist account of labor is not incidental to his objectification of nature, for it promotes a view of nature as the passive substratum of humanly active efforts. And his objectification of nature plays into the dialectic of enlightenment, which is also implicated in the nature-female affiliation. But this affiliation has already had a prior confirmation in the very securing of masculine identity against a female mother-world that becomes the prototype for "nature". Hence, the

objectification of women and nature are implicated in a complex spiral of self-referential and -confirming beliefs and feelings.

Masculine gender identity also enables a view of freedom and necessity as being inversely related. This issues out of an over-voluntarist conception of labor and parallels the antagonistic relationship between humanity and nature. Post-embeddedness is the inevitably "utopian" endpoint of such a scheme. What it recapitulates at the level of social theory is a yearning and fantasy embedded in the deep psychology of masculine identity: clean and ultimate release from the (m)other.

FOOTNOTES

¹Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, ed. C.J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 47.

²Ibid., p. 42.

³See Marx's discussion in the Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 94. The same dangers of abstraction apply to the category "women". Recent published writings of "Third World" and Afro-American women have alerted white feminists to the dangers and abuses of "color blind" categories which reproduce white middle class experience as inclusive of female experience. See the following: Toni Cade, ed., The Black Woman: An Anthology (New York: New American Library, 1970); Cherrié Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color (Watertown, Ma.: Persephone Press, 1981); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies (Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1982); Judith Kegan Gardiner, Elly Bulkin, Rena Grasso Patterson, Annette Kolodny, "An Interchange in Feminist Criticism: On "Dancing through the Minefield", in Feminist Studies 8 (3): 629-675.

⁴Thankfully, this work has already been done. For a very early and important formulation, see Zillah Eisenstein, "Developing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism," in Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, ed. Zillah Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 5-40. For a recent summary of the gender gaps in Marx's analysis of labor, see Nancy Hartsock, Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (New York and London: Longman, 1983), pp. 146-152. See also Jean Bethke Elstain, Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 256-284, for a critical assessment of Marxist-Feminism.

⁵Louis Althusser, For Marx (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969). For over-worked attempts to present Marx as a thoroughly systematic and consistent thinker, see the following: Carol C. Gould, Marx's Social Ontology: Individuality and Community in Marx's Theory of Social Reality (Cambridge, Ma. and London: The M.I.T. Press,

5 (cont'd) 1978); John McMurtry, The Structure of Marx's World View (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); and Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971). For a more balanced attempt to understand Marx on the basis of his use of different analogic models, see Melvin Rader, Marx's Interpretation of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). See also Dominick LaCapra, "Marxism and Intellectual History," in his ReThinking Intellectual History: Text, Contexts, Language (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 325-346. LaCapra writes that Marx's works may be viewed as "a set of nonsacred texts that are marked by various and at times internally divergent, even self-contestatory, tendencies. Given their heterogeneity, there is no simple model that covers their relation to one another, to the past, or to political practice." (p. 330) See also John Mepham, "From the Grundrisse to Capital: The Making of Marx's Method," in John Mepham and D-H. Ruben, eds. Issues in Marxist Philosophy, 3 vols. (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979), vol. 1: Dialectics and Method, pp. 145-173.

6 Jerrold Seigel, Marx's Fate: The Shape of a Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). See also Saul K. Padover's biography, Karl Marx: An Intimate Biography (New York and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library 1978; abridged ed.). Despite his professed dispassion, Padover obviously dislikes Marx, whereas Seigel, who admits to engagement and disagreement with Marx, provides the more balanced and empathetic account.

For helpful discussions of the Grundrisse, see the following: Gould, Marx's Social Ontology; Terrell Carver, Karl Marx: Texts on Method (New York: Harper and Row, 1975; Basil Blackwell, 1975); and David McLellan, The Thought of Karl Marx (London and New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

7 I believe this has quite a bit to do with the sexual division of labor in the modern West. Men have been enabled to spend a lot of time refining theory, thanks to the work of women. For an acute analysis of the ramifications of this phenomenon on the woman writer, see Tillie Olsen, Silences (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1979).

8 For all of its important criticisms of Marx, Isaac Balbus's Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) is a fascinating and disturbing example of how criticism against Marx proceeds in the hands of those who expected too much of him the first place. Balbus's nitpicky

8 (cont'd) and unrelieved analytic criticism of Marx looks like a case of cathartic overkill against the primal father. See Part 1 especially.

⁹I am using the term "feminine", of course, in a historically and culturally-specific way; certainly not in a Jungian manner. Neither is this to say that dialectics is the only non- or anti-dichotomous epistemology available. Contemporary systems theory is another.

¹⁰For some initial forays into this terrain, see the following: Balbus, Marxism and Domination; Jessica Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love: Rational Violence and Erotic Domination," in Feminist Studies 6 (1): 144-174; Lawrence Blum "Kant's and Hegel's Moral Rationalism: A Feminist Perspective," in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy 12 (2): 287-302; Jo-Ann Pilardi Fuchs, "On the War Path and Beyond: Hegel, Freud and Feminist Theory," in Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy, special issue of Women's Studies International Forum 6 (6): 565-572; Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 283-310; Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); and Charles Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

¹¹For a very suggestive examination of the links between women's experiences and materialism, see Hartsock, Money, Sex, and Power, esp. ch. 10.

¹²For one of the first attempts to forge a theoretical Marx-Feminism synthesis, see Eisenstein, "Developing a Theory". See also Sheila Rowbotham, Woman's Consciousness, Man's World (Middlesex, England and Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1973). Juliet Mitchell's Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women (New York: Random House, 1975) initiated and contributed significantly to feminist efforts to forge Marx and Freud. Nancy Chodorow's The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978) also falls into this camp, with less emphasis on Freud and more on object-relations theory. See also Chodorow's essay, "Mothering, Male Dominance and Capitalism," in Eisenstein, ed., Capitalist Patriarchy, pp. 83-106.

¹³Alexandra Kollontai's The Autobiography of a

13 (cont'd) Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman, trans. Salvator Attanasio, ed. Iring Fetscher (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), published with its previously Communist Party-censored parts included, and Clara Zetkin's "My Recollections of Lenin: An Interview on the Woman Question," reprinted in Miriam Schneir, ed., Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings (New York: Random House, 1972) provided intimations of the strains between socialism and feminism. An important theoretical article on this issue was written by Heidi Hartmann and Amy Bridges and circulated for several years among feminist theory study groups. It was finally published in altered form under Heidi Hartmann's name as "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," in Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, ed. Lydia Sargent (Boston: South End Press, 1981), pp. 2-41. For a recent historical study of socialist women, see Marie Marmo Mullaney, Revolutionary Women: Gender and the Socialist Revolutionary Role (New York: Praeger, 1983). See also Hilda Scott, Does Socialism Liberate Women?: Experiences From Eastern Europe (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974).

14 What I mean by "enlarged possibilities" is that we have a wider range of choices than our predecessors did. I have more "choice" than my grandmother did. "Dangerously amplified threats", unfortunately, requires no explanation.

15 We are indebted to Georg Lukács for the first systematic elaboration of this notion. See "What is Orthodox Marxism?" in History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1971), pp. 1-26. For an excellent recent elaboration of the notion of standpoint in Marx's theory, see Hartsock, Money, Sex, and Power, pp. 115-144.

16 Seigel, Marx's Fate, p. 182.

17 Ibid.

18 See section 2 of Hegel's Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 1-2.

19 Many polemical modes exist. Marx's is a particular type. Women, of course, are also capable of nastiness, often referred to as "bitchiness". All polemical modes, however, do not involve the kind of space clearing that we find in Marx. This is what is especially distinctive about his style. Finally, for those who would view this

19 (cont'd) characterization as a WASPy misunderstanding of Jewish culture, I'd like to invoke my own ethnic background (southern Italian) for some support. The British "cut" is far more devastating than anything I have ever witnessed around the dinner table. What Seigel notices about Marx is not his "decibel level"; rather it is his argumentative strategy. And this strategy is quite similar to Hobbes's description of his own.

20 It may be found in Seigel, Marx's Fate, p. 49.

21 See Padover, Karl Marx.

22 See Janice Moulton, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method," in Harding and Hintikka, eds., Discovering Reality, pp. 149-164.

23 This approach is similar to Marx's non-personal casting of the capitalist in Capital. In the 1867 Preface to Vol. 1 he wrote: "I paint the capitalist and landlord in no sense couleur de rose. But here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests." Similarly, I am approaching Marx as the personification of a gender category.

24 For helpful discussions of Marx's ontology, see Gould, Marx's Social Ontology and Ollman, Alienation. See also Norman Geras, Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend (London: New Left Books, 1983) for a recent critique of the structuralist argument that Marx had no theory of human nature. Those who argue for the existence of an operative ontology in Marx invariably focus on the themes of sociability, collective endeavor, and socially acquired identity.

25 Robert Heilbroner, Marxism: For and Against (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1980), p. 143.

26 "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in David McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 73.

27 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, in McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings, p. 101.

28 Capital, vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 19.

29 It is easy and mistaken to make both too much and too little of this "inversion". For example, the facile

29 (cont'd) characterization of Hegel as an "idealist" misses something particularly striking about his philosophy, which is engaged with "the real world." On the other hand, Hegel's notion of Geist certainly poses large obstacles. See Richard Bernstein's discussion of Hegel in Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Human Activity (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), pp. 11-83. Both Marx and Hegel, I would argue, have important things to say about the complex, mutually constitutive relationship between "ideas", or consciousness, and the "real world". See Charles Taylor's Hegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) for an interesting discussion of how we might go about retaining important features of Hegel's philosophical project without being required to accept his theology. For an interesting dialogue on the differences and similarities between Hegel and Marx, see Richard Norman and Sean Sayers, Hegel, Marx and Dialectic: A Debate (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press; Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980).

30 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings, p. 89.

31 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: Seabury Press, 1972).

32 Heraclitus, trans. by Richard Lattimore in Matthew Thomas McClure, The Early Philosophers of Greece, cited in Rader, Marx's Interpretation of History, p. xviii.

33 Heilbroner, Marxism: For and Against, p. 56.

34 Ibid., p. 38.

35 Hegel, Encyclopedia of Logic, sec. 89, cited in Sean Sayers, "On the Marxist Dialectic," in Norman and Sayers, Hegel, Marx and Dialectic, p. 9.

36 This discussion of dialectics and types of experience is neither empirical, nor historical in a strict, demonstrable sense. Rather, it is a kind of ideal reconstruction of an epistemology and its constituency. For an especially good discussion of the materialist, experiential underpinnings of epistemology, see Jane Flax, "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics," in Harding and Hintikka, eds., Discovering Reality, esp. pp. 248-250.

37 The fact that Hegel fell into neither of these two groups, sociologically speaking, is a testament to his sensitivity, perspicacity and courage in addressing the

37 (cont'd) dilemmas of his age. Whether he succeeded or not is another issue.

38 Marx, "On James Mill," in McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings, pp. 114-122, esp. pp. 121-122.

39 O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction. See also Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).

40 Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," in Feminist Studies 6 (2): 342-367.

41 See Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism;" and Ulrike Prokop, "Production and the Context of Women's Daily Life," in New German Critique #13 (Winter 1978), pp. 18-33.

42 For accounts of the dialectical experience of the "other", see Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (New York: Random House, 1974) and Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love: Rational Violence and Erotic Domination."

For descriptive and explanatory accounts of why women's psychology has dialectical components which are less repressed than those of men, see the following: Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender; Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Jane Flax, "Mother Daughter Relationships: Psychodynamics, Politics and Philosophy," in Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine, eds., The Future of Difference (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), pp. 20-40; and Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976).

43 Strictly speaking, these two formulations are by no means necessarily contradictory. This could be expressed in the phrase "everything-is-connected-through-contradiction". A good example of this is Marx's characterization of the relationship between bourgeoisie and proletariat. While each entails the other in a necessary fashion, each opposes the other as well. Here we have a contradictory unity of opposites. Nevertheless, at a phenomenological level, the stress on connection and the stress on opposition are often felt as opposed; each tends to manifest itself in a singular fashion.

44 See William Connolly, "Personal Identity, Citizenship, and the State," and "Socialism and Freedom," in his Appearance and Reality in Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 151-172, 173-193,

44 (cont'd) respectively. I have pursued some of these issues as they apply to women in "Legitimation Crisis Reconsidered: Women, Personal Identity and the State," unpublished paper, 1978.

45 See Robert Heilbroner, Marxism: For and Against. Marx, of course, was an astute political analyst. As he was well aware, ever-changing circumstances required changes in theory and analysis.

46 See William Connolly, "Socialism and Freedom". See also Sigmund Freud's trenchant critique of Marxism's failure to deal with aggression, in "The Question of a Weltanschauung," New Introductory Lectures, XXV, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), pp. 158-182. See also his Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. James Trachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961) for the disturbing question he raises about future objects of attachment for the aggressive drive once private property has been abolished.

47 The Politics of Reproduction, pp. 38-39.

48 Cf. Nancy Hartsock's interpretation in Money, Sex and Power, pp. 115-144.

49 I am not opposed to the notion that some standpoints are more privileged than others if "privileged" is understood to mean being more critical and inclusive than other standpoints. This is not to say, however, that standpoints convey or guarantee a singular "truth". (I believe that Nancy Hartsock would disagree with me, but this is how I prefer to use the term.) We must also be extremely careful of the potential abuses of the notion of standpoint. A privileged standpoint that fails to "listen" to others is a candidate for totalitarianism. On the other hand, part of what makes it privileged is its ability to understand and to accomodate more voices than less-privileged standpoints.

50 This is by no means to deny the significance of class struggle or the reality of antagonistic class interests. These, however, would be better situated within a more comprehensive context. Several features of social reality point us in this direction. First, a two class model cannot help us to understand the situation of women, Afro-Americans, persecuted lesbians and homosexuals, and the treatment of Native Americans and other minority groups. The voices, interests, and oppressions of these groups require much more than a two-tiered model to account for and rectify their situations. Secondly, class theory needs to come to terms with the internalization by members of the

50 (cont'd) working class of certain aspects of bourgeois-conceived notions of dignity, respect, and the good life. [See Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class (New York: Random House, 1972).] This is not a question of "false consciousness". Thirdly, many of the outstanding problems of the age--including the threat of nuclear holocaust, technological degradation of the environment, the psychological crisis of modernity, and others--are not amenable to class analysis. On the other hand, other features of contemporary social reality and discomfort are served by class analysis. These include: the political and economic consequences of economic decline in the West [see Paul Blumberg, Inequality in an Age of Decline (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980)]; and the accelerating problem of imperialism, including current political struggles in Central and Latin America [see Saul Landau, "Inside Nicaragua's Class War," in Socialist Review 71 (1983), pp. 8-28]. We can expect the further proletarianization of labor in the United States, an intensification of global class-like relations between different regions and peoples of the world, and struggles for political and economic reform by and on behalf of disenfranchised and propertyless workers. Those who fail to articulate the class-specific interests at stake in these struggles are rightfully accused of capitulating to capitalist class interests and power.

51 For a sense of the alternatives, see Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

52 Money, Sex and Power, p. 146.

53 The German Ideology, pp. 43-44, 52-53.

54 See Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976) for an especially good elaboration of the separation of mental and manual work. The heart imagery comes from Hilary Rose, "Hand, Brain, and Heart: A Feminist Epistemology for the Natural Sciences," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 9 (1): 73-90.

55 Rose, "Hand, Brain, and Heart", p. 75.

56 The German Ideology, p. 57. Of course, in the original German rendition of this it would be "menschen", which carries no gender-specific meaning, as opposed to its English translation as "men". My correction here is not addressed to Marx and Engels.

⁵⁷I am using "mothers" and "fathers" here as social, rather than strictly biological concepts. For an elaboration of the suggestion that "mothers" preceded "fathers", see O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction.

⁵⁸Capital, vol. 1., p. 173.

⁵⁹See Louise Kapp Howe, Pink Collar Workers (New York: Avon Books, 1977) for the argument that females working in female labor markets constitute a distinct class of workers. Some would argue that, given Marx's decision to focus on "capitalism", the decision to analytically distinguish between use-values and exchange values was a legitimate one. This is true in one sense but it begs the question of how "capitalism" is to be defined and understood. This problem has everything to do with how we decide to theorize "women's work" in relation to capitalism. Thankfully, this is not my task.

⁶⁰Hilary Graham, "Caring: A Labour of Love," in A Labour of Love: Women, Work and Caring, eds. Janet Finch and Dulcie Groves (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 25. See also Ulrike Prokop, "Production and the Context of Women's Daily Life"; and Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology For Women," in The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge eds. Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 135-187.

⁶¹Graham, "Caring", p. 30.

⁶²I realize that this sounds "functionalist". So be it. Sometimes functionalism is appropriate to understanding social phenomena. We can say many things about women's work, including that it helps to keep things running smoothly. This does not require a view of women as nothing but pawns in the economic system.

⁶³Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power, p. 148.

⁶⁴The German Ideology, p. 53.

⁶⁵Rose, "Hand, Brain and Heart," p. 84.

⁶⁶Capital, Vol. 1, p. 198.

⁶⁷Capital, Vol. III (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 820.

⁶⁸Cf. Hartsock's argument in Money, Sex and Power that objectification "has to do with an affirmation of the

68 (cont'd) existence of the material world." (p. 125) Hartsock does not see objectification as problematic; this constitutes a significant difference between her analysis of Marx and that of Isaac Balbus.

69 See Mary Midgely, Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) for an important critique of this method of defining the specifically human in opposition to the natural-animal world.

70 O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction, pp. 37-38.

71 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, p. 93. See also n. 56 above.

72 The Politics of Reproduction, pp. 37-38.

73 Ibid., p. 42.

74 "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte," in McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings, p. 300.

75 The task of assessing or formulating a female conception of time is difficult, but intriguing. On the one hand, those feminists whose view of history is fairly mono-dimensional, where an undifferentiated patriarchy is seen as the prevailing historical norm, are likely to see their own time as kind of historical watershed. Seeing their own activities as a radical rupture with the past, their view of the past would be one of "pre-history" and their view of time would be essentially forward-looking. We have all felt like this at one time or another. On the other hand, many women look to a past inhabited by "sisters", "mothers", and "grandmothers" in the effort to simultaneously learn from them and celebrate them. This "familial" orientation to the past suggests a very different view of time, one which occurs on a kinship-based continuum and which would include a theory of change not nearly as cataclysmic as the former. While it is difficult to get a firm handle on this issue, Mary O'Brien's suggestion that women are privy to a sense of temporal continuity on the basis of "reproductive consciousness" makes good sense. See Kristeva, "Women's Time," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 7 (1): 13-35, for a complicated, fascinating excursion into the question. See also Smith, "A Sociology for Women".

76 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, p. 95.

77 Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., 94.

⁷⁹Graeme Duncan, Marx and Mill: Two Views of Social Conflict and Social Harmony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 56.

⁸⁰"The human is . . . an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society." "Production by an isolated individual outside society . . . is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other." Grundrisse, p. 84.

⁸¹O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction, p. 184.

⁸²Heilbroner, Marxism: For and Against, p. 163.

⁸³Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology." American Sociological Review, 26 (2): 183-193.

⁸⁴Marx of course, did not fully specify his anticipated post-socialist future. A good part of this underdescription was surely deliberate, and for good reason. What he did specify, however, is remarkably untroubled by any tension.

⁸⁵Jeremy Shapiro, "The Slime of History: Embeddedness in Nature and Critical Theory," in On Critical Theory, ed. John O'Neill, (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 149.

One of my favorite examples of Marx's stretched images of human self-creation is this: "in taking in food . . . the human being produces his own body." Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, p. 90. This simply denies the autonomous and remarkable functions of the body.

⁸⁶Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, p. 82.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Marx, Capital, quoted in Shapiro, "The Slime of History". This emphasis on self-creation also contributes to the overexaggerated claim that under capitalism, "individuals are now ruled by abstractions, whereas earlier they depended on one another." Grundrisse, p. 164. As if men and children no longer depend on women; as if women no longer depend on each other.

⁸⁹The Politics of Reproduction, p. 53.

⁹⁰See Prokop, "Production and the Context of Daily Life," and Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking".

⁹¹Dialectic of Enlightenment.

⁹²See Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

⁹³Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, p. 88.

⁹⁴Dialectic of Enlightenment, pp. 247-48.

⁹⁵Capital, vol. 1, pp. 197-198.

⁹⁶Grundrisse, p. 706.

⁹⁷Ibid., 87.

⁹⁸Capital, vol. 1, pp. 184-4.

⁹⁹Murray Bookchin, The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy (Palo Alto, Ca.: Cheshire Books, 1982), p. 32. For a devastating historical account of the Western compulsion to "tame" nature, including human beings of non-Western cultures, see Frederick Turner, Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983). See also the account of Columbus's landing in the New World in chapter 1 of Howard Zinn's A People's History of the United States (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

¹⁰⁰Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power.

¹⁰¹Balbus, Marxism and Domination, p. 269. The latter phrase is Marcuse's.

¹⁰²Dialectic of Enlightenment, p. 245.

¹⁰³Marxism and Domination, p. 269.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 271. See how Freud inverts Marx's formulation by suggesting that our relation to nature affects our economic arrangements: "the relation of mankind to their control over Nature, from which they derive their weapons for fighting their fellow men, must necessarily also affect their economic arrangements." In "The Question of a Weltanschauung", p. 178.

- 105Balbus, Marxism and Domination, p. 271.
- 106See Genevieve Lloyd, "Reason, Gender and Morality in the History of Philosophy," in Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences 50 (3): 490-513.
- 107Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 86.
- 108Shapiro, "The Slime of History," p. 149.
- 109See Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature," in Heresies 13 (1981), pp. 12-16.
- 110Paul Connerton, The Tragedy of Enlightenment: An Essay on the Frankfurt School (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 67.
- 111Adorno, Prisms, cited in Silvia Bovenschen, "The Contemporary Witch, The Historical Witch, and Witch Myth," in New German Critique 15 (Fall 1978), p. 116.
- 112Adorno and Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, p. 248.
- 113Bovenschen, "The Contemporary Witch," p. 117.
- 114See, for an example, Connerton, The Tragedy of the Enlightenment, pp. 71-79.
- 115"Is Gender A Variable in Conceptions of Rationality? A Survey of Issues," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), p. 44.
- 116Ibid., p. 51.
- 117Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx (London: New Left Books, 1971), p. 41.
- 118"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves. . ." In McLellan, Karl Marx: Selected Writings, p. 300.
- 119See Azizah al-Hibri, "Reproduction, Mothering and the Origins of Patriarchy," in Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory, ed. Joyce Trebilcot (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 81-93; and Eva Feder Kittay, "Womb

119 (cont'd) Envy: An Explanatory Concept," in the same collection, pp. 94-128; along with O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction for explorations of the male appropriation of female reproductive powers.

120 Mary O'Brien, "Between Critique and Community," review of Money, Sex and Power, by Nancy Hartsock, in The Women's Review of Books 1 (7), p. 9.

121 Turner, Beyond Geography, p. 124.

122 Harding, "Is Gender a Variable?", p. 48.

123 In A Different Voice, pp. 24-63.

124 The Politics of Reproduction.

C H A P T E R VI

GENDER AND POLITICAL THEORY: THE RETURN TO DIFFERENCE

A picture held us captive, and we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably

We are not contributing curiosities, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations

Both the intelligence of the self and the intelligence of the other are indispensable to overcome the blind Western refusal to recognize the other, the strange, the different

To discover the other is to discover our forgotten self.

Carlos Fuentes, "Writing in Time"

What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life?

The world would split open.

Muriel Rukeyser, "Käthe Kollwitz"

Modern thought is advancing toward that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself.

Michael Foucault, The Order of Things

Hobbes, Mill and Marx Revisited

Our exploration of Hobbes, J.S. Mill and Marx provides strong support for the thesis that masculine gender is a detectably significant constituent of the discourse of modern political theory. Specifically masculine presuppositions, perceptions, interests and values have

escaped detection and remark not simply because of the entrenched pervasiveness of the masculine outlook, but also because the eyes that beheld it have been unselfconsciously confirmed by its unarticulated presence and logic. In other words, male hegemony in modern Western political theory has simultaneously produced masculine ideology in that genre and rendered it unproblematic and invisible. While political theory has undergone significant permutations through time, adding new and often discordant voices to its various 'conversations' in the face of its revealed limited abilities to express socio-political experiences, disappointments, desires and possibilities, it is still "a landscape in which women are strangers."¹ It is, in effect, a gendered landscape, whose contours are beginning to come into view just as, and precisely because, women are beginning to "speak from the silence" that heretofore has been ours.²

The most notable feature of this landscape (one that I did not initially go 'fishing for', but which presented itself to me as I went through the literature of political theory) is the grand and contrived absence of the mother. Given her privileged position in the construction and attainment of masculine gender identity, this should come as no surprise. For while she is the key figure in the articulation of masculine identity, she is the negative and repressed ground of that identity. Hence, the search for

masculine ideology in modern western political theory has turned up a "maternal subtext"³, inhabited by a mother who is both real and fantasized. The real missing mother is the mother who has birthed us and most probably cared for us during our early, vulnerable and formative years. She provided the original ground of our difficult strivings for identity. The fantasized mother is the mother of huge proportions--terrifying in her wrath and vindictiveness, seductive in her promise of a recaptured "oceanic feeling".

The absence of the mother is richly orchestrated; it can take, as we have seen, a variety of forms. But whatever the particular scenario, it is always based on a forcible expulsion which is subsequently denied--i.e., "forgotten". Such forgetfulness is maintained in the layers of discourse within which she is wrapped and handed from theorist to theorist. The forgetfulness is so successful, that no surprise or recognition is registered when she reappears in a Hobbesian sovereign who is self-generating through time, or in a capitalism that reproduces itself with inexorable deliberateness. The expulsion and denial of the mother are handily captured in Hobbes's suggestion that we imagine ourselves "like mushrooms". They are presupposed in Mill's conception of a discrete, abstract individual who is entitled to rights on the basis of a public-private distinction. They are embodied in Marx's vision of human beings as essentially

self-creating producers. Each of these characterizations, significantly different as they are, shares in a profound denial of the mother.

Each is also threatened, although differentially so, by her reappearance on the scene. In the case of Hobbes, she threatens to turn the mushroom metaphor into an absurd and even humorous construct. We hear her laughing in the shadows of the state of nature. For Mill, the return of the mother threatens to clutter the liberal individual's carefully manicured identity and to impede his access to privately-generated rights. She poses a fundamental challenge to the nature-culture distinction by straddling it and she threatens to release the lid on the Pandora's box of repressed nature. In Marx's case, she provokes a re-thinking of the basic elements of labor, along with the categories of "production" and "history". She is unmoved by the communist ideal because she cannot abide a neat and inverted distinction between freedom and necessity.

The missing and repressed mother is especially implicated in the portrayal of nature, as we have noted specifically in the cases of Mill and Marx. The mutually implicated fates of mothers and nature in western political theory are the result not so much of ontology but of post-Enlightenment dichotomies and associations that link women to nature through the maternal function and set masculinized Reason in opposition to feminized Nature.⁴

This association, I would argue, is not simply an idealist or ideological one, however. Maternal labor is implicated in a profound and irreducible relation to nature.⁵ But this relationship has been "stretched" to the point that, until recently, we have been unable to conceive of maternal activity as cognitive, rational practice.⁶ Mill provides one of the most extreme and disturbing versions of a mind set that fails to appreciate the legitimate cognitive dimensions of materially embedded labor. This is exhibited in his distrust of "partial" interests, which he counterposes to the apparently disembodied rationality of the educated. His paranoid account of a vile and vindictive nature set in opposition to civilization ramifies on his portrayal of the "individual" who is only apparently genderless. This individual is indelibly marked by "abstract masculinity"⁷, Mills's feminism notwithstanding.

Marx's portrayal of nature-necessity as the objectified ground of man's creative impulses and labors also requires the banishment of the mother. This is most evident in his portrayal of an architect-like labor which writes out maternal labor and women's labors of caring. Antipathy towards nature, virulent in Mill, ambivalently cast by Marx, issues in effective antipathy to women. This in spite of the intentions of either theorist.

A masculine orientation and cognitive structure has a

powerful effect on the political theorist's portrayal of human nature and the subject. In the case of Hobbes and Mill, an atomistic conception of the individual prevails. This individual inhabits a terrain populated by self-sprung persons whose identities are self-generated and self-contained. Inviolable egos such as these embody the masculine fantasy of omnipotence and self-sufficiency. There is, however, a steep price to be paid for the attempted enactment of this fantasy, for the denial of the mother "cuts man adrift in an endless search for the origin that he has effaced in his desire to be self-generating."⁸ In Marx, this fantasy issues in a vision of what Charles Taylor has called "situationless freedom".⁹ For Mill, it requires a struggle against a forever threatening nature (inner and outer). And in Hobbes, it produces a civil order governed by a self-generating, but arbitrary (because ontologically ungrounded) authority. (Here we have a classic instance of 'having one's cake and eating it too': even as he eliminates the mother, he wants to re-introduce precisely her own ability to provide generational continuity.) Hobbes's and Mill's individuals are defined essentially in terms of rights which are negotiated contractually. Such rights are the essence of political life. Marx, on the other hand, invokes a social conception of the individual. His individual is not pre-constituted; rather, he is a complex ensemble of his social relations.

Nonetheless, Marx's version of the subject shares with Hobbes's and Mill's the fantasy of self-creation. In Marx's hands, the fantasy is more complex and attractive; nonetheless it is housed within a frame that cannot abide the complexities of social and carnal vulnerability. This orientation is given full sway in his vision of communism. It is also at the heart of his voluntarist conception of labor.

We are also in a position to appreciate the ways in which effaced maternal origins have something to do with a plastic conception of human nature which we find significantly developed in Marx and Mill. (Hobbes's description of human nature, on the other hand, is simply radically under-described.) While Marx stressed the "man makes himself" version of this conception, Mill's behaviorism moved him to focus on social influences as the significant determinants of human identity, motivation and potential. Each version promotes an ontological emptiness that flies in the face of an original securing of the self vis`a vis our primordial caretaker. Each version makes it particularly difficult to address the question of human needs.¹⁰

In this study, we have also explored the relationship between masculinity and intellectual style. Hobbes is the most virile of the three, having cast himself as an epic hero fighting dangerous battles. Marx's style is also

notably combative and aggressive. Mill's aggression is the more sublimated, cloaked under the veneer of Victorian gentlemanly rationality. It too, however, tends toward an arrogant and pre-emptive posture and is employed as a kind of weapon with which to rout out foes. Within Mill's scheme, disagreements signal a breakdown in rational discourse, since rational method presumably points to the correct solution. Those who disagree with Mill are cast aside as "unenlightened" or as "irrational", which means less-than-fully-civilized. This style is perhaps the most insidious of the three.

Epistemology and method have also been explored with a view to searching for gender-specific components of political theory. Mill's methodological individualism is the clearest and most extreme expression of a masculine epistemological orientation, since it recapitulates, in nearly classic form, a stereotypical masculine subject, one with clearly demarcated ego boundaries and tidy transactional relations with other similarly constructed subjects. Within such a world, methodological individualism makes perfect sense. The reconstruction of social phenomena as the products of the quantitatively reduced and simplified processes of cause and effect is theoretically attainable within an environment populated by "individual men". Hobbes's geometry-inspired political science was an earlier version of the same thing, enhanced

and simplified by his nominalism. Marx's method, of course, is quite different. It is aimed at understanding a complex system of relations which also constitute the "objects" within it. This is very different from a "scientific" approach to pre-constituted objects who subsequently engage in social relations. Like Hobbes, Marx is a conflict theorist, although the language he uses to describe and understand conflict is radically different. Within Hobbes's scheme, conflict is a necessary by-product of social relations: human beings bump up against each other in competitive movement towards necessarily scarce objects of desire. For Marx, on the other hand, conflict inheres in social reality itself. The very relational constitution of human beings presupposes contradictions, whether latent or manifest. Masculinity is exhibited in Marx's account via the dichotomous rendition of class relations that he presents. The self-other opposition of Hobbes's state of nature, where every ego is the Self, and all others are the Other, is transposed in Marx's account into one grand Self-Other conflict, proletariat on one side, bourgeoisie on the other. Marx suggested, of course, that the bourgeois ideologues had it backwards. That is, that their privileged identity was historically illusory. His alternative account, however, recapitulates the dichotomous contrast and anticipates its eventual resolution as a one-sided unconditional victory.

Ironically, Marx's futuristic visioning fails to accommodate the very dialectical interplay that is so compelling in his account of capitalism. Between the historical transcendence of class, politics and necessity, he has left exceedingly little for the dialectic to get its hands on.

Marx and Hobbes share a distinctive and important impulse which is rooted in their ultra-conflictual accounts of society. Each projects a future and desirable order which is remarkably conflict-free. Citizens of the Leviathan hand over their capacities for conflict to the supreme civil authority in exchange for peace and stability. In Marx's vision, future comrades labor creatively and cooperatively with no State hovering above them. Their relationship to society is thoroughly unproblematic. And whatever problematic relationship to nature still exists, because of "her" recalcitrance, has been reduced to a minimum. We can understand these theoretical projections, in part, as a psychological response to the anxiety produced by incessant conflict. An indefinite future of Civil Wars or class struggle would be psychically unbearable for anybody. While Marx and Hobbes had the "guts" to face up to the conflict of their times, they were human enough to need and to construct an exit. But the unreal and impoverished cast of their alternative solutions suggests that the original formulations of the problem were skewed. And we are in a position now to

appreciate the possibility that such distortions might be based to some degree on gender-specific perceptions.

As the epigrams and quotes which head up chapters III, IV and V were selected to suggest, each theorist would appear to be aiming for human comprehensiveness in his work. Such comprehensiveness, in fact, is invoked as a criterion for the truth and adequacy of each theory. Hobbes believes that his theory of human nature can be cross-checked and verified by any who take time to reflect honestly on their motivations, desires, passions and behaviors. Mill criticizes his Utilitarian predecessors for having an overly limited view of their human subjects and he suggests that we must be open to the partial and often hidden views of differently situated individuals. He invokes, among other things, wealth, age and sex in making his argument. Marx believes that he has finally founded a comprehensive social theory by treating class as a significant constituent of knowledge, interests and power. His insight into the necessary connections between social relations and intellectual "wealth" is both compelling and ironic, given his failure to appreciate the ways in which women of his time were differentially embedded in social relations. Yet, none of these theorists seems to be aware of his sex and his gender as possible constituents of his thought. They have all failed to fulfill one of their own criteria for "good" social theory. This is not simply

because women are effectively written out of these accounts. At a more profound level, the "forgotten self" of political theory is the masculine self.

Each theorist embodies Freud's description of the boy who finds it self-evident that "a genital like his own is to be attributed to everyone he knows." This "phallic prerogative" serves, in the case of Hobbes, to write women out of his account of the state of nature and civil society. In the case of Mill, it assimilates women to itself in the form of liberal feminism. In Marx, it issues in a failure to understand labor fully, along with a replication of a sexual division of labor which will not and cannot acknowledge "women's work" even as it legislates it. To the extent that Marx's "materialist" theory fails to engage with the complex substratum of necessity in human affairs and relations, it fails dismally both as an account of extant social reality and as a proposal for revolution. But the problem here is not simply women's absence as gendered and sex-specific persons. For this absence is orchestrated by the silent presumption that masculinity is the norm. To bring women back in to political theory requires also that we "bring men back in." To do this is, as the sociologist David Morgan has written, "to take gender seriously."¹¹

Each of the theorists studied here exemplifies the "problem of difference" explored in chapter I. On the one

hand, each may be charged guilty for having taken it for granted. That is, each theorist replicates, unself-consciously, features of his social environment and intellectual inheritance which are built on presumptions of sexual difference. On the other hand, each fails to appreciate the ways in which "difference" puts pressure on his assumptions and formulations concerning "human" requirements and possibilities. As the argument in chapter I was designed to suggest, women's "otherness" is not simply the false positing of a women's nature which can be rectified by policy changes, "role" switches and non-sexist language. It is also a "true" characterization of women's experiences in male-dominated, gender-differentiated society, secured by centuries of differential activities and interests. At this point in Western history, "difference" is something other and more than an inconvenient and unwanted skin which "liberated" men and women can shed with some good old-fashioned will power a la Mill. It is part of the very fabric of culture, social structure, subjectivity and identity. Identity itself is constructed on the terrain and with the materials of gender differences. I would like to suggest, along the lines of some of the French feminists (see Appendix B), that "difference" preserves some critical counter truths. But this is a difference that must be reappropriated with a twist. Shoshana Felman has put it this way:

Defined by man, the conventional polarity of masculine and feminine names woman as a metaphor of man The rhetorical hierarchization of the very opposition between the sexes is then such that woman's difference is suppressed being totally subsumed by the reference of the feminine to masculine identity.¹²

On this view, attempts to write difference out of political theory should be as suspect as efforts to reinvigorate it as a reflecting metaphor for masculinity. Hence, Mill's feminism is disturbing not simply because it is a limited feminism (i.e., it fails to engage with the evident needs of working class women), but because it offers emancipation in exchange for female-feminine specificity. Such an exchange is wildly premature and full of problems. At this historical point, what it offers is nothing other than the legitimated imposition of the phallic prerogative.

Masculinity as Ideology

Graeme Duncan's reflections on social theory provide an especially helpful way of initially situating this discussion of masculinity as ideology:

My own belief . . . is that it is impossible to produce a substantial social theory which is free of prejudice, and which does not rest upon a mass of anticipatory and excluding decisions at different stages along the way, including the beginning Doubting that men are, or can be, sufficiently disinterested or omniscient to see the world steadily and see it whole, I must admit nonetheless that it is conceivable that things will be different one day. But hitherto the world has looked strikingly different from the different places that men [sic] occupy in it. It looks different from a peasant's hut, a labourer's tenement, an executive's split-level house, a

president's palace, a monk's cell, or from the various prisons which woman has occupied historically. These differences of vision, which are not related solely to wealth or social positions, should be at least chastening to bullies and dogmatists and bureaucrats. And hitherto efforts to establish one true view of the world have not resulted from argument, persuasion and imaginative endeavor, but from the readiness of certain men--perhaps under the guidance of the gods, or of some political fantasy--to impose their will on the remainder.¹³

Duncan's comments are intended to remind us of two important things about social theory: its inevitable partiality and its embeddedness within particular locations which yield particular outlooks. If the world looks "strikingly different from the different places that men occupy in it," it must also look strikingly different from the different places that men and women occupy in it. And the "places" that we inhabit are not just (!) the places of labor, leisure, family life and social relations; we must also consider the terrain of gender identity itself as differentiated territory. The very ways in which that "space" and its inhabitants are constructed and perceived is different. Masculine space is open and uncluttered; more often than not, it is structured in linear hierarchical terms. Feminine space is web-like, inhabited by diverse cross-currents of affiliation.¹⁴ The masculine ego is well-defined and has an interest in protecting his boundaries from violations. The feminine ego is more amorphous, complexly embedded in relationships that tend to obscure a singular sense of self. A final

comment on Duncan's assessment of social theory: thus far, efforts to establish "one true view" have been the efforts of men. This phenomenon may be understood as something more than a reflection of the fact that up until now, at least, privileged men have been the only persons in a position to attempt such an imposition of the will. That is, masculine gender identity already contains a predisposition to behave in this way. Acton's characterization of power--"absolute power corrupts absolutely"--might require some gender-specific modification.¹⁵

In Chapter II I made a promissory claim concerning the notion of 'masculinity as world view' which should by now have been made good, or nearly so. I have chosen to utilize and defend this notion for several reasons. First, I want to argue that masculinity, understood in ideal-type terms, has a characteristic structure, that it is something more than a vaguely defined sense of identity with some kind of unspecified relationship to or effect on political theory. Secondly, I want to underscore the (potential) ubiquity of masculinity in modern western political thought. While that is a claim that extends beyond the limited scope of this analysis, it is a claim worth taking seriously for future study. The notion of masculinity as world view may be of analytic help to those who decide to explore the question of this ubiquity in greater detail.

The notion of masculinity as world view also raises some important (although tentative) critical questions about the historical and thematic periodization of political theory. If a masculine world view is found in the works of political theorists other than those examined here, what will or should the criteria be for distinguishing them from each other? If those feminists working in history have begun to notice that each newly "progressive" era in West has found more potent means for dominating women, what does this suggest for our understanding of the history of political and social theory?¹⁶ Such questions might also have a significant bearing on our framing of the "problem of modernity". To the extent that modernity is tied up with the ethos of "self-assertion", with the problems of the "self-made man", is it a problem for women? Do women experience modernity in this form? Might it be a masculine problematic? Would thinking along these lines enable us to understand it any better?¹⁷

Returning now to the issue of masculinity as world view, we must be able to identify, however crudely, a subset of beliefs, attitudes and goals which characterize masculinity as a world view. I offer the following schematization, with a caveat that must be taken seriously. It is this: I have argued against the reductionistic tendency to presume that gender translates

automatically into the substance and style of thinking in political theory. Instead, I have invoked gender as an irreducible ground of thinking and cognition, but as a ground which may and has been mediated in a variety of ways. The prescriptions of gender are also, in many ways, impossible and internally inconsistent prescriptions.¹⁸

This approach mitigates against any kind of extensive and neat list-making. When we "look" for masculinity in political theory, we must proceed with a "feeling for" "the idiosyncratic vocabulary of the inner man" which has been translated into public language.¹⁹ This is very different from proceeding with a checklist of masculine attributes to match up against the texts with which we are working. With this cautionary note in mind, I would offer the following as general attributes of masculine ideology on the basis of my work with Hobbes, J.S. Mill and Marx:

- 1) Mothers do not, as a rule, exist for the purposes of political theory; neither do the activities associated with biological reproduction.
- 2) The human subject is a male-masculine (just like me) subject.
- 3) Life is a struggle between usually conflicting persons and goals and in relation to a recalcitrant and often hostile nature.
- 4) Thinking is adversarial and takes place in relation to a resistant reality and fellow adversarial

thinkers. There are many ways of breaking down this resistance: we can rearrange the parts of reality to reconstruct cause-effect relations; we can peel away the levels of appearances to find reality underneath. Those who fail to see reality as I do are either stupid or corrupt. In either case, they are dangerous and must be opposed.

5) The point of life is to minimize human dependence on nature and fellow human beings. To the extent that we can achieve this, we are actualizing our humanity.

I have sought to show that these elements are widely shared between Hobbes, Mill and Marx, although diversely and specifically articulated by each theorist, and that they are systematically interconnected. Their common point of origin is located in the acquisition of a masculine identity vis à vis the (m)other. I have also argued, in each chapter and in the opening pages of this concluding chapter, that these elements of masculine ideology are central to the conceptual schemes of each theorist, and that they have a wide and deep influence on their theories. Finally, there is no need to belabor the obvious centrality of these elements to important issues of human life and to metaphysical issues. They are at the core of Hobbes's conception of civil society, Marx's view of labor, and Mill's view of liberal democracy.

In this work, I have tried to demonstrate that the

construction of socio-political problems and their solutions by Hobbes, Marx and Mill rests on an anthropological foundation that is identifiably masculine. Each theorist works with a "cherished conception of the self"²⁰ which imbibes aspects of masculine identity. While these aspects are elaborated in significantly different ways, we can also understand them as elements of the same multifaceted frame. The point of such an analysis is not to lump each theorist together into an undifferentiated collection of "masculine thinkers". Such a move erases more than it reveals. On the other hand, it is plausible to suggest that the concept of "masculine ideology" enables us to understand them simultaneously as distinct thinkers partaking in a discursive substratum, i.e., a kind of pre-conscious conversation with its own necessary and limiting horizon. I have attempted to bring this discourse to the surface of consciousness. In effect, we can appreciate the uniqueness of each theorist in the new light that is cast by the suggestion that they also share a set of similar concerns which evolve out of a preoccupation with the health and well-being of a masculine subject who, as such, is located in the world in specific ways. We can also begin to chart the deficiencies of each theorist's work with respect to these shared, if differently elaborated, concerns. Such a critique proceeds out of a different ontological experience or standpoint,

that of women.

A Different Reality²¹

The self-other opposition is, as we have seen, central to the construction of masculine identity and deeply implicated in the dichotomies of post-Enlightenment Western philosophical thought.²² "The construction of the self in opposition to another who threatens one's very being"²³ cannot help but be felt in an intellectual tradition inhabited predominantly by men. How might feminine "difference" be invoked in critical contrast to the intellectual constructs of masculinity? An obvious starting point is in the process of feminine identity acquisition where "girls form their self-concepts in large part through identification with their first significant other(s) who share the same socially defined possibilities of a female body."²⁴ A likely result of this experience is that "the self-other distinction is neither symbolized by a distinction between the sexes, nor does it involve the assumption that the self and the other possess opposing characteristics."²⁵ Instead, argues Carolyn Whitbeck, the daughter-mother relationship unfolds between beings who are in some important sense analogous. This provides a very different starting point for cognitive development, one that is relations-based and which must subsequently be

concerned with the scope and limits of the analogy between the self and the other rather than with questions of identity and difference, strictly conceived. An understanding of differentiation that does not require strict opposition could be characterized as "a multifactorial interactive model."²⁶

Some would argue that this early psychological experience provides a different ontological ground, one that enables a seeing of the Other as "distinct and different in some respects" without being an opposite.²⁷ Working such an ontological proposal out is quite difficult, however:

The difficulty is that the terminology in which the new ontology is to be articulated is automatically interpreted in terms of the accepted ontology, so that one is always at the risk of having one's statements construed either as nonsense, or as a quaint phrasing of what are familiar truths according to the old ontology.²⁸

If this alternative feminist ontology is taken as a mirror-image of the masculine one, nothing will have been gained. A mirror image conception would maintain the originally problematic masculine cognitive structure; furthermore, its "alternative" form of cognition and rationality would be unable to provide limiting or distinguishing criteria. That is, all differentiation would become "mushed out" into one giant undifferentiated agglomeration. A preserving of the notion of differentiation, along with the introduction of the notion

of analogous thinking processes, provides instead a different process of differentiation, rather than the "alternative" of no differentiation at all.

To argue for and attempt to delineate an alternative ontological ground along these lines is by no means to confine such an experience to women (or to assume that all women experience it and know it):

Although a certain history of relationships may incline a person to seek out other relationships and practices that embody a similar ontological outlook, people may become convinced of the superiority of a particular ontology and seek the relationships and practices consistent with that view.²⁹

Sara Ruddick has made a similar point in her discussion of maternal thinking.³⁰

Whitbeck's initial effort to explore a "different ontology" is echoed in Isaac Balbus's notion of a "post-instrumental" mode of symbolization, where our relations to others and to nature are no longer objectified, but partake of a mutual recognition of shared and differentiated subjectivities. Significantly, each attempt is rooted in an analysis of the unfolding self-other relation in infancy and early childhood. "Thinking," writes Jane Flax, "is a form of activity which cannot be treated in isolation from other forms of human activity, including the forms of human activity which in turn shape the humans who think."³¹ When we consider such "shaping activities", parenting and early

socialization come immediately to mind.

"Difference" may also be explored on the adult terrain of reproduction and labor. Mary O'Brien has made a cogent argument for gender-differentiated reproductive experience and consciousness, which is implicated in our sense of time, history and bodily consciousness.³² Significantly, the sex- and gender-differentiated aspects of this experience seem to recapitulate and reinforce the earlier "lessons" of gender identity acquisition. Hence, male reproductive consciousness, according to O'Brien, is more likely to center around feelings of dis-connection and alienation; subsequent efforts to "mediate" this experience have taken the historical form of compensatory efforts to insure paternity. Patriarchal versions of paternity, like masculine gender identity, are bound up with efforts to deny the original power of women. Female reproductive experience, on the other hand, partakes of biological continuity and bodily experiences that mitigate against a dualistic classification scheme. Sara Ruddick's work on maternal thinking focuses directly on the activities of mothering and suggests that this experience generates particular "interests" and forms of knowledge appropriate to those interests.³³ Interests in the preservation, growth and acceptability of the child generate a cognitive orientation that must be flexible, humble, cheerful, and complexly caring. Maternal thinking is embedded in an

environment of constant change, generated by the inevitable growth and maturity of children. This reality is rarely static or predictable. Control is simultaneously necessary and impossible. It is exercised within a constantly shifting environment, made unpredictable by a larger social order over which mothers have little control, as well as by the inevitable development of children.

Moving on to the sexual division of labor more broadly conceived, Dorothy Smith and Nancy Hartsock, among others, have argued that women's work provides a mediation with nature, particularity and contingency that is all too often hidden and presupposed within the frame of men's work:

. . . the unity of mental and manual labor and the directly sensuous nature of much of women's work leads to a more profound unity of mental and manual labor, social and natural worlds, than is experienced by the male worker in capitalism.³⁴

Women keep house, bear, and care for children, look after him when he is sick, and in general provide for the logistics of his bodily existence. But this marriage aspect of women's work is only one side of a more general relation. Women work in and around the professional and managerial scene in analogous ways. They do those things which give concrete form to the conceptual activities. . . . At almost every point, women mediate for men the relation between the conceptual mode of action and the actual concrete forms on which it depends. Women's work is interposed between the abstracted modes and the local and particular actualities in which they are necessarily anchored. Also, women's work conceals from men acting in the abstract mode just this anchorage.³⁵

These and many other efforts provide an elaboration of "difference" with the intent not simply of documenting women's heretofore hidden activities and interests, but of

bringing these to bear on dominant and often male-monopolized practices and interests. Muriel Rukeyser provided a poetic intuition of the likely results of such an interchange. "The world would split open" because, as it is currently constituted, masculine paradigms prevail.³⁶ These paradigms are called into critical question by the varieties of expression of the "human condition" elicited by female experience. But Rukeyser's poem also imagines that a woman is able to "tell the truth about her life". As such, she must have access to and be able to use the tools of truth-telling: language, of course, but more specifically, concepts which are capable of conveying the rich and "messy" complexity of her experience. "Womanly thinking" requires "womanly concepts."³⁷ Such concepts, of course, have not been readily at hand for women entering previously male-defined and inhabited disciplines. Those of us working in political and social theory are in the midst of the difficult and exciting work of re-thinking the conceptual apparatus we have inherited. An understanding of the connections between gender and modern political thought suggests that such a task is simultaneously necessary and immense.

Political Theory and the Feminist Critic:
What Should Political Theory Really Be Now?

If masculine gender is in fact a significant, but hidden, constituent feature of the discourse of modern western political theory, this suggests that efforts to re-right the sexual imbalance in political theory cannot and should not be elaborated by simply adding women to that discourse. For a discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, is "like a conversation in which utterances are abstracted from particular participants located in particular spatio-temporal settings."³⁸ And men and women, as gendered subjects, are located in different settings even as they are differentially located within similar settings. This is true not simply of the places they inhabit, but also of the introjected object-settings that constitute gendered identity itself. Much more than a simple acknowledgement of women's existence and presence is called for. For our existence, identity and outlook as women, as gender-specific subjects, is simultaneously denied by and threatening to academic discourse.

Women who have or who are attempting to settle on the academic terrain have tended to do so in one of two ways: They have repudiated their identities as women, as sex- and gender-specific subjects, to become 'one of the boys'. Or, they have settled on the fringes of the territory, as

rabble-rousers, weirdos, harpies. Such women are often seen as lacking in "professional" discipline, commitments, capacities, and "colleagiality". Those who attempt to avoid either location often settle on a "line of fault", marked by "a disjuncture between experience and the forms in which experience is socially expressed."³⁹ The dilemma is this: in adopting the discourse of the academic disciplines, we are often forced to give up our identities as women; in failing to adopt the "talk" (along with the "walk") our identity as intellectuals is threatened.

There was, we discovered, a circle effect--men attend to and treat as significant what men say and have said. The circle extends back in time and as far as our records reach. What men were doing has been relevant to men, was written by men about men for men. Men listened and men listen to what one another say. A tradition is formed, traditions form, in a discourse with the past within the present. The themes, problematics, assumptions, metaphors, and images form as the circle of those present draws upon the work of those speaking from the past and builds it up to project it into the future. From this circle women have been almost entirely excluded. When admitted, it has been only by special license, and as individuals, never as representatives of their sex. They could share in this circle only by receiving its terms and relevances. These have been and still are to a large extent the terms and relevances of a discourse among men.⁴⁰

The impersonal mode of academia simultaneously masks the gendered voices of its male practitioners as it confers "abstract" and "impersonal" legitimacy of them.⁴¹ As a result, women in academia often find themselves on unsteady ground, threatened on one side by their delegitimization as

intellectuals and on the other by their attempts to work with a "forced set of categories into which we must stuff the awkward and resistant actualities of our world."⁴² Attempts to articulate female experience take place on this fault line. It is a mode of inquiry which is simultaneously hazardous, necessary and promising. The hazards consist not simply in the threat of intellectual de-legitimization, but also in the unwary adoption of disciplinary agendas which already constitute their universes of observation.⁴³ The promises of such inquiry exist not only for women but also for the critical self-reflection of men and the disciplines themselves. In "disrupting the transparency and misleadingly self-evident universality of its male enunciation,"⁴⁴ attempts to articulate female experiences are highlighting the taken-for-granted location of academic disciplines and discourses in a space of male experience. Hence:

The critic who intrudes into the father-son dialogue as a female, that unholy ghost who would display the strategies of the patristic heritage and dispel the magic of men's naming, necessarily speaks as a dissident.⁴⁵

The necessity for such an inquiry, considered in terms of the dissident female academic in political theory, may be adduced by reflecting on Norman Jacobson's characterization of "great" political theory:

. . . the genius of all great political thinkers is to make public that which is of private concern, to translate into public language the more special,

idiosyncratic vocabulary of the inner man in hopes of arriving at public solutions which might then be internalized by each of us.⁴⁶

To deal with matters of private concern and experience which might illuminate political problems and dilemmas, within the context of a discourse that can not admit to its own gender-specific texture, is a nearly impossible endeavor.⁴⁷

One of the foremost obstacles confronting the feminist dissident in political theory is the likely perception that her work is illegitimate because it raises concerns and issues that could not possibly have been available to the theorists she is reassessing. The methodological appeal to historical embeddedness is a powerful one, for it cautions against the violation of the integrity of the political theorist as a historically and culturally embedded subject. As feminists, we are (or should be) sensitive to issues such as these, for they call on the capacities for empathy, respect and imaginative projection that women are all too well versed in. On the other hand, to imagine that we can ever fully enter a strange and different time or place contains a touch of abstract, disembodied arrogance. "For we bring ourselves with us wherever we go; we cannot ever deliberately forget the voices that have become 'internally persuasive'."⁴⁸ We cannot, in other words, deny or dodge the life that we have with various works. For it is this, along with our preoccupation with

contemporary political and social issues, that marks the temper of political theory in the present. In reading the classics of political theory as women and as feminists, we need to embrace "the work as a whole--the complete imaginative offering, the experience the work makes possible for us."⁴⁹ This is a move beyond the earlier one of documenting "instances" of sexism. It gets us into the heart of the political imagination in the West. And we are entitled to search for and to identify "failures of the imagination", particularly when such failures continue to constitute timely ideological differences that carry significant import for the political fates of human beings. Certainly, we are entitled to read these works as women rather than as abstract intellects. The difference between this activity and what men in the tradition have been doing all along is simply that, until recently, we have been eavesdroppers on a conversation that was not meant for us, even as it affected us.

Freedom from male hegemony, I believe, cannot proceed without reference to the languages and discourses we have inherited. Our freedom from the interpretations of the past depends on our freedom to reinterpret the past.⁵⁰ The reinterpretation of the Western political imagination is a vast project. Such a re-thinking will come, in part, through re-interpretive efforts, along with attention to human practices, desires, needs and possibilities that have

been unjustly ignored:

. . . little can be contributed by disassociating ourselves from what have been women's practices, and the women engaged in them, since we will then either ignore those practices or inadvertently perpetuate the false account that masculinist culture gives of them.⁵¹

A simultaneous focus on women's practices and the inherited discourse of political theory may help us to resist the prevailing tendency "to deny the existence of the other to a greater or lesser degree or to make any existing other into the self."⁵² This tendency, of course, ramifies not simply on women in the West, but on a host of other peoples and cultures besides our own, as well as on variously oppressed males in our culture. It is also a tendency that must be resisted by white middle- and upper-class women who are less prepared than they should be to listen seriously to what women of other classes, races, and cultural backgrounds have to say.⁵³ Finally, the denial and appropriation of the other would also seem to constitute the destructive and suicidal trajectory of western modernity itself. To the extent that a vigorous feminist re-invocation of "difference" in the name of the "other" is promoted, feminism promises a critical re-thinking of the post-Enlightenment legacy to which political theory is heir.

If, as Charles Taylor has said, political theory boils down to efforts to answer the (deceptively simple) question, "What is really happening in society?"⁵⁴ then

the absence of and failure to acknowledge female voices in modern western political theory is an issue of fundamental importance. And the question of whether political theory can account for existing practices must open even further to the question of the repertoire of practices that fall within our field of vision as political theorists. A recent collection of timely new writings in political theory, entitled What Should Political Theory Be Now? contains nothing which is by or substantially about women.⁵⁵ "Political theory", it would seem, is not overly preoccupied with women. Feminists, however, must be more generous; we cannot afford a reciprocal attitude.

In the immediate short run, the aim of this work has been to substantiate in greater depth and with more detail feminist intimations that Western political theory is masculinist. The longer range aim of this work, one that requires a fairly thorough interpretive "airing out" before it can be enacted, is to contribute to efforts to provide a conceptual home for women--all women, it must be stressed--within the enterprise of political theory. Such an effort will be a long time in the making. In the meantime, we must insist on the vital significance of "difference". Otherwise we capitulate to a politics of sameness, which is a capitulation to the politics of masculinity.

FOOTNOTES

¹Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology for Women," in The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge, eds. Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), p. 138.

²Nannerl Keohane, "Speaking From Silence: Women and the Science of Politics," in A Feminist Perspective in the Academy: The Difference It Makes, eds. Elizabeth Langland and Walter Gove (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 86-100.

³See Coppélia Kahn, "Excavating 'Those Dim Minoan Regions': The Maternal Subtext in Patriarchal Literature," in Diacritics 12 (2), pp. 32-41.

⁴See Sandra Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality? A Survey of Issues," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 43-63; and Genevieve Lloyd, "Reason, Gender and Morality in the History of Philosophy," in Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences 50 (3), pp. 490-513.

⁵See the following: Nancy Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (New York and London: Longman, 1983), esp. ch. 10; Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (Boston, London, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," in Feminist Studies 6 (2): 342-367; and Joyce Trebilcot, ed., Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983).

⁶For the first contemporary effort to do this, see Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking".

⁷For a discussion of abstract masculinity, see Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power, esp. pp. 240-247.

⁸Elizabeth Berg, "The Third Woman," in Diacritics 12 (2), p. 18.

⁹Charles Taylor, Hegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 557.

¹⁰Cf. Agnes Heller, The Theory of Need in Marx (London: Allison and Busby, 1974).

¹¹David Morgan, "Men, Masculinity and the Process of Sociological Enquiry," in Doing Feminist Research, ed. Helen Roberts (London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 94

¹²Shoshana Felman, "Rereading Fertility," in Yale French Studies 62 (1981), p. 25.

¹³Graeme Duncan, Marx and Mill: Two Views of Social Conflict and Social Harmony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 13. I take issue with Duncan's characterization of women's prison-like social locations. Such a characterization facilitates the mistaken notion that the task at hand involves nothing but release. It contributes to an overly facile neglect of women's standpoints.

¹⁴This imagery is borrowed from Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

¹⁵See Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power, pp. 155-185 and Jane Flax, "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 245-281.

¹⁶See Joan Kelly-Gadol, "The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (4): 809-824. Michel Foucault's reinterpretation of modern western history would seem to support this claim even more generally. On this view, political and social "progress" for men has been a bit of an illusion, too. See Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York: Random House, 1979).

¹⁷See Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?"

¹⁸For all of the emphasis on masculine self-sufficiency, men, it would seem, need women, perhaps even more than women need men. See Jessie Bernard, The Future of Marriage (New York: Bantam Books, 1973). And self-abnegation in women makes for neither good nurture,

18 (cont'd) nor for developed ethical capacities. See Gilligan, In a Different Voice. See also Andrew Tolson, The Limits of Masculinity: Male Identity and Women's Liberation (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

19 I have borrowed the term "feeling for" from the title of Evelyn Keller's biography of Barbara McClintock. For a description of the "feeling for" methodology as an attempt to grasp the parts through an apprehension of the whole, to attain a global intuitive insight, in contrast to the inductive reasoning model, see Stephen J. Gould, "Triumph of a Naturalist," review of A Feeling for the Organism: The Life and Work of Barbara McClintock, by Evelyn Keller, in the New York Review of Books 29 March 1984, pp. 3-7. The second quoted phrase comes from Norman Jacobson, Pride and Solace: The Functions and Limits of Political Theory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 100.

20 William Connolly, "Personal Identity and Political Interpretation". Paper delivered to the Rutgers Conference on Public Language and Political Education, April 1978.

21 I have borrowed this phrase from Carolyn Whitbeck, "A Different Reality: Feminist Ontology," in Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, ed. Carol C. Gould (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 64-88.

22 See Flax, "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious"; Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power; Lloyd, "Reason, Gender and Morality"; O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction; Whitbeck, "A Different Reality".

23 Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power, p. 241.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., p. 76.

28 Ibid., p. 74.

29 Ibid., pp. 73-74.

30 "Maternal Thinking".

³¹Flax, "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious," p. 248.

³²The Politics of Reproduction.

³³"Maternal Thinking".

³⁴Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power, p. 243.

³⁵Smith, "A Sociology for Women," p. 168.

³⁶Muriel Rukeyser, "Käthe Kollwitz," in Voices of Women: 3 Critics on 3 Poets on 3 Heroines, ed. Cynthia Navaretta (New York: Midmarch Associates, 1980), pp. 13-21.

³⁷The term "womanly thinking" comes from Sara Ruddick's revised and abbreviated version of "Maternal Thinking," in Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions, eds. Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom (New York and London: Longman, 1982), pp. 76-94.

³⁸Smith, "A Sociology for Women", p. 147.

³⁹Ibid., p. 135.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 137.

⁴¹See Marcia Westcott, "Feminist Criticism of the Social Sciences," in Harvard Educational Review, 49 (4): 422-30.

⁴²Smith, "A Sociology for Women," p. 141.

⁴³See Smith, "A Sociology for Women" for an especially fine appreciation and exploration of this point. See also Mary O'Brien, "Between Critique and Community," review of Money, Sex and Power, by Nancy Hartsock, in The Women's Review of Books 1 (7), pp. 9-11.

⁴⁴Felman, "Rereading Feminity," p. 21.

⁴⁵Domna Stanton, "The Fiction of Préciosité and the Fear of Women," in Yale French Studies 62 (1981), p. 107.

⁴⁶Jacobson, Pride and Solace, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁷But not totally, of course; Jean Elshtain, Nancy Hartsock, Jane Flax and Mary O'Brien have been especially adept at working through the political theory literature without getting "lost" in it.

⁴⁸Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism," in The Politics of Interpretation, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 77.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁰I am highly indebted to Booth's exploration of this issue in literary theory. It has many obvious applications to the work that we do in political theory.

⁵¹Whitbeck, "A Different Reality," p. 66.

⁵²Ibid., p. 75.

⁵³See the following: Leila Ahmed, "Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem," in Feminist Studies 8 (3): 521-534; Toni Cade, ed., The Black Woman: An Anthology (New York: New American Library, 1970); Cherrië Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color (Watertown, Ma.: Persephone Press, 1981); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies (Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1982).

⁵⁴Charles Taylor, "Political Theory and Practice," in Social Theory and Political Practice, ed. Christopher Lloyd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 61.

⁵⁵John S. Nelson, ed., What Should Political Theory Be Now? Essays From the Shambaugh Conference on Political Theory (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

A P P E N D I X A
GENDER AND PSYCHO-HISTORY

In the absence of vigilant care and critical discrimination in its application, the interpretive approach developed here is susceptible to a number of dangerous abuses and significant criticisms related to such abuses. The dangers derive primarily from 1) problems attending the cross-disciplinary application of psychoanalytic theory, and 2) methodological issues within history and anthropology concerning trans-historical and cross-cultural applications of contemporary notions of gender. These problems will be explored below in the effort to anticipate potential cogent criticisms of this work and to provide as rigorous a model of interpretation as possible.

Psychoanalysis has frequently been called to task for its reductionistic and over-determined view of childhood experiences, especially those relating to sexuality. One of the greatest abuses of which the psychoanalytic method is susceptible is the production of "seamless web" types of explanation, which purport to account for nearly every aspect of culture and social life (individual and collective) in early psycho-dynamic terms. Hence, revolutions can be characterized as revolts against the Oedipal father by jealous sons and works of art are

susceptible to interpretation strictly in terms of their unconscious or sublimated contents. Because its subject matter--a psyche that is neither wholly conscious to itself nor subject to prevailing standards of rationality--is simultaneously elusive and widely applicable to a vast array of human activities and concerns, psychoanalysis could conceivably be used to account for everything, from the arena of the bedroom, to those of the battlefield and economic marketplace. Furthermore, objections to psychoanalytic interpretations of social phenomena can be written off in therapeutic terms as instances of "denial". This, of course, leaves the critic thoroughly boxed in.

Such reductionism is made possible within a frame of explanation which accords, rightfully I believe, special importance to early patterns of experience and their rendering into meaningful but unconscious memories which we may unwittingly repeat and re-experience. It is unfortunate that the dangers of reductionism accompany those features of psychoanalytic theory which also make it an exciting, expansive, and insight-producing approach. As in the case of Marx, Freud's theory has simultaneously provided the tools for expanded critical analysis and fetishized social theory. Critical social theorists must learn to appreciate and insist on the difference.

The difference, I would suggest, consists in the claims made within various explanations regarding the range and

focus of their explanatory power. It is one thing, for example, to argue that the international nuclear arms buildup can be thoroughly captured within a frame of explanation that focuses on little boys' needs to demonstrate their phallic powers. It is quite another thing, however, to point out that the arms race may contain traces of this phenomenon, or that it is partially constituted in these terms.¹

Recent and important critiques have surfaced with regard to the current emphasis of object-relations theory on pre-Oedipal experiences, which are even more elusive, more likely to be deeply situated in the remoter regions of the unconscious, than the Oedipal dynamics of orthodox Freudian theory. Dinnerstein's analysis is especially susceptible to charges of reductionism and over-determinism because it moves rather fluidly between different levels and arenas of social life. Her vivid rendition of the Kleinian version of the neonate's early relationship to the mother and of the dramatic breakup of symbiotic unity is often rapidly transposed into the dynamics of adult heterosexual relationships, and the anti-ecological and pro-militaristic posturings of male political leadership. Critics are correct to be wary of an overly neat transposition, such that adult life and culture are nothing but re-enactments of pre-Oedipal dramas.² Such an account is unnecessarily static and pessimistic: it grants

little in the way of active mediation on the part of adults and children who are clearly more than overgrown infants, it detracts attention from socio-structural phenomena, and it fails to provide a plausible analysis of change.³

The simplified excesses of psychoanalytically-based explanations warrant the critical scrutiny and skepticism they have received. Such criticism, however, should not detract attention from the important place that psychoanalysis occupies in social theory. In providing an entrée to questions of latent meaning and complex psychological processes, psychoanalysis has a unique and important role in contemporary efforts to understand human activities as fully as possible. While we cannot abide psychological reductionism, we cannot do without psychoanalysis as a rich, if partial, source of speculative and reconstructive efforts to interpret the human drama in all of its complexity.

For the purposes of this study, which include the effort to understand a portion of what might be termed "the unconscious" of political theory,⁴ psychoanalysis is an indispensable tool of analysis. This interpretive effort is by no means intended to be exhaustive or inclusive. I do not claim to be offering a preemptive analysis which supercedes all others. I do, however, argue that gender can be appropriately invoked as an interest-base and ideological foundation in the historical elaboration of

political theory; that it is not incidental to the style and content of discourses which are materially produced and situated in genderically differentiated societies. In short, I argue that the study of political theory can be usefully enriched through an interpretive effort which is focused on gender and, as such, requires the conceptual tools provided by psychoanalysis.

Aside from the critique of psychological reductionism, which I will make every effort to avoid, the analysis of masculinity as ideology is subject to another major critical onslaught, one that has also been levelled against psycho-history. Because my analysis includes recourse to a thinker historically situated in pre-contemporary times, while it relies on a fairly contemporary version and understanding of gender identity, I am obliged to assume the burden of defense against existing criticisms of psychohistory. However, because my study begins with Hobbes and is therefore situated entirely within the frame of the modern political theory tradition in the West, the burden of proof here is not enormous. Nonetheless, many of the issues at stake in the disputes surrounding psycho-history bear in significant ways on the methodological tenets of this study.

The historical troublespots associated with the study of gender and psychoanalytic conceptions of psychodynamic processes derive from 1) the fragmentary and incomplete

nature of historical accounts of pre-industrial social life in the West, and 2) epistemological disputes within the disciplines of history and anthropology having to do with the study of the "differentness" of distant persons and cultures. Each of these problems will be treated in turn.

While Freudian and post-Freudian analyses of modern versions of gender identity root their material in the dynamics of contemporary nuclear family life, to which social analysts have ample research access, many features of pre-industrial Western life have been lost to historical scrutiny.⁵ The paucity of information regarding the everyday life of the non-elite and illiterate masses of the West is astounding. Notably missing are rich and reliable accounts of the lives of women and children, as well as illiterate men who, until recently, were in no position to contribute to the official historical record. That a historian with the credentials and resources of Peter Laslett cannot definitively answer the question as to whether starvation was a significant factor in the lives of England's pre-industrial masses is illustrative of how much we do not know about the basic existence of our ancestors only a few centuries back. The same observation holds for questions concerning the emotional everyday lives of the pre-industrial masses. Commenting on the strange disjuncture between the evidence in paintings of masses of children and their virtual absence in written accounts of

pre-industrial life, Laslett writes:

These crowds and crowds of little children are strangely absent from the written record There is something mysterious about the silence of all these multitudes of babes in arms, toddlers and adolescents in the statements men made at that time about their own experience . . . we know very little indeed about child nurture in pre-industrial times, and no confident promise can be made of knowledge yet to come.⁶

One thing we can surmise from Laslett's awe in the face of this mysterious absence of children is that literate males of the elite had little to do with them. This deduction, however, tells us little about qualitative features of parent-child interaction within the fabric of everyday life. One small bit of relevant information, however, is that women appear to have been the primary caretakers during the early years of children's lives.

The few explicit accounts that we do have of pre-industrial child-rearing chronicle the experiences of the elite. For example, David Hunt's study of the psychology of family life in early modern France relies extensively on records kept of the rearing and education of Louis XIII. In his extensive study of The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, Lawrence Stone apologizes for the weak and circumstantial evidence concerning the lower classes, most of which he chose to eliminate from the abridged version of his work. What has been gleaned by noteworthy historians of the family such as Laslett, Stone, Shorter, Ariès, and Hunt is the result of painstaking

research, much of it in the form of demographic data culled from parish registers, and careful, hesitant conjecture. Indeed, most of what can be confidently attributed to pre-industrial family life in the West applies to a miniscule proportion of pre-industrial populations: the wealthy and literate males of the elite who had the means and leisure to document life as they saw it. We have inherited a history of self-constituting verbal activity which has privileged certain subjects at the expense of others.⁷

In spite of the obstacles, research on the pre-industrial Western family has proceeded with some measure of success due to refined procedures of data collection, attempts to establish an empathic connection with the experience of illiterate peoples,⁸ and the fact that many elite practices eventually trickled down to affect the behavior and aspirations of the emerging middle classes. Thanks to the pioneering work of Ariès, we are more critically cognizant of the historical specificity of concepts of childhood and intimate family relations, which did not even begin to emerge until the seventeenth century. Stone's efforts have been directed towards establishing the historical rise of affective individualism, and Laslett's emphasis is on the contrast between contemporary life in mass society and the village-bounded existence of our pre-industrial ancestors.

Together, these works force a critical appraisal of the taken-for-granted and cherished concepts of contemporary everyday life and discriminating care in their retrospective historical application. Differences between the medieval household, pre- and early-industrial, and modern families are now acknowledged as crucial points of contrast.

The evidence for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in western Europe seems to indicate the women were the nurturers and rearers of children, at least during the early years (up to the age of 7), although the quality of this care was markedly different from contemporary versions of maternal nurturance. As we know, infant mortality rates were high and children were not even regarded as human individuals until they had survived weaning.⁹ Childhood, if it existed at all in the pre-industrial world, was an exceedingly attenuated period, in contrast to our own version. By the age of seven, most children were let out as servants and apprentices to new households. So much for the idyllic misconception of pre-industrial tightly knit families bound for life to cottage, land and family. The elite practice of sending infants out into the countryside under the care of peasant wet nurses and (if they were fortunate enough to survive) putting them under the care of female nurses and male tutors (for sons) on their return home suggests that

parents and children of the aristocratic classes, as well as those of the hard-laboring masses, had brief, sporadic relations in comparison with our own. Finally, the image of the extended family household has been effectively debunked as a myth. High mortality rates, the fact that patriarchal heads of households didn't retire until death claimed them, and the clear association between getting married and setting up an independent household conspired to reduce, rather than to enhance, cross-generational familial ties. Life expectancy in that time also mitigated against the likelihood of adults ever living long enough to become grandparents. In sum, the intense, affective, and protracted relations between parents and children, which are the hallmark of contemporary family life, comprise a relatively recent phenomenon in the West.¹⁰

The same may be said about affective relations between spouses. Husband-wife relations within the pre-industrial and early modern marriage appear cold and antagonistic in relation to our own.¹¹ Among the elite and emerging middle classes, marriages were arranged on economic, social and political grounds. The relationship between spouses was often reducible to the terms of a functional contract designed to strengthen family lines, holdings, and power. Expectations for happiness in marriage ran low and divorce was correspondingly rare, although re-marriage rates were high among widowers who were first-born sons and widows

with substantial dowries. Married men and women of the elite spent little time together. Once the nuptials had been effected, thereby cementing the economic and political ties of the families involved, procreation was the only remaining function meriting serious attention. Here, the main purpose was to provide a male heir. Given the high mortality rates of infants, exacerbated by the practice of sending them out to wet nurses, elite families produced many children in the hopes that at least one male heir would survive. Since female children were an economic liability, reproductive strategy must have been fraught with anxiety, frustration, and resentment on the part of marriage partners.

In non-elite households that were invariably the sites of productive activity, spouses probably had more contact with each other as partners in work. Laslett describes a typical household of 1619 in England which operated a bakery business and was comprised of the baker, his wife, four journeymen, two apprentices, two maidservants, and three or four offspring:

The only word used at that time to describe such a group of people was 'family'. The man at the head of the group, the entrepreneur, the employer, or the manager, was then known as the master or head of the family. He was father to some of its members and in place of father to the rest. There was no sharp distinction between his domestic and his economic functions. His wife was both his partner and his subordinate, a partner because she ran the family, took charge of the food, and managed the women-servants, a

subordinate because she was woman and wife, mother and in place of mother to the rest.¹²

According to Laslett, these patriarchal familial relations are "as old as the Greeks, as old as European history, and not confined to Europe."¹³ They involved the "subordination", "exploitation", and "obliteration of those who were young, or feminine, or in service".¹⁴ Within this historical setting, nearly everyone lived his or her life within a family--although not necessarily in the family of origin--that was ruled by a patriarchal figure.¹⁵ Characterizing the England of 1640 as an "association between the heads of such families, but an association largely confined to those who were literate, who had wealth and status,"¹⁶ Laslett also points out that the "head of the poorest family was at least the head of something."¹⁷

If life was largely lived within the bounds of family and village, we must also bear in mind that "the family" was not the privatized and emotionally resonant site that it is today. Situated in and comprising a cultural milieu radically different from that of our own mass society which relies on a public-private distinction, household members lived in a social world commingling labor, recreation, biological functions, emotional and instinctual yearnings and religious activities and sentiments in a rich tapestry of interchange which, to our eyes, appears as confusing,

chaotic and crowded as the roomless dwellings they inhabited, in and around which they worked, slept, fornicated, defecated, played and died.

While there is much that is strange and different to contemporary eyes in this account of pre-industrial family life, several features continue to strike an emotional resonance in our own age. The antipathy to women and marriage on the part of men, documented most convincingly by Hunt, persists, along with clear cut distinctions between male and female arenas of work and social life. And the social subordination of women to men, while less strict and ideologically overt today, continues to structure social organization, family life and ideology in identifiable ways. While some feminists have been justly criticized for misusing the term "patriarchy" to describe political arrangements between the sexes in modern society, one cannot fail but be struck by what evidently seem to be some shared parallels between the pre-industrial and industrial worlds or, as orthodox Marxists would have it, the sticky and stubborn residue of now "antiquated" social and familial relationships.

Similarities in male dominance and the sexual division of labor notwithstanding, they do not translate clearly into a historical analysis of gender. Contemporary theories of masculinity and femininity provide an account of gender identity acquisition which is secured within the

complex inter- and intra-psychic relations of an intensely affective white middle-class modern family life. As the historical literature previously reviewed indicates, the private affective family binding spouse to spouse and parents to children, providing the environment for projective and introjective psychic dynamics which constitute the fabric of contemporary identity, did not emerge in significant numbers among European populations until the eighteenth century. Also, contemporary psychoanalytic models of gender acquisition are embedded within a conceptual framework that presumes a host of related concepts which are historically suspect, even as they are precious and central to our way of life. These include notions of ego, individual identity and personality, childhood, parenthood, and sexual needs, some or all of which may not be trans-historically applicable. It is here that the charges levelled against psychohistory as a method that fails to deal with the unique "differentness" of distant peoples and cultures, as it uncritically projects the historically relative features of modern life onto our images of the past, should be noted and dealt with.

Psychohistorians have been criticized for presuming an immutability of human nature and social forms, a charge that is similar and related to criticisms of the Freudian notion of pre-social drives. The extreme version of the

critique of the immutability assumption leads to a position which argues the impossibility of historical discovery and interpretation. A human nature that is presumed to be thoroughly mutable and totally constituted within culture has no cross-cultural anchor points by which to usefully compare, contrast and highlight different versions of this nature. In its most extreme form, the mutability thesis yields a starkly solipsistic account that denies the possibility of knowing any others aside from the self. Many critics of psychohistory, while holding firm to the version of cultural mutability, are not willing to go the solipsistic route.¹⁸ Within this frame of analysis, solipsism is avoided by means of identifying intra-cultural regularities which constitute and characterize particular ways of life.¹⁹

Leaving solipsism out of the account, the issue may be simplified and broken down in the following way: either cultural differences are significant enough to influence perceptual tendencies and thereby create human beings in different cultures and historical periods with notably different perceptions of themselves and the worlds they inhabit, mitigating against the assumption of some singular human nature; or the biological and psychological homogeneity of culture-learning humans precludes such differences in the monumental sense. David Stannard pursues the implications of the former possibility thusly:

. . . if an individual in the past did not even perceive a person, events, or other seemingly "objective" phenomenon in the same way as does the modern historian, it would clearly be a mistake to apply retrospectively contemporary psychoanalytic or any other highly structured explanatory concepts of motivation to the historical figure's behavior.²⁰

The question of the cultural variability of perception, where perception is understood to be a type of dynamic screening process which both selects and helps to constitute objects of perception, including the perceiver as an object in relation to others, is extremely important and complex. Human beings are born into culture and are cognitively formed by rule-governed general belief systems that could be characterized as paradigm-like, much as they are formed by those language systems which significantly constitute and express their beliefs and desires. This characterization need not entail a tabula rasa model of development, unless one begins with the presumption of a strict nature-culture division. In this case, culture can be granted its formative role only in the absence of natural 'constraints'. If, however, the development of the human species and of individuals within that species is understood as the product of a complex and mutual interaction between natural and cultural factors, which are vitally interrelated, then the search for pre-cultural humanity, based on the notion that the rules governing particular cultures are purely arbitrary artifacts, impositions and distortions of an underlying human nature,

is as misplaced as the denial of any substratum of human nature and its cultural articulation and elaboration.²¹

As Clifford Geertz has argued, "what man [sic] is may be so entangled with where he [sic] is, and what he [sic] believes, that it is inseparable from them."²² The rejection of what he has termed the "uniformitarian view of man" has tended to result in extreme posturings within social science of cultural relativism. It is possible, however, to maneuver a more sophisticated and appropriate path through this material which avoids the joint mistakes and implications of relativism and an overly socialized account of the human subject.²³ On Geertz's view, such a method proceeds "by seeking in culture patterns themselves the defining elements of a human existence which although not constant in expression, are yet distinctive in character."²⁴ As the link between innate capacities, general predispositions, actual behaviors and elaborated meanings, culture provides the means for the study of human beings who necessarily complete themselves, in varied and particular ways, through rule-governed interpretive activity. On this view, the search for "bloodless universals" or the Everyman is as misplaced as the notion that cultures stand on their own as discrete entities which cannot be compared to each other because they have 'produced' human beings who are as different as night and day.

An epistemological and ontological stance such as Geertz's provides the most helpful and appropriate orientation to the study of "differentness", although it does not provide a methodological blueprint for the study of diverse cultures. Such a blueprint, in any case, is not on Geertz's agenda. We can now return to family history for an exploratory look at what this suggests for our interpretation of that history and its implications for the study of gender.

In reading the historical studies provided by Stone, Laslett, Ariès and others, we are immediately drawn to their insistent renditions of the essentially different sorts of lives lived by humans in the past. But we must then venture to ask, "how different?" The answer to this question is not automatically provided in the description of different cultures. Nor is it simply resolvable in empirical terms, since it involves recourse to complex interpretation at two levels. First, the reconstruction of beliefs from pre-industrial ages, based on incomplete records and involving a piecing together of a way of life which we do not have before us for complete inspection, could not possibly be engaged in strictly empirical terms. Secondly, "how different" involves recourse to our own belief systems (public and private), which are not amenable to understanding in strict empirical terms. If, in attempting to answer the "how different" question, we must

be wary of extrapolating our own experiences and rule-governed cultural logics and applying them to different eras, we must also be willing to look for similar or related patterns of experience and interpretation. In effect, we cannot help doing this. It is one of the characteristic ways in which we engage in the ongoing activity of interpretation which marks us as a species. Having no methodological guarantees or recipes, we must proceed as rigorously, carefully and empathically as possible.

If family history has taught us anything, it is that the family is not simply a passive product of social structure and that changes in family life do not proceed neatly and in tandem with other socio-cultural changes. Indeed, static difference turns out to be relatively easier to document than dynamic change is to explain. Intimations of new social relations and attitudes towards family life often precede their full-scale implementation by one or two centuries, suggesting that some individuals are prompted to mediate the disappointments, frustrations or contradictions of their times "ahead of schedule".²⁵ But how is it that such nonconforming desires are felt at all? Undue stress on the fundamental difference of earlier periods and cultures, along with an over-socialized view of the inhabitants of those cultures, cannot help us to get at this sort of question. For example, the rapidity with

which maternal breastfeeding took hold among the elite of England during the latter half of the eighteenth century suggests that under the surface of cultural mores and behaviors that excluded this practice, mothers were powerfully desirous of feeding and nurturing their children and that this may have been artificially thwarted by men.²⁶ The work of Shorter and Stone, among others, clearly suggests that family life evolved in part out of the desire for more privacy and intimacy between spouses and that this trend was initiated by the professional classes and the gentry.²⁷ Furthermore, the Marxist link between industrial capitalism and the nuclear family has been rendered increasingly problematic by the demonstrations of family historians that the ideology and practice of nuclear family life, including concepts of individualism, clearly pre-date the establishment of capitalism.

Psychoanalytic theory provides a means of understanding complex processes of social change through its theory of instincts which are both pre-social and necessarily shaped according to cultural norms. The Freudian argument for basic instinctual drives, somatically organized in terms of the stages of physical maturation in infants and children, suggests that humans are not simply plastic creatures who are completely constituted in terms of the indelible imprint of their cultures. Culture must also be understood

in terms of its various accommodations--be they repressive, sublimating or fairly accepting--to drives. Examples of the appropriate uses to which psychoanalytic theory may be put by historians are provided by the work of Hunt and Stone. Hunt makes a convincing argument for the primacy of the oral stage in the life of the seventeenth century French child and Stone uses parent-child interaction as a means of explaining the particular brand of affect characterizing seventeenth century England. His speculations on the relationship between extended sexual latency for young men and England's formidable military prowess are also compelling.

These historians have demonstrated some of the ways in which psychoanalysis provides an open-ended model for the exploration of diverse cultures, one that is simultaneously attuned to the substratum of human needs and to various cultural productions of needs and their satisfaction. The psychoanalytic notion of drives provides substructural links between various historical periods and cultures. And these drives must be taken into account when the question of "differentness" is raised. So too must those aspects of species-life (not in Marx's specialized sense) which characterize homo-sapiens as a biological collectivity.²⁸

Situated between the important particularities of different cultures and those open and closed instincts which characterize human species-life, is the arena of

Western culture, comprised of various diverse ways of life, but also unified in some sense as an identifiable entity.²⁹ Western culture is comprised of unmistakably gendered societies which are patterned hierarchically and valuationally in favor of men.³⁰ It is also characterized by a man-against-Nature view of humanity and culture which utilizes a sexual imagery linking up women with Nature. We know this much, even if we cannot ultimately explain the origins of the domination of women and Nature in the West. However, care must be taken to avoid the uncritical and ahistorical linking up of male dominance in our Western ancestral cultures with masculinity as we know it today.

For example, with the benefit of hindsight, we can explore Plato's attitudes towards women and the body and notice parallels between his imagery and arguments and more recent versions which are readily identifiable aspects of masculine gender identity.³¹ But a critical question lingers: Is Plato's somatophobia the same phenomenon we witness in our time? Or are the links only apparent and merely fortuitous ones? Is masculine gender in the West a singular phenomena? Minimally, can we speak of a masculine core which is then elaborated in diverse and connected ways?³² Can we even think in terms of gender identity, a term that presupposes our own cherished conception of individualized identity, during those epochs

that preceded the rise of affective individualism? These are difficult and important questions. Thankfully, they have a minimal impact on this study, which begins with seventeenth century political thought. Nonetheless, I am going to hazard a few selected remarks on these issues.

In the absence of definitive answers, we can proceed by way of carefully maneuvering between some fairly solid anchor points. The first such point is a biological-evolutionary phenomenon which merits serious attention. Homo sapiens share with the higher primates and apes highly distinguishable and individualized facial features, the result of those facial muscles which are employed for expressive and communicative activities. What we share with the closest of our animal relatives and have systematically developed in wide-ranging and culturally-specific ways, is a physiological facial apparatus designed to exhibit and express individuality. This needs to be taken into account in our consideration of historical and anthropological studies of pre-industrial cultures which stress the absence of individualism as we know it, along with highly developed notions of personal identity. Granting the significance of cultural diversity, we must nonetheless give our evolutionary heritage its due. As a species, we have been characterized for thousands of years by a physiological apparatus designed to express individuality. Such an apparatus would only have evolved

and persisted in response to the utilization of such proclivities.

Minimally, acknowledgement of our evolutionary heritage forces careful reconsideration of what life in pre- or non-individualistic cultures must have been like. The tendency to imagine the human beings of such cultures as nothing but undifferentiated blobs would clearly be mistaken. We need a vocabulary that can enable us to talk about identity in a variety of ways. It may be secured in the environment of a nuclear family, polis, village, state orphanage, clan, or matrilineal kinship structure. It may take on features that range from the ultra-individualized to the minimally-individualized; be secured in relation to a few persons or to many. But identity--broadly conceived--would seem to be an indelible feature of human life that is biologically based, evolutionarily secured, and culturally elaborated in diverse ways. In short, questions about individualized identities cannot be resolved in strict either-or terms of presence and absence. That is, the absence of identity as we know it and experience it does not automatically imply the absence of identity per se. Using Geertz's formulation, we might approach identity as a distinctive although not constant element comprising the various patterns of human culture.³⁴

The second anchor point for this discussion is provided

by "gender" as a distinctive but by no means constant element of nearly all known human societies. As Salvatore Cucchiari articulates the summation of anthropological findings on this issue: "Although the categories--man and woman--are universal, the content of the categories varies from culture to culture; and the variation is truly impressive."³⁵ Equally impressive is the near-universality of cultural forms which use the genitals as the primary criteria for the assignment of human beings into one of two major gender categories. On the one hand, then, the "activities, attitudes, values, objects, symbols, and expectations"³⁶ associated with the categories "man" and "woman" vary widely; on the other, nearly all versions of culture are symbolically and socially organized in terms of a presumed meaningful ontology of dichotomous sex differences. To say this is by no means to suggest that gender functions as a kind of primordial or natural category. It is no more reflective of brute "natural" experience than other cultural forms which structure our experience of nature. As the anthropologist Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo has pointed out, the ubiquity of gender in all forms of collective social life provides a tempting backdrop to universalizing and biologicistic explanations.³⁷ Such a temptation must be abjured in favor of a focus on the political and social terrain of its articulation.

Two points which the preceding discussion has been aiming at merit direct formulation. I have sought to establish some plausible grounds for the legitimacy of invoking gendered identity in transcultural terms without violating due respect for those significant differences which distinguish historical periods, cultures and peoples from each other. In response to the "how different" question, I propose that we be willing and prepared to look for a variety of ways in which identity might be fashioned and secured and that we take seriously the universal phenomenon of the categorization of persons in terms of gender. These two observations also work hand in hand. For if human beings are inclined and predisposed to fashion particular identities for themselves, such a process presumably takes place within a social and symbolic framework that is genderized. Such a process need not take place in a familial or Oedipalized environment. This, however, does not necessarily minimize the explanatory potential of gender identity as a constitutive feature of persons in societies which may be radically different from our own. Gender, of course, may be more or less important within an overall cultural configuration.³⁸ We cannot assume that it will always have a privileged and central location in the social and symbolic frameworks of various cultures.

Of the three political theorists studied here, Hobbes

(1588-1679) would seem to be the one who is most problematically situated. Whereas Mill and Marx are located within the modern frame of bourgeois family relations epitomized by Freud, Hobbes rests in the midst of a significant watershed in European family history. On the one hand, he was reared within a sixteenth century family which has been described by Stone in terms which are simultaneously chilling and reminiscent of Hobbes's own state of nature:

What is being postulated for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is a society in which a majority of the individuals who composed it found it very difficult to establish close emotional ties to any person. Children were often neglected, brutally treated, and even killed; many adults treated each other with suspicion and hostility; affect was low, and hard to find The lack of a unique mother figure in the first two years of life, the constant loss of close relatives, siblings, parents, nurses and friends through premature death, the physical imprisonment of the infant in tight swaddling-clothes in early months, and the deliberate breaking of the child's will contributed to a 'psychic numbing' which created many adults whose primary responses to others were at best a calculating indifference and at worst a mixture of suspicion and hostility, tyranny and submission, alienation and rage

So far as the surviving evidence goes, England between 1500 and 1660 was relatively cold, suspicious, and violence-prone.³⁹

On the other hand, Stone detects a sixteenth and seventeenth century trend of significant changes in the structure of English middle- and upper-class family life:

Under pressure from the state and from Protestant moral theology, it shifted from a predominantly open structure to a more restrictedly nuclear one. The functions of this nuclear family were more and more

confined to the nurture and socialization of the infant and young child, and the economic, emotional and sexual satisfaction of the husband and wife.⁴⁰

According to Stone, the period 1660-1800 witnessed major changes in child-rearing practices among the squirarchy and upper bourgeoisie. It is during this time that the "mother" emerged to become the dominant figure in children's lives. Hence, the confusing facts of childhood during Hobbes's time would seem to be these. On the one hand, "up to the age of seven, the children were mostly left in the care of women, primarily their mother, nurse, and governess."⁴¹ On the other hand, a discernible ideology of motherhood did not yet exist. Although women bore and raised children:

Mothering was not the prerogative of married women in a society where high adult mortality and frequent remarriage meant that many children were raised in households of neighbors and kin: babies were cared for by their grandmothers, father's new wife, her widowed aunt, an older step-sister, a cousin or maid servant, as often as by their natural mothers. Seventeenth-century women valued their reputation for chastity, health and hard work, their integrity as housewives and traders; the qualities today associated with 'mothering'--tenderness, self-sacrifice, caring--seem significantly absent as a source of honour and shame.⁴²

Above all, the social system of child exchange (between families with too many mouths to feed and those that needed more labor; between middle- and upper-class families and child-tenders and schools) mitigated against the intimacy and corresponding tensions of parent-child interaction that would be more prevalent during the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries.

We have one of either two (or more) possible interpretations. 1) The fact that children were reared by women within an admittedly less intense psycho-sexual family environment is sufficient to make the case for a masculine identity forged in opposition to the female.⁴³ 2) The "pre-Oedipal" environment is insufficiently affect-laden to justify the retrospective application of masculine gender identity in the psychoanalytic sense with which it is also applied to Mill and Marx.

To make matters even more complicated, 1500-1700 is the period identified by intellectual historians and historians of science as the era which witnessed the emergence of scientific conceptions of nature, rationality, and empirical science.⁴⁴ Recent retrospective studies of modern scientific rationality have identified significant metaphorical parallels between the categories of "women" and "nature" which psychoanalytic theory roots in childrearing practices. In some ways, it would seem that modern conceptions of science, which are also gendered, pre-date the emergence of the modern family. At this point, historical knowledge raises more questions than it can answer. Modern gender relations and conceptions would seem to be linked in some way with modern science and rationality, even though there seems to be no way of getting a handle on the question of origins. These

outstanding issues must also remain as outstanding issues in this work, particularly in the analysis of Hobbes that is developed here.

Minimally, however, we can say this much about Hobbes. He was embedded within a culture in the midst of changes that yielded modern family life and whose gendered imagery is more like than unlike our own. To this extent, we are entitled to query his work as potentially masculinist. On the other hand, we are in no position to assess the origins of this gendered frame of thinking. As I argue in the chapter on Hobbes, we cannot be sure that the thesis of masculine ideology adequately captures the actual ground of his own frame of thinking. But we are entitled to suggest that his theory was open to such a reading and interpretation in the minds of subsequent students and readers.

My general point is this: Gender identity can be appropriately invoked as a component or ground of particular ways of being in and thinking about the world. It is not an interpretive concept which ought to be restricted to that period characterized by affective individualism to which we are the tangible and troubled heirs. Wherever gender means something in the cosmology and social organization of culture, we can expect that the people of those cultures define themselves and their practices with reference to that system of meaning. While

we do not know nearly enough about the practices of pre-industrial child-rearing in the West to trace out in fine detail the various ways in which gender identity may or may not have been secured in early interpersonal dynamics, we can nevertheless attempt to reconstruct in an interpretive fashion the ways in which the overt and socially sanctioned perceptions of gender entered into the substance and style of thought in pre-modern times.

Many of the mutually related conceptions and experiences of masculinity and femininity whose contemporary origins have been traced to the dynamics of nuclear family life (most especially its sexual division of labor which ensures female-dominated child-rearing within a sphere marked as private) clearly pre-date the historical rise of the nuclear family. These include: split images of women which bifurcate sexual and maternal aspects, fear of female sexual prowess, glorification of male sexual prowess, insistence on the need for and legitimacy of subordinating women, the depiction of manhood as an achieved status which requires independence from and control over women, and the association of women with the natural and men with the cultural spheres of human existence.⁴⁵ These trans-historical parallels ramify on the prevailing psychoanalytic accounts in one of two ways: Either 1) the nuclear family has been overemphasized as the site of a particular process of gender acquisition which

produces masculine presumptions of superiority over women, or 2) female-dominated childrearing, a practice which is not restricted to the nuclear family form, has had far-ranging effects in and of itself and in tandem with sexually differentiated and hierarchical social systems, such that female authority is feared and denigrated in a variety of familial and social environments. The first option clearly undermines those psychoanalytic accounts which identify the nuclear family as the linchpin of gender hierarchy. The second option, on the other hand, reinforces those object-relations accounts which stress the pre-Oedipal significance and wide-ranging ramifications of female-dominated childcare. It also prompts a reconsideration of psychological dynamics in non-nuclear family settings which may produce remarkably similar outcomes to those of the nuclear family.⁴⁶ The fact that females, although not necessarily biological mothers, were predominantly responsible for the care of the young in the pre-industrial West could serve as a sufficiently tangible link with the past to justify psychohistorical efforts to contribute to solving the riddle of male "superiority" in the West.⁴⁷

In any case, the burden of defense for the study of masculinity as ideology in the Western political theory tradition is not so large as some of the noted potential objections to such a study suggest. Such objections are

often rightfully levelled against studies covering a wide cultural and historical terrain and making broad universalistic generalizations about human nature and conduct. In this case, however, the parameters of inquiry are already located in a historical period when contemporary versions and experiences of familial and emotional life were beginning to emerge.

My general argument, that which forms the backdrop to the interpretation of gender and political theory offered in this work is this: One way of critically assessing the Western intellectual tradition is by means of the notion of gender-differentiated patterns of experience and consciousness. Since the Western political theory tradition is overwhelmingly male dominated, we can reasonably expect that masculine identity will figure as an important ideological influence on that tradition. Of course, this would only figure as a reasonable expectation if Western cultures, cosmologies, and social organization forms were constituted in terms of gendered imagery and prescribed and enforced sexual differences. Common knowledge tells us that this is overwhelmingly true.

FOOTNOTES

¹That the anti-arms slogan, "Take the toys away from the boys," resonates with meaning for participants in the arms reduction movement suggests that there is an important grain of intuitive truth in this characterization.

²See the debate on Chodorow's work in Judith Lorber, et al., "On The Reproduction of Mothering: A Methodological Debate," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 6 (3): 482-514. See also Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Symmetry and Soporifics: A Critique of Feminist Accounts of Gender Development," unpublished paper, 1982.

³This is a striking and poignant feature of theories of asymmetrical gender development such as Chodorow's and Dinnerstein's. Much as their accounts communicate powerful desires for change, their analyses tend to preclude a believable agenda for social transformation. Given that boys and girls grow into men and women with uniquely different yet interrelated capacities and handicaps for social interaction, men are likely to continue to be unfit to nurture and women are likely to continue to nurture in generationally repetitive ways, thereby producing sons and daughters according to the logic of a vicious cycle. How adults who were once mothered in the terms posed by Chodorow and Dinnerstein are ever to change their own parenting practices is an elusive, although necessary question for women's liberation in the terms provided by their model. Ironically, the very frame of explanation which identifies shared parenting as the singular and major means for change makes the feasibility of its implementation highly unlikely. For a study which confirms the pessimism of this account, see Diane Ehrensaft, "When Men and Women Mother," in Socialist Review, 49 (January-February 1980), pp. 37-73.

⁴Jane Flax has also utilized this notion of an unconscious in political theory. See her essay, "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psycho-analytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics," in Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 245-281.

⁵For the following discussion of the history of the family in the West, I am indebted to these major sources: Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life, trans. Robert Baldick, (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); David Hunt, Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965); Peter Laslett, ed., Household and Family in Past Time (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Edward Shorter, The Making of the Modern Family (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (New York: Harper and Row, 1979; abridged ed.)

⁶Laslett, The World We Have Lost, pp. 110-111.

⁷Margaret Miles, "Embodiment, Perspective and Historical Interpretation," paper presented to the Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 27 October 1983.

⁸The historian Margaret Miles, for example, has sought to reconstruct the visual experiences of medieval women during the time they spent in cathedrals. See also Elise Boulding, The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1976).

⁹This should not be construed as an overly simplified causal account of the relationship between human emotions and affections and demographic factors. While high infant mortality rates do seem to figure as significant factors in the pre-affective individualism ages's attitudes towards newborns, it is also true that once affections for newborns, including an acknowledgement of their individual personhood began to take hold, fluctuations in infant mortality rates did not undermine these emotions. See Robert Darnton, "The Art of Dying," review of Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death Among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France, by John McManners, New York Review of Books, 13 May 1982, pp. 8-12.

¹⁰According to Stone, intimations and early developments may be found in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England.

¹¹See Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, pp. 69-88.

¹²Laslett, The World We Have Lost, p. 2.

¹³Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵See also Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), pp. 9-60.

¹⁶Laslett, The World We Have Lost, p. 20.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁸See David Stannard, Shrinking History: On Freud and the Failure of Psychohistory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) for an elaboration of this position.

¹⁹For an important elaboration of this position, see Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958). Winch is actually better at showing us how difficult this is.

²⁰Stannard, Shrinking History, p. 133.

²¹Mary Midgely, Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) has an excellent discussion of the nature-culture relation. See also Paul Hirst and Penny Wooley, Social Relations and Human Attributes (London: Tavistock Publications, 1982), pp. 1-91.

²²Clifford Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," in his The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 35.

²³For an important criticism of over-socialized accounts see Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," American Sociological Review 26 (2): pp. 183-193. See also Mary Midgely's important discussion of determinism and freedom in Beast and Man. For a very helpful recent synthesis of these debates in philosophy of science and the social sciences, see Richard Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), pp. 1-108.

²⁴Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," p. 37.

²⁵See Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800.

²⁶Both Stone's research on England and Hunt's explorations of early modern French life suggest this.

²⁷Laslett is also emphatic on this point.

²⁸See Mary Midgely, Beast and Man for an especially compelling argument along these lines.

²⁹For broad scale discussions of Western culture in terms of the Judeo-Christian heritage see Peggy Reeves Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), esp. pp. 215-231; and Frederick Turner, Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

³⁰See Sarah B. Pomeroy, Godesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves (New York: Schocken Books, 1975); and Vern L. Bullough, The Subordinate Sex (New York: Penguin Books, 1974). See also Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance; and Turner, Beyond Geography.

³¹See Elizabeth Spellman, "Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views," in Feminist Studies 8 (1): 109-132.

³²For an affirmative answer, see Nancy Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (New York and London: Longman, 1983), esp. pp. 155-208.

³³I am indebted to Mary Midgely, Beast and Man, for this point in particular, but also for giving me some courage in taking another look at biology.

³⁴For helpful critical approaches to the mistaken universalization of contemporary Western notions of individualism, see Paul Hirst and Penny Wooley, Social Relations and Human Attributes, pp. 118-130. See also Marilyn Strathern's discussion of her anthropological use of the terms "person" and "individual" in describing cultures radically different from our own, in "Self-Interest and the Social Good: Some Implications of Hagen Gender Imagery," in Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality, eds. Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 166-191.

³⁵See Salvatore Cucchiari, "The Gender Revolution and the Transition from Bisexual Horde to Patrilocl Band:

35 (cont'd) "The Origins of Gender Hierarchy," in Sexual Meanings, esp. p. 32.

36 Ibid.

37 M.Z. Rosaldo, "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 5 (3): 389-417.

38 See Jane Monnig Atkinson, "Anthropology," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 8 (2): 236-258. See also Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, eds., Nature, Culture and Gender (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

39 Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 80.

40 Ibid., p. 145.

41 Ibid., p. 120.

42 Miranda Chaytor and Jane Lewis, "Introduction" to The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, by Alice Clark (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. xxiv.

43 Those who have made the case for masculine identity in these terms include Coppelia Kahn, Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) and Evelyn Keller, "Gender and Science," in Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought 1 (3): 409-433. Keller's analysis is especially concerned with the work of Francis Bacon.

44 See Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

45 Confirmation of these sweeping generalizations may be found in the following historical sources: Vern Bullough, The Subordinate Sex; H.R. Hayes, The Dangerous Sex; Wolfgang Lederer, The Fear of Women (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968); Martha Lee Osbourne, Woman in Western Thought (New York: Random House, 1979); Sarah B. Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves; Rosemary Ruether, New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).

46 For a commendable and useful effort to trace out the various implications of different kinship and parenting

46 (cont'd) configurations in the attempt to historicize Dinnerstein's analysis, see Isaac D. Balbus, Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psycho-analytic Theory of Sexual, Political and Technological Liberation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 303-352.

See David Hunt, Parents and Children in History, for a fascinating account of the dauphin's sexualized relationship with his nurse, remarkably similar to the sexualized configuration of the nuclear family setting, although with a different cast of characters: "The nurse was in constant and intimate attendance to the child, caring for him, sharing meals, play, conversation, and often her bed with him. In some sense, she replaced the mother in his affections. Thus we find Louis bragging that 'he was not a simpleton: he slept with Doundoun [the nurse] when [her husband] was away.'" (p. 173)

47 Peggy Sanday's work, Female Power and Male Dominance, offers many helpful clues to the question of the etiology of Western male dominance. Her research indicates that male dominance is often the result of a society's response to stress. Important determinants of male dominance include cosmological views, conceptions of sacred power, views of the natural environment, and perceived sources of stress. Her most important contribution, in my opinion, is the argument that gender, to be properly understood, must always be situated within the socio-symbolic framework that it practically inhabits and affects.

For a sobering analysis of the logical pitfalls involved in identifying male gender identity as the cause of male domination, see Iris Marion Young, "Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination?" in Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory, ed. Joyce Trebilcot (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), pp. 129-146.

A P P E N D I X B

DIFFERENCE IN A NEW KEY: FRENCH FEMINIST OFFERINGS

How can I say you, who are always other?
Luce Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together"

A new genre within feminist theory known as "French feminisms" has much to offer the feminist student of sexual difference.¹ For all of their diversity and heated arguments between each other, "French feminisms" are notable on two distinctive counts: Against the political backdrop of feminist activism in the "base" areas of reproductive rights, labor reforms, and public policy legislation as it affects women, many of the French feminists have increasingly and relentlessly pursued the "superstructural" aspects of women's social inferiority, analyzing language, psychology, the arts (especially literature) and intellectual traditions. Secondly, they have been willing, if not eager, to take on the theme of "difference" and to confront the body explicitly.

The concern with language, the symbolic order, women, and the body intersect most tangibly in the "écriture féminine" strain, whose proponents speak and write specifically as women and communicate their desire to articulate a female language, usually grounded in female

sexuality or sensuality. Helene Cixous is one of the best known practitioners of this genre. Monique Wittig's work is also similar, although she publically disassociates herself from Cixous's "feminized" approach, which she finds crudely naturalistic and essentialist. In spite of their significant theoretical and artistic differences, both have produced works in attempts to "write the body" of women. The work of Luce Irigaray, which we will also examine in some detail, is fascinating for its seductive rendering of the possibility of an analogy between repressed female sexuality and a heretofore unarticulated women's language. With Irigaray and Cixous, Julia Kristeva shares an interest in and concern with "desire" and the search for/creation of a language appropriate to its expression. Through their differences and similarities, which will be treated below, these four writers bear on considerations raised in this work in their consensus that "the woman question" cannot be addressed within the prevailing linguistic, symbolic, political and intellectual formulas; that "difference" is, in fact, the lid fastened securely on a Pandora's box of repressed material that threatens not simply the sexually uneven social distribution of responsibilities, rights and benefits, but the symbolic and psychological underpinnings of culture, broadly conceived.

Getting a firm handle on just what difference is, what it consists of, and how we ought to approach it and treat

it is a difficult, perhaps impossible task, captured strikingly by Jacques Derrida in his observation that: "It is no longer possible to go looking for woman, or for woman's femininity or for female sexuality. At least, they cannot be found by means of any familiar mode of thought or knowledge--even if it is impossible to stop looking for her."² The difficulty hinges on the phenomenon itself, the uses to which it has historically been put, and our own logico-linguistic apparatus. As a phenomenon, "difference" is simultaneously elusive and tangible. Just when we think we have laid hold of it we are in the gravest danger of having fetishized it. Just when it has been buried or banished, presumably forever, it appears again, Cheshire Cat-like, to mock our naiveté. Historically, we find countless examples of the ways in which "difference" has been used to legitimize oppressive practices against women. And in logico-linguistic terms, we are inclined to think about difference in dualistic and hierarchical terms. Alice Jardine describes this particular facet of the topic, noting in ways similar to observations posed by Midgely and Wolgast, that "Western culture has proven to be incapable of thinking not-the-same-as without assigning one of the terms a positive value and the other, a negative."³

Simone de Beauvoir anticipated, and perhaps prompted, recent feminist theoretical developments in her country when she wrote enigmatically: "She is the elemental

silence of Truth."⁴ We might read this to mean: Woman is the repressed underside of a verbalized and visible Truth, of that which counts as Truth, even though it is partial; and it is partial precisely because of her silence. She constitutes Truth by and through her silence. She can never--as a woman--articulate this Truth actively. As symbol and living subject, she bears silent witness to a hypocritical truth masking as Truth. Here we have the deep irony of "difference": it entails a disregard of the Other (who may not speak) even as it invokes her. In the words of Josette Féral: "The Savage in the West has always been the Woman: simultaneously present and absent, present when absent, and all the more absent when she is there."⁵

Like the state of nature constructs employed by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, involving logical reconstruction along with fanciful projection as a means of highlighting the possibilities and requirements of civil society, female difference has invariably been put to logical and political uses whereby it functions as a simultaneous confirmation of/counterfactual to male identity. If little has been added to the store of knowledge concerning pre-civil or "primitive" societies through such state of nature constructs, they often contribute to the social theorist's analysis of his society's identity and to retrospective critical studies of social orders and their ideologies.⁶

Similarly with conceptions of sexual difference, we might say that such constructs, while they reveal little about women, can tell us quite a bit about the function of the idea of woman within particular social-symbolic orders, and more significantly, about how certain conceptions of difference and of the "feminine" help to constitute particular versions of masculine identity. "Enmeshed in man's self-representation, woman exists only insofar as she reflects back to him the image of his manly reality."⁷

It is precisely this feature of difference, as masculine projection, along with the hierarchical ordering to which it is subjected such that women invariably lose, which accounts for the attempts of many feminists to expunge the term altogether. Undoubtedly, the positing of female Otherness as consisting of the "denied, abused, and hidden" other side of man makes the term justly suspect. What possible use might difference, "as a signature of her void and mark of his identity," have for feminists interested in a critical social theory and practice that seeks to liberate women without subjecting men to the injuries that have been historically levelled against women?

Many of the French feminists argue one step beyond this question and the preceding formulation of "difference" that the problem of difference consists not simply in the false positing of Otherness from a male perspective, but in the denial of difference as well:

Defined by man, the conventional polarity of masculine and feminine names woman as a metaphor of man The rhetorical hierarchization of the very opposition between the sexes is then such that woman's difference is suppressed, being totally subsumed by the reference of the feminine to masculine identity.⁸

To expunge the term from feminist discourse would amount, on this view, to a capitulation to the dynamic and politics of masculine sameness and hegemony. These feminists view the critical task to be one of re-appropriating rather than eliminating "difference" as a critical concept. Society and language, based on the negation of difference and the presumption of a singular (masculine) identity and logic, must be criticized from the vantage point of the Other. Operating in the service of "heterogeneity, alterity, multiplicity", this difference, theorized and articulated by Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig, and Julia Kristeva, among others, has a vital and critical role to play for women and society at large. Upholding difference, while rejecting the entrapment of a reverse mirror conception, many of the French feminists insist on walking the admittedly fine line between false or fetishized difference and real, critical difference. Josette Féral summarizes this impulse in the following way:

Difference, in this context, is not simply defined by reference to a norm--the masculine norm--whose negative side it would be while remaining inscribed within the realm of identity. Rather, difference is to be thought of as other, not bounded by any system or any structure. Difference becomes the negation of phallogocentrism, but in the name of its own inner diversity.⁹

Within this view, "difference"--in the name of women and, for some, of a more generalized critical alterity embodied by other individuals and groups as well--is a crucial and precious concept that must be preserved, expanded, sought out, and refined, rather than thrown out as outmoded or sexist. In the words of Julia Kristeva: "Woman is here to shake up, to deflate masculine values, and not to espouse them. Her role is to maintain differences by pointing to them, by giving them life, by putting them into play against one another."¹⁰

This reappropriation of difference, invoking a critical questioning of conceptions of subjectivity and structures of logic and discourse, takes place within the framework of a persistent and vexing question whose voicing and potential solution ramify beyond exclusively feminist concerns to a broader epistemological terrain. In the words of Alice Jardine, it goes something like this:

Is there a way to think outside the patriarchally determined Same/Other, Subject/Object dichotomies diagnosed as the fact of culture by Simone de Beauvoir thirty years ago, and, in the process, still include women as a presence? In other words, do we want to continue reorganizing the relationship of difference to sameness through a dialectics of valorization, or is there a way to break down the over-determined metaphors which continue to organize our perceptions of reality?¹¹

Jardine's question provides an initial clue to understanding why so many of the French feminists writing in the name of difference invariably deal with the

Subject/Object relationship and its connection to identity. In many ways, they are picking up where de Beauvoir left off.

The reappropriation of difference involves a voicing of that difference which is negated and denied within social organization (e.g., the invisibility of women's labor) and dominant forms of language and thought (including prevailing forms of "difference".) As the posited naturalized embodiment of non-culture, women might embody alternate cultures rather than no culture. Rethinking that "disloyalty to civilization" of which women have so often been accused, rather than denying it, and going even further to rethink "civilization" in this respect, women's previously empty and masculine-derived negativity (as "that which is not-male") might be rendered into substantive and critical forms.¹² Such an approach is based on the proposition that "What is at stake in the woman's struggle is much more than simply finding a place within the existing values or discourses. It is the problem of a whole society, questioning its very foundations and its right to impose its truth as uniquely true."¹³

This broadened and vitally critical task of feminism as theory and practice, captured by Annie Leclerc in the observation that 'if we invent our sexuality, they will have to rethink their own,'¹⁴ also ramifies on the conception and study of oppression. For critical feminist

analysis in the name of difference proceeds in the name of a difference that is hidden, denied, elusive and distorted because it is repressed. This is precisely why the unconscious, the body and desire occupy a significant, if not privileged, focus of inquiry within French feminist discourse which builds on a psychoanalytic, linguistic and philosophical foundation. If the articulated woman of the social order is a false and limited projection--a description of man's repressed nature--then where do we locate her? How can we even begin to think about her? The answer of some is that we must immerse ourselves within, re-evoke, and fantasize about the shadowy, pre-rational, pre-socialized, repressed terrain of the unconscious:

For the woman's unconscious is 'the noise' in the system, the defect. It is a surplus which patriarchal society has always wanted to get rid of by denying it any specificity, thus positing that same society's right to talk about it in terms of identity with a resemblance to the male model.¹⁵

This simultaneous search for/creation of a female discourse, to get at "another thinking as yet unthinkable" has yielded a rich array of unconventional works challenging the substance and structure of the taken-for-granted. Within the realms of fiction and literature, Cixous and Wittig strive to write the pleasures, appetites, agonies and discourses of female selves, bodies and desire. Kristeva, as a linguist and literary critic, listens for "the call of the

unnamable . . . issuing from those borders where signification vanishes."¹⁶ And Irigaray, deported Lacanian analyst, employs a medley of styles, ranging from critique and deconstruction of the thought of Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and Freud, to creative imaginary forays into the languages and sexualities of women.

Julia Kristeva's work in linguistics may be roughly characterized as the attempt to displace a view of language as a closed, homogenized, and self-evident meaning system with its correspondingly intact and comfortable subject, with a more dynamic and tension-filled account. Kristeva is interested in whatever threatens to upset the complacent balance of linguistically structured and socially sanctioned meaning and "truth". Politically situating herself in opposition to the flow of totalizing and rationalizing culture, she sums up her political ethics with the following question: "If we are not on the side of those whom society wastes in order to reproduce itself, where are we?"¹⁷ She looks to the "margins of recognized culture" in search of desires and logics "exceeding that of codified discourse."¹⁸ Above all, it is "the free play of negativity, needs, desire, pleasure and jouissance"¹⁹ in which Kristeva is interested, for they are the raw stuff which language attempts to appropriate, if never completely successfully. Desire, for Kristeva, is both the instigator and victim of language, much as Mary Midgely reminds us of

the instinctual components of language. Kristeva views language as both a prison house and a gateway, and she weaves a careful pattern between these two accounts. It would clearly be mistaken to caricature Kristeva as a primitivist who prefers the natural honesty of grunts, moans and hysterical speech to the 'artificial' fabrications and structure of language. Her quarrel with language is rather in its totalizing tendency: the attempt to write out what it cannot yet (or ever), or refuses to, enunciate; the persistent attempt to flatten out the diversity of human experience within a singular economy of meaning. Hence, she pushes for a careful searching out of those counter-cultural locales and texts where:

. . . in the face of a want of discourse, there is that strength that remains wordless or lacks truth when verbalized, a strength of formidable institutional contestation, or a strength of voice, gesture, gaze, sweeping over the psychological requests of speech, and yet the eternal 'that's not it', 'that's not enough'
 . . .²⁰

In her approach to the study of language and literature, Kristeva identifies two major discourses at work (and at play), the symbolic and the semiotic. Semiotic discourse is the conceptual articulation of those bodily drives that elude sublimation and repression, surviving to surface occasionally in symbolic discourse, which is enacted on the visible terrain of signification, sign, and syntax. As the means through which man orders and objectifies the world, symbolic discourse aims for

homogeneity, a singular economy of meaning. The relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic is fuelled by, and feeds on, the energy and impulses of semiotic desire even as it must squelch it, by ordering it into predictable and safe meaning arrangements. Surplus meaning, that which exceeds and threatens the necessarily limited logos of symbolic discourse, is relegated to the distant reaches of the crazy, perverse, inaudible. It may be allowed expression in poetry. As the repressed, desiring, perhaps instinctual foundation of symbolic discourse, the semiotic precedes (temporally and logically) the institution of the symbolic as sanctioned language. In the terms provided by the psychoanalytic account of individual development and socialization, we could imagine the semiotic as originating in that pre-verbal, pre-ego stage of identification with the mother's body, prior to the successful differentiation and establishment of self against that maternal body, prior to the full implementation of sexual prohibitions, prior to the ultimate repudiation of our claims on and identification with the maternal body.

Kristeva uses a feminized vocabulary to describe the semiotic, in order to rekindle the primal memory of maternal presence. The question of women's more direct access to this discourse, as daughters, as mothers, as special victims of Oedipalization, is a separate issue, one

that Kristeva, unlike Cixous and Irigaray, seems less willing to address, although her own maternal experience is sometimes expressed in her writing.

According to Kristeva, the existing systems of signification are constantly threatened by a simmering semiotic murmur which occasionally breaks through to the surface of symbolic discourse. Hence her approach to language as a dynamic compendium and articulation of heterogeneous and unstable meaning. This is not to deny the power of the symbolic edifice, for it is formidable. It is, however, an important recognition of the possibility of cultivating its cracks and fissures. The semiotic provides the ground (shifting and elusive, to be sure) from which to criticize language in the name of unacknowledged, unsatisfied, and multiple desires.

Within this framework, the relationship of women to culture and language becomes an interesting source of study and speculation, both for what this relationship can reveal about women, as well as for what it suggests about a culture from which women are at least partially alienated and in which they are deeply implicated as the Other. Invoking the unmistakable parallels between the semiotic and the feminine, Kristeva writes: "The role of women strikes me as more interesting when it consists in stating the right to the difference, the return of the negative, the challenge to communities, divinities, authorities,

including that crafty authority, the ego. . . "21

Interesting, and well worth noting before we proceed with a more sustained examination of Kristeva's treatment of sexual difference, is the fact that her most fully developed treatment of this issue takes place between the covers of a book ostensibly about Chinese women. Bearing witness to her careful avoidance of the error of mistaking the Chinese experience itself for the Chinese experience as viewed through Western eyes, the book is also a fitting testament to the difficulty of taking a direct line of approach to the issue of sexual difference. A large portion of About Chinese Women is actually about the sorts of questions about Western women brought to light through engagement with Chinese women. Kristeva's inquiry takes the form, deliberately it would seem, of reflective dialogue rather than linear inquiry. Like the Chinese Revolution in relation to the West, women in relation to western male-dominated culture promote "the chance that the discovery of 'the Other' may make us question ourselves about what, here and now, is new, scarcely audible, disturbing."²² Like the Chinese Revolution, "woman as such does not exist." Neither, Kristeva might say, does "difference". Each must be approached as complex refractions, products of interchange, contrasts; as surplus and repressed meanings leaving their traces in scattered and often undecipherable patterns. "Women. We have the

luck to be able to take advantage of a biological peculiarity to give a name to that which, in monotheistic capitalism, remains on this side of the threshold of repression, voice stilled, body mute, always foreign to the social order."²³ Warning against the theology of an "inverted humanism", Kristeva would have women search for their voices and identities, but not with an end point (glorification of womanhood) in mind; the denial of difference, as well as its instituted and totalizing reification, result in totalitarianism, defined as the inability/unwillingness to tolerate difference.

The historical and current burden carried by women in a society that simultaneously denies and inscribes difference is powerfully described by Kristeva in a rich panoply of prose that communicates a uniquely female/feminine experience of the mind-body split within Western culture:

. . . voice without body, body without voice, silent anguish, choking on the rythms of words, the tones of sounds, the colours of images, but without words, without sounds, without images; outside time, outside knowledge, cut off forever from the rythmic, colourful, violent changes that streak sleep, skin, viscera: socialized, even revolutionary, but at the cost of the body; body crying, infatuating, but at the cost of time; cut off, swallowed up; on the one hand, the aphasic pleasure of childbirth that imagines itself a participant in the cosmic cycles; on the other, jouissance under the symbolic weight of a law (paternal, familial, social, divine) of which she is the sacrificial support, bursting with glory on the condition that she submit to the denial, if not the murder of the body . . . ²⁴

Woman's apparent choice is either to accede to a language

and culture which deny her embodied subjectivity, or to become the repressed specified other of carnality. These limited and mutually exclusive choices are the products of a social and symbolic order which Kristeva describes variously as monotheistic, Christian, paternal, and capitalist.

Monotheism is the grand symbolic organizing principle of community which succeeded historically by repressing paganism (the worship of a variety of gods) and "the greater half of agrarian civilization and their ideologies: women and mothers."²⁵

No other civilization, therefore, seems to have made the principle of sexual difference so crystal clear: between the two sexes there is a cleavage, an abyss, which is marked by their different relationships to the Law (religious and political) and which is the very condition of their alliance. Monotheistic unity is sustained by a radical separation of the sexes: indeed, this separation is its prerequisite. For without this gap between the sexes, without this localization of the polymorphic, orgasmic body, laughing and desiring, in the other sex, it would have been impossible, in the symbolic sphere, to isolate the principle of One Law--One, Purifying, Transcendent, Guarantory of the ideal interest of the community.

There is one unity: an increasingly purified community discipline, isolated as a transcendent principle and thus insuring the survival of the group. This unity that the God of monotheism represents is sustained by a desire that pervades the community, making it run but also threatening it. Remove this threatening desire--this perilous support of the community--from man; place it beside him: you have woman, who is speechless, but who appears as the pure desire of speech.²⁶

Kristeva identifies monotheism with "the function of human symbolism: to provide an instance of communication and

cohesion despite the fact that it operates by dividing thing/word, body/speech, pleasure/law, incest/procreation."²⁷ The patrilinear function is also firmly implicated in the monotheistic impulse:

. . . patrilinear descent with transmission of the father's name centralizes eroticism in the single goal of procreation, in the grip of an abstract symbolic authority which refuses to acknowledge the fact that the child grows and is carried in the mother's body, which a matrilinear system of descent kept alive in the mind by leaving certain possibilities of polymorphism--if not incest--still available.²⁸

Invoking a Freudian mode of analysis, Kristeva argues that the development of productive forces--the consolidation of economic and political power--is, in effect, premised on the centralized, repressed, and sublimated eroticism that women experience and symbolize through the maternal body. "Jouissance" is the term that she uses to get at this repressed feminine eroticism (not exclusively experienced by women). Difficult to pin down concretely, the term connotes sensuous pleasure and the orgasmic experiences associated with sex and maternity. According to Kristeva, our entire logic of production and reproduction (what Freud referred to as "civilization") is based on the radical codification of sexual difference, the denial of jouissance, and the exclusion of women as women from knowledge and power. This point is also pursued by Irigaray and Cixous.

As the particular version of monotheism which

constitutes the symbolic and social order of the West, Christianity is, for Kristeva, the fantasy of a male homosexual economy, premised on a denial of sexual difference in its denial of maternal jouissance. She describes The Word as a sublimated version of the fart, evidence of a deeper lying fantasy of anal penetration and resulting pregnancy. Only in assuming the role of a male homosexual, as a virgin anally impregnated by The Word, can Woman (i.e., Mary) be placed within the symbolic order of Christianity. (While Kristeva does not mention it, we might also consider the Church-inspired persecution of witches in the context of this interpretation. The sexualized tenor of this brutal assault on women is unmistakable.)²⁹ Women's legitimate forms of participation within the Christian symbolic order are reduced to two: the ecstatic and the melancholic, represented by Theresa d'Avila and Catherine of Sienna, respectively. The price of specifically female sexuality is masochism or social persecution.

These two limited choices--de-feminized ecstasy or feminine masochism--characterize the only possible avenues of a female's access to power, knowledge, and symbolism within a monotheistic symbolic order organized around the unitary rule of the Father. It is the mother, figure of an earlier and repressed symbolism, who loses out.³⁰

Specifically feminine sexuality, described by Kristeva

as maternal jouissance, is based on the daughter's relationship to the maternal body. Like other feminist theorists, Kristeva stresses the significance of the pre-Oedipal period of psycho-sexual development for understanding female sexuality and psychology in contradistinction to that of males.³¹ Freud's Oedipal castration trauma is transposed by Kristeva into the Lacanian mode of viewing it as a process of learning the symbolic function: "with the Oedipal phase come language, the symbolic instance, the ban on auto-eroticism, and the reorganization of the law of the father."³² She defines the symbolic function as "a system of signs (first, rhythmic and intonation differences, then signifier/signified) organized into logico-linguistic structures whose goal is to accredit social communication as exchange purified of pleasure."³³ Superego and symbolic order (the order of verbal communication) are built on the foundation of prohibitions rendered unconscious:

The symbolic function in our monotheistic West functions by means of a system of kinship dependent on transmission of the father's name and a rigorous prohibition of incest, and a system of verbal communication that is increasingly logical, simple, positive, stripped of stylistic, rhythmic, 'poetic' ambiguities. Such an order brings this constitutional inhibition of the speaking subject to a zenith never before attained . . . ³⁴

In contrast, the "truth" of the pre-Oedipal, primary process, mother-dominated realm is "a curious truth: outside time with neither past nor future, neither true nor

false; buried underground, it neither postulates nor judges. It refuses, displaces, breaks the symbolic order before it can re-establish itself."³⁵ Lurking beneath the surface, all that is repressed "by sign, by sense, by communication, by symbolic order, in whatever is legislating, restrictive, paternal,"³⁶ --that which is allied with the pre-Oedipal phase--is capable of "blowing the whole thing apart."³⁷ Jouissance, pregnancy ("escape from the bonds of daily social temporality"), and a "marginal speech, with regard to the science, religion, and philosophy of the polis,"³⁸ are identified by Kristeva as "the means by which this 'truth', cloaked and hidden by the symbolic order and its companion, time, functions through women."³⁹

If a woman cannot be part of the temporal symbolic order except by identifying with the father, it is clear that as soon as she shows any evidence of that which, in herself, escapes such identification and acts differently, resembling the dream of the maternal body, she evolves into this 'truth' in question. It is thus that feminine specificity defines itself in patrilineal society; woman is a specialist in the unconscious, a witch, a bacchanalian, taking her jouissance in an anti-Appolonian, Dionysian orgy.⁴⁰

Women represent the elusive and unconscious truth of the symbolic order only so long as this 'truth' is not given tangible form. For once the unconscious passes into the symbolic order as 'truth', it becomes fetishized. And here lies the dilemma for feminists, as Kristeva sees it: assuming an activist, militant, virile, and hence

masculinized stance as we demand entry into the Symbolic order, "or else we remain in an eternal sulk before history,"⁴¹ This problem, which might be termed the "problem of perpetual negativity", is one to which we will return.

To sum up Kristeva's position with respect to "difference" I would argue that her overweening interest is in a counter-theory of the subject/theory of the counter-subject, rather than in a theory of woman per se as counter-subject. "Woman" would seem to represent an attitude, a position within the symbolic order, rather than a sex. As idea, attitude, position and sex, "woman" aids in the displacement of the modern Western notion of the Subject as an organic and consistent entity. While this subject may indeed have been conceived in phallic terms, women do not embody the full range of repressed alternatives, of those polymorphous manifestations of negativity, dissidence, and difference. Indeed, biological sex must not be confused with sexuality if Kristeva is to be interpreted correctly. Jean Genet, for example, stands within Kristeva's framework as a good example of a writer whose texts are suffused with "feminité", along with Mallarmé and Artaud who, she argues, have achieved literary versions of semiotic discourse. (In fact, Kristeva rarely analyzes the literature of female writers.) The writer who can set "jouissance" into play, opposing the rules of

conventional language, enacts that pre-verbal identification with the mother which necessarily undermines the logic of "paternal discourse" (phallogocentrism). If Genet, Mallarmé, and Artaud did not have "the luck to be able to take advantage of a biological peculiarity to give a name to that which . . . remains . . . foreign to the social order," they were nonetheless able to invoke the "feminine discourse" of the semiotic.

Kristeva's version of "difference", then, is not a strictly sexual one. "Woman" raises the question of difference because "she" has some foothold within the symbolic order which enables her and those sympathetic to her situation (male homosexuals are such a potential group) to criticize language from within (the symbolic) and without (the semiotic). The "problem of Woman" is the problem of all those "who swim against the tide." Ultimately, it is the problem of the rigidly conceived subject, who must deny the semiotic/feminine, twist it, simplify it, and dominate it, in order to maintain his peculiar sense of self and mastery of reality in "this untenable place where our speaking species resides, threatened by madness beneath the emptiness of heaven."⁴² If the long term goal of feminism is "another economy of the sexes," along with a radically refashioned cultural order, the more immediate strategy must be to "go on waging the war of the sexes, without a perverse denial

of the abyss that marks the sexual difference or a dissillusioned mortification at its depth."⁴³ Such a battle can best be waged, according to Kristeva, if we assume the critical stance of listening for the barely perceptible murmurings of the semiotic.

In contrast to Kristeva's concern with the mute body, silenced desire, with "the inexhaustible, non-symbolized impulse," Luce Irigaray focuses more directly on "that repressed which is the feminine imagery." Irigaray employs an inventive, complex, and extended rendering of the related critiques of the symbolic-social order, of conceptions of a unified and unproblematic (male) subject and discourse, and of the problem of the domination of women and Woman to the stylistic outer reaches. If Kristeva makes for difficult reading, Irigaray leaves American readers simultaneously dumbfounded and acutely uncomfortable with her detailed and evocative bodily imagery. That she has been denounced as a crude biological reductionist and ontologizer of difference says more about the limits of the language that she is trying to displace/deconstruct than about her position proper.⁴⁴

As with the attempt to convey and summarize the work of Kristeva, it is difficult, if not impossible, to do so in Irigaray's case without fairly extensive quoting and paraphrasing. This is so because the aphoristic and stylistic use of language in her work is integral to its

meaning. Because she is doing what she advocates through her mode of writing, her procedure (firmly rooted in the French intellectual tradition and language) is her content.⁴⁵ A regrettable, but unrecuperable loss also attends the translation of her works into English, where puns, double, ambiguous, multiple and contradictory meanings are often lost. The extensive footnotes provided by her translators can only partially make up for the lost meaning, since the real power of Irigaray's work seems to depend on the active and immediate engagement of her readers within the frame of her prose. According to Carolyn Burke, one of her foremost American translators, "reading Irigaray is like taking part in a process in which neither participant is certain of the outcome."⁴⁶ In other words, Irigaray's texts do not aim for singular, whole, or pre-fashioned and detachable meanings: "You don't understand a thing? No more than they understand you."⁴⁷ In spite of these noted impediments to a full experience, understanding and appreciation of her work, Irigaray provides sufficient grist for the mill to justify a tentative, if necessarily diluted, accounting of her work.

According to Irigaray, women are caught in a world structured by male-centered concepts. Within this system of signification, women have no way of representing, much less knowing themselves in any but a masculine fashion. In her imaginary dialogue for two female lovers (or an

auto-erotic self), "When Our Lips Speak Together," Irigaray writes:

If we continue to speak the same language to each other, we will reproduce the same story. . . . If we continue to speak this sameness, if we speak to each other as men have spoken for centuries, as they taught us to speak, we will fail each other. Again Words will pass through our bodies, above our heads, disappear, make us disappear. . . . How can I touch you if you're not there? Your blood is translated into their senses. They can speak to each other and about us. But "us"? Get out of their language. Go back through all the names they gave you. I'm waiting for you, I'm waiting for myself.⁴⁸

Her sarcastic and reportedly witty (as yet untranslated) exposé of Plato and Freud's portrayal of women as irrational and imperfect (because castrated) men (Speculum De L'Autre Femme) is one feature of her more basic argument that Western thought is based on a systematic repression of women's experience/sexuality. Going a step beyond Kristeva's version of resistance as the listening for, experience and articulation of "jouissance" or semiotic discourse (both necessarily negative with respect to the symbolic order), Irigaray (and Cixous as well) hones in directly on the evocative and explicit expression of female sexuality and the creation of a language capable of expressing that sexuality, with a view to establishing some tangible ground from which to critically analyse, demystify and deconstruct "phallogocentrism". Indeed, these two projects are vitally connected. "In the face of language, constructed and maintained by men only, I raise the

question of the specificity of a feminine language: of a language which could be adequate for the body, sex and the imagination (imaginary) of the woman."⁴⁹

Phallogocentrism is responsible for a conception of the unitary masculine subject who stands at the center of a symbolic and linguistic universe that orders reality in accordance with the conjoined rule of the Father and the Phallus. Extending Derrida's definition and critique of logocentrism as a 'metaphysics of presence' which obscures the very differences on which meaning-as-presence depends, 'phallogocentrism' (a term which is also used by Derrida in Writing and Difference) specifies that this singular system and the hierarchies which it has established are rooted in a specifically masculine construction of presence and identity. In the words of Helene Cixous:

This opposition to woman cuts endlessly across all the oppositions that order culture. It's the classic opposition, dualist and hierarchical. Man/Woman automatically means great/small, superior/inferior . . . means high or low, means Nature/History, means transformation/inertia. In fact, every theory of culture, every theory of society, the whole conglomeration of symbolic systems--everything, that is, that's spoken, everything that's organized as discourse, art, religion, the family, language, everything that seizes us, everything that acts on us--it is all ordered around hierarchical oppositions that come back to the man/woman opposition. . . 50

That this opposition has been set up from the vantage point of the masculine subject makes for phallogocentrism. Women have a specificity, constructed within but also lurking outside of phallogocentric discourse, that distinguishes

them from men. Distinguished in this double sense, within a discourse that sets woman up as counter-identity, and outside of a discourse that cannot capture real difference because it threatens the logic of that discourse, female specificity is infuriatingly difficult to specify.

Irigaray does not shrink from the task at hand.

Employing a method of deconstruction and creative writing which evokes erotic and pre-Oedipal imagery, she attempts to reveal that the presumed neutrality of language accomodates a masculine subject and sets up the feminine subject as exception, without giving her voice, thus denying her specificity:

They neither taught us nor allowed us to say our multiplicity. That would have been improper speech. Of course, we were allowed--we had to?--display one truth even as we sensed but muffled, stifled another. Truth's other side--its complement? its remainder?--stayed hidden.⁵¹

Phallogocentrism reduces everything to its own system of signification. Women are subjected to the principle of Identity conceived as masculine sameness and (not surprisingly) found lacking. Turning the tables on phallogocentric discourse, female difference become the lack or question within the discourse. Cixous describes this method as elaborated in her own work:

If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to dislocate this "within", to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it

hers, containing it, taking it into her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of.⁵²

Freud's genius was to shake up the notion of a unified consciousness and subjectivity with his discovery of the unconscious. Yet he mistakenly persisted in defining sexual difference in terms of an a priori sameness (in terms of the penis/phallus) such that female sexuality is relegated to the status of absence, lack, deficiency. This type of signification, according to Irigaray, denies female subjectivity in its own right. Cixous describes it as "the reductive stinginess of the masculine-conjugal economy."⁵³

In the face of this limited economy of meaning, women "can touch each other only when naked."⁵⁴

. . . to find ourselves and each other, we have a great deal to take off. So many images and appearances separate us, one from another. They decked us out according to their desires for so long, and we adorned ourselves so often to please them, that we forgot the feel of our skin. Removed from our own skin, we remain distant.⁵⁵

Women must become the speaking subjects of their difference, which requires that they break through this system of thought and signification, critically confronting a phallic conception of the subject with their embodied and expressive alternatives:

If we don't invent a language; if we don't find our body's language, its gestures will be too few to accompany our story. When we become tired of the same old ones, we'll keep our desires secret, unrealized. Asleep again, dissatisfied, we will be turned over to the words of men--who have claimed to "know" for a long time. But not our body. Thus seduced, allured,

fascinated, ecstatic over our becoming, we will be paralyzed. Deprived of our movements. Frozen, although we are made for endless change.⁵⁶

Kristeva's attempt to shake up the notion of the Subject as a singular and consistent entity may be viewed as a project to which Irigaray's more focused and detailed evocation of female imagery is parallel. Both would have us interrogate the rules of discourse in the attempt to understand the simultaneous production and denial of meanings which help to constitute the "feminine":

To put discourse into question is to reject the existing order. It is to renounce, in effect, the identity principle, the principles of unity and resemblance which allow for the constitution of phallogentric society. It means choosing marginality (with an emphasis on margins) in order to designate one's difference, a difference no longer conceived of as an inverted image or as a double, but as alterity, multiplicity, heterogeneity. It means laying claim to an absolute difference, posited not within the norms but against and outside the norms.⁵⁷

Easier said than done, we might reply. For there is a tightly tangled and unavoidable knot at the heart of any attempt to articulate difference outside the norms. The problem is this: Does language translate/describe reality, or does it create/constitute it? The first option has been effectively ousted from Irigaray's approach. It is, in effect, a non-option. She is simply not situated within a conception of language as mirror of reality. Indeed, the view that language merely describes the phenomenal world would not generate the sorts of analyses that we find in the likes of Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous. Language

itself would not be the focus of such lively, passionate interest and concern. The emphasis, instead, would be on "practice", crudely conceived; for language would be expected to follow suit once appropriate changes in the base structure (society) had been made. Irigaray's work is clearly located within the position that language constitutes social reality, including subjectivity. But in this case, how, if ever, can we assume a critical position towards language and our constitution within it? Irigaray is obviously sensitive to this problem:

How can we speak to escape their enclosures, patterns, distinctions, and oppositions: virginal/deflowered, pure/impure, innocent/knowing . . . How can we shake off the chains of these terms, free ourselves from their categories, divest ourselves of their names? Disengage ourselves, alive, from their concepts?⁵⁸

That Irigaray proceeds as if such a critical position is possible is related to the work of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida, to which we briefly turn, for a consideration of Derrida's deconstructive method and Lacan's notion of an asymmetrical sexual entry into the Symbolic order. For while Irigaray's work is uniquely distinctive and even engages in a forthright challenge to and critique of the work of Lacan, these two thinkers have had an unmistakable influence on her work.

Lacan is by now famous for his attempts to document the simultaneous acquisition of language and subjectivity.⁵⁹ Within this framework, identity is that position which we

(are forced to) assume within the Symbolic order. Lacan's work goes so far as to identify the processes by which we are subjected to the structure of the Symbolic order and also come to think of ourselves as the point of origin of our ideas and beliefs. This false sense of subjectivity, developmentally following the first period of infantile omnipotence, is acquired during the Mirror Phase, when the pre-oedipal child glimpses him/herself in the mirror and perceives itself simultaneously as subject and object. The illusion of totality or unity, fostered by the mirror image, goes underground after the establishment of symbolic relations, persisting in unconscious formations.

Lacan and Derrida, building on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, argue that we are situated within and produced by language through a set of relationally generated meanings fixed by our relation to/positions within the Symbolic order with respect to various signifiers. According to Lacan, the phallus functions as the privileged signifier in the child's entry into the Symbolic order, which is also its passage through the Oedipus Complex. The early dual imaginary identifications of the ego with itself and the mother are broken by the introduction of a third term, the father, in relation to whom the child is forced to assume a position. Such positioning is initially achieved through the designation of having/not-having a phallus. Like a signifier, the phallus fixes difference according to having

or not having it. It is in this sense that Lacan argues that women lack access to the Symbolic order, or, as re-fashioned by several Lacanian feminists, that women's entry into the Symbolic order is negative.⁶⁰ Here we can identify an important starting point for a conception of sexual difference rooted within language and the symbolic order, which promises the avoidance of the problem of formulating difference in extra-linguistic or -symbolic terms.

Irigaray proceeds out of this framework by employing Derrida's tactic of unseating the privileged signifier.⁶¹ She does this initially by attempting to deconstruct the ascription of 'no sex' (no penis/phallus), changing it to 'many sexes', and also by attempting to write female sexuality without reference to the phallus.⁶² In effect, she reverses the phallus/non-phallus hierarchy, although this is never intended as a permanent switch. Her creative evocation of a feminine dialogue would seem to operate simultaneously as a refutation/critique of the subject/object relationship and of any attempt to re-insert a hierarchical and dichotomous ordering of signifiers, be they masculine or feminine:

Open your lips, but do not open them simply. I do not open them simply. We--you/I--are never open nor closed. Because we never separate simply, a single word can't be pronounced, produced by, emitted from our mouths. From your/my lips, several songs, several ways of saying echo each other. For one is never separable from the other. You/I are always several at the same

time. How could one dominate the other? Impose her voice, her tone, her meaning? They are not distinct, which does not mean that they are blurred.⁶³

(Notice too that Irigaray refashions a meaning from "no word" to "no single word", playing with the notion that women lack access to language and the symbolic arena.)

Derrida's deconstructive method opens the way for an immanent critique of language. If we can only exist in relation to language and never outside it, we can nevertheless engage in a critical process precisely because language itself is not as closed and fixed as it appears. Infinitely complex, meaning--ostensibly fixed by the relationship between signifier and signified--is almost free-floating, due to its constitution within a series of differences and the inevitable slippage between the signifier and signified:

The play of differences involves syntheses and referrals (renvois) which prevent there from being at any moment or in any way a simple element which is present in and of itself and refers only to itself. Whether in written or spoken discourse, no element can function as a sign without relating to another element which itself is not simply present. This linkage means that each 'element'--phoneme or grapheme--is constituted with reference to the trace in it of the other elements of the sequence or system. Nothing, in either the elements or the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent.⁶⁴

Irigaray invokes this play of difference in two ways. First, by invoking a feminine imaginary in contrast to a phallic one; second, by setting the play of difference into operation within her rendition of female discourse. "Speak

just the same. Because your language doesn't follow just one thread, one course, or one pattern, we are in luck. You speak from everywhere at the same time."⁶⁵ In these ways, then, Irigaray's approach aids in the identification of the conditions of thought imposed by phallogocentrism. This practice is critique, since these conditions, presuming a universality and self-evident logic, are necessarily deligitimized when subjected to such scrutiny and confronted with alternate discourses. "Speak, nevertheless. Between us 'hardness' is not the rule. We know the contours of our bodies well enough to appreciate fluidity. Our density can do without the sharp edges of rigidity. We are not attracted to dead bodies."⁶⁶ Cixous poses the longer range ramifications of the method in this way:

What would become of logocentrism, of the great philosophical systems, of world order, if the rock upon which they founded their church were to crumble? If it were to come out. . . that the logocentric project had always undeniably existed to found (fund) phallogocentrism, to insure for masculine order a rationale equal to history itself? Then all the stories would have to be told differently, the future would be incalculable, the historical forces would, will, change hands, bodies, another thinking as yet unthinkable will transform the functioning of all society.⁶⁷

In the transcribed interview entitled "Women's Exile," Irigaray introduces us to her critical questioning of theoretical discourse, including that of psychoanalysis, which portrays the female sex as a lack, hole, other, in

relation to the male. This status of female sexuality in psychoanalysis is the symptom of a more general discursive function. "Freud's discourse represents the symptom of a particular social and cultural economy, which has been maintained in the West at least since the Greeks."⁶⁸ The usefulness (and limit) of Freud and Lacan is that they describe the consequences of a socio-cultural system which they then fail to criticize sufficiently. Lacan's portrayal of woman as a lack in the discourse organized around the phallus as privileged signifier is, in an important sense (and here is where American feminists have been too quick to dismiss Freud), not false at all. "Can female sexuality articulate itself, even minimally, within an Aristotelian type of logic? No."⁶⁹ The language of the female, says Irigaray, "has nothing to do with the syntax which we have used for centuries, namely that constructed according to the following organization: subject, predicate, or; subject, verb, object. For female sexuality is not unifiable, it cannot be subsumed under the concept of the subject."⁷⁰

This female sexuality is precisely what Irigaray seeks to explore in her creative prose pieces, "When Our Lips Speak Together" and "And One Doesn't Stir Without the Other."⁷¹ "I have tried to find out what the specific modes of functioning of the female sex and the 'imaginary' could be."⁷² (Italics mine.) This is where Irigaray is

most difficult to understand and most susceptible to misinterpretation. It is important to bear in mind that she characterizes her project as one of inventing/exploring new possible languages rather than of documenting pre-fashioned ones:

How can I say it? That we are women from the start. That we don't need to be produced by them, named by them, made sacred or profane by them. That this has always already happened, without their labors. And that their history constitutes the locus of our exile. It's not that we have our own territory, but that their nation, family, home, and discourse imprison us in enclosures where we can no longer move--or live as "we". Their property is our exile. Their enclosures, the death of our love. Their words, the gag upon our lips.⁷³ (Italics mine.)

It must be stressed that her mode is one of deconstruction, rather than naive reconstruction. For example, she plays on the prevailing notion that woman has 'no sex' (no phallus), and takes the implication in a new direction, suggesting that "she does not have 'a sex' [rather than 'any sex'], and that her sex is not visible, or identifiable, or representable in a definite form."⁷⁴ (Italics mine.) This sexual multiplicity, as opposed to lack, in turn threatens the genital organization of heterosexuality, along with a phallic conception of the subject and of identity:

You are moving. You never stay still. You never stay. You never "are". How can I say you, who are always other? How can I speak you, who remain in a flux that never congeals or solidifies? How can this current pass into words? It is multiple, devoid, of "causes" and "meanings", simple qualities; yet it is not decomposable. These movements can't be described

as the passage from a beginning to an end. These streams don't flow into one, definitive sea; these rivers have no permanent banks; this body, no fixed borders. This unceasing mobility, this life. Which they might describe as our restlessness, whims, pretenses, or lies. For all this seems so strange to those who claim "solidity" as their foundation.⁷⁵

What is understandably confusing for some is Irigaray's often direct appropriation of an anatomical vocabulary to convey and explore women's language(s). For example, her image of two lips to simultaneously describe women's discourse and sexuality:

. . . the woman's auto-eroticism is very different from that of the man. The latter needs an instrument to touch himself: his hand, the woman's sex, language Woman, however, is in touch with herself, and in herself without the necessity of a mediation and prior to any possible distinction between activity and passivity. Woman 'touches herself' all the time, moreover without anyone being able to forbid her to do so, for her sex is made up of two lips which embrace each other continuously. Thus, in herself, she is already two--but indivisible into ones--which affect, are affected by, are attached to each other.⁷⁶

And yet, she clearly attempts to disengage from an anatomical interpretation of her method. "We must go back to the question not of the anatomy but of the morphology of the female sex."⁷⁷ Her choice of words here is intriguing, since "morphology" has both a biological and linguistic definition: "1: a branch of biology dealing with the form and structure of organisms 2: a study and description of word formation in a language". (Merriam-Webster) Invoking an association between language (word) and structure (organism), "morphology" also lends itself

to the image of language as a living and dynamic structure; we also hear the unmistakable linking up of bodies (biology) with the symbolic order (words) in this term. Pointing out what others (especially Nietzsche) have noted, Irigaray argues that "all Western discourse presents a certain isomorphism with the masculine sex: the privilege of unity, form of the self, of the visible, of the speculable; of the erection (which is the becoming in a form)." ⁷⁸

If Irigaray is saying that the structure of language and thought recapitulates the symbolic structuring of the masculine body ("the body" as we think we know it) and vice versa, this is very different from an 'anatomy is destiny' formulation of language expressing anatomical 'truth'. In other words, Irigaray is far from asserting that raw or pre-social sexuality dictates our forms of representation. (The question of influence, however, seems to remain open.) Pre-social, non-structured, non-symbolized sexuality is better defined as "drive", "desire", or "instinct". This is the raw stuff which is channelled, molded, cut out in definite forms, repressed and sublimated as it gains representation (a place) within the Symbolic order. If our knowledge and language of sexuality and identity invoke anatomical imagery, this imagery itself (breasts, penis, buttocks, lips), our sense of the anatomical, has already been organized linguistically and

symbolically. This, I would argue, is the framework within which Irigaray ought to be read; otherwise, she will be grossly misinterpreted.

On this view, Irigaray's provocative observation that "the criteria for a valid sexuality should be the same as those of a valid discourse, and that the criteria should be acceptable for a masculine sexuality,"⁷⁹ should be viewed as rooted in the Lacanian notion of linguistically structured sexuality and subjectivity. To say that Irigaray is addressing the intersection of sexuality and representation means that she chooses to focus on linguistically and socially structured sexual meanings which are themselves embedded in an imagery of 'the natural'. That these meanings are generated primarily in reference to an Oedipal phallic signifier in relation to which men and women are situated and hence, defined differently and that this difference is constituted hierarchically in relation to the "rule of the father" and "presence" of the phallus, is the ground which Irigaray attempts to dislodge. She does so by introducing the forbidden and repressed, yet logically implicit notion of multiple sexualities, re-evoking the pre-Oedipal mother-daughter relationship, and using an explicit and often shocking language of female sexuality and anatomy.

Since conceptions of sexuality and subjectivity/identity are integrally bound up within her psychoanalytic

framework, it is no accident that the subject-object relationship repeatedly crops up in her work. Contrasting the phallic conception of this relationship with its repressed feminine counter-part(s), she writes:

We live as two beyond images, mirages, and mirrors. Between us, one is not the "real" and the other, her imitaton; one is not the original and the other, her copy. Although we can be perfect dissemblers within their system, we relate to each other without simulation. Our resemblance does without semblances: in our bodies, already the same. Touch yourself, touch me, you'll "see".⁸⁰

When she argues that the morphologic of Western discourse "does not correspond to the female sex," she is situating herself, appearances to the contrary, within a discourse that denies women-as-the-female-sex access to that singular and contained sense of identity enjoyed by men, rather than within "nature" itself. She then attempts to describe--always metaphorically and tentatively--what such a morphology of the female sex might be, what sort of discourse it might entail:

These two lips of the female sex make it once and for all a return to unity, because they are always at least two, and that one can never determine of these two, which is one, which is the other: they are continually interchanging. They are neither identifiable nor separable one from the other. Besides, instead of that being the visible or the form which constitutes the dominant criteria, it is the touch which for the female sex seems to me primordial: these 'two lips' are always joined in an embrace.⁸¹

That Irigary uses an anatomical language to express these thoughts simultaneously throws the phallus-as-signifier into critical relief as it seeks to defuse the

classical anatomical and biological explanations for women's passivity and inferiority, by giving this discourse a 'taste of its own medicine'. Furthermore, the explicit invocation of female sexual imagery breaks the linguistic and social taboo against an overly explicit rendering of female sexuality, satisfied vicariously in this culture through the pornographic industry. What is also striking about Irigaray's imagery is that it seems largely devoid of the fecundity which is often associated with the feminine.⁸³ This may be a deliberate attempt on her part to develop those voices besides the maternal which is, after all, the main version of female sexuality allowed within the prevailing sexual economy of meaning that must insure reproduction (biological and social).

Difference, then, for Irigaray, is sexually specific because language and the symbolic order organize it along these lines. Woman is the counter subject; counter-subjectivity and counter truths are apprehended through a relentless searching out of the denied feminines lurking within and threatening the singular phallic-inspired logic and identity. This assault on the unified and masculine subject is evident in the works of all four writers under consideration here. From Kristeva's critical perusal of "that crafty authority, the ego", to Irigaray's "How can I say you who are always other?", to Cixous's "contestation of this solidarity of logocentrism and

phallogentrism", to Wittig's explanation of her use of the split "I" (J/e) in The Lesbian Body, this theme is striking in its consistent evocation among writers who disagree about so many other things. Wittig's self-conscious rendition of her own experience as a writer towards a language that has written her out and will only accommodate her on its masculine terms is instructive:

'I' (Je) as a generic feminine subject can only enter by force into a language which is foreign to it, the human not being feminine grammatically speaking but he (il) or they (ils). 'I' (Je) conceals the sexual difference of the verbal persons while specifying them in verbal interchange. 'I' (Je) obliterates the fact that elle or elles are submerged in il or ils, i.e., that all the feminine persons are complementary to the masculine persons. The feminine 'I' (Je) who is speaking can fortunately forget this difference and assume indifferently the masculine language. But the 'I' (Je) who writes is driven back to her specific experience as subject. The 'I' (Je) who writes is alien to her own writing at every word because this 'I' (Je) uses a language alien to her. This 'I' (Je) experiences what is alien to her. This 'I' (Je) cannot be 'un ecrivain'. If, in writing je, I adopt this language, this je cannot do so. J/e is the symbol of the lived, rending experience which is m/y writing, of this cutting in two which throughout literature is the exercise of a language which does not constitute m/e as a subject. J/e poses the ideological and historical question of feminine subjects . . . 83

But for all of their similarities on the turf of criticizing masculine subjectivity and identity, these writers, once past the critique of singular masculine-inspired identity, differ enormously on the question of women and subjectivity. Wittig has publicly situated herself in critical opposition to the écriture feminine strain, criticizing it for what she perceives to be an

uncritical and unmediated appropriation of a language of difference and femininity that is culturally contrived and useful only for keeping women in their appointed places relative to men. "The women say that they perceive their bodies in their entirety. They say that they do not favor any of its parts on the grounds that it was formerly a forbidden subject. They do not want to become prisoners of their own ideology."⁸⁴ Of the four writers under consideration here, Wittig is the least inclined to include "Woman" in her vocabulary. In Les Guérillères and The Lesbian Body we find references to "women" and "the women" only. And in her dictionary for Lesbian Peoples, "woman", like "wife" is defined as a term that has been:

Obsolete since the beginning of the Glorious Age. Considered by many companion lovers as the most infamous designation. This word once applied to beings fallen in an absolute state of servitude. Its meaning was, "one who belongs to another."⁸⁵

The abbreviated dictionary version of Wittig's position is developed more fully in her essay "One is Not Born a Woman," where she argues that "woman" and "man" are political and economic categories, mutually implicated in each other, and requiring a radical questioning. ". . . women will have to abstract themselves from the definition 'woman' which is imposed on them." "'Woman' is there to confuse us, to hide the reality 'women'."⁸⁶ Arguing that the categories of sex must be destroyed, she identifies lesbianism as a concept which transcends these categories,

for "what makes a woman is a specific social relation to man . . . a relation which lesbians escape by refusing to become or stay heterosexual."⁸⁷

Hence, Wittig writes a lesbian-inspired literature, whose thematic and scenic trajectory has increasingly excluded the presence of men, from L'OpoPONax, set within a girls' school and which chronicles the resistance to feminine socialization, to Les Guérillères, an epic myth of Amazon-like revolution against the patriarchy, to Les Corps Lesbien, a lesbian re-writing of the Song of Songs, and Lesbian Peoples: Materials for a Dictionary, in which there is no entry for "men" and where we find a playful recuperation of body, self, language and history for women only.

The women say, I refuse henceforward to speak this language, I refuse to mumble after them the words lack of penis lack of money lack of insignia lack of name. I refuse to pronounce the names of possession and non-possession. They say, If I take over the world, let it be to dispossess myself of it immediately, let it be to forge new links between myself and the world.⁸⁸

Wittig's literary rendition of her political call for a demystification of the category "woman" is to produce a literary form that is maximally non-susceptible to a reading in terms of current definitions of womanhood and gender identity. Her critique of *l'écriture féminine* is that it falls prey to, and helps reproduce, those meanings it would seek to destroy. Metaphorically characterizing her method in Les Guérillères, she writes:

One must not run. One must walk patiently counting the number of one's steps. If one makes no mistake, if one turns to the left at just the right moment, one will not touch the tree sticky with honey with one's outstretched arms. At this stage of the march one must interrupt the calculations and begin again at zero. If one makes no mistake in the calculations, if one jumps with feet together at just the right moment, one will not fall into the snakepit. At this stage of the march one must interrupt the calculations and begin again at zero. If one makes no mistake in the calculations, if one bends down at just the right moment, one will not be caught in the jaws of the trap. At this stage of the march one must interrupt the calculations and begin again at zero.⁸⁹ (*Italics mine.*)

In spite of her opposition to l'écriture féminine, Wittig does not stray from the task of writing the body. The Lesbian Body is a remarkable, beautiful, terrifying and disturbing work. In it, Wittig seeks to write the whole body, and a specified lesbian body at that. The eroticism of the text is produced by a sensuous descriptive language that partakes, in brief sketches, of emotional rantings, strong feelings of attraction and revulsion, violence and sensuousness, confusingly allied. The most remarkable feature of the text is Wittig's journey into the depths, the interior, of the body:

THE LESBIAN BODY THE JUICE THE
 SPITTLE THE SALIVA THE SNOT
 THE SWEAT THE TEARS THE WAX
 THE URINE THE FEACES THE
 EXCREMENTS THE BLOOD THE
 LYMPH THE JELLY THE WATER
 THE CHYLE THE CHYME THE
 HUMOURS THE SECRETIONS THE
 PUS THE DISCHARGES THE SUP-
 PURATIONS THE BILE THE JUICES
 THE ACIDS THE FLUIDS THE
 FLUXES THE FOAM THE SULPHUR
 THE UREA THE MILK THE

ALBUMEN THE OXYGEN THE
 FLATULENCE THE POUCHES THE
 PARIETIES THE MEMBRANES THE
 PERITONEUM, THE OMENTUM,
 THE PLAURA THE VAGINA THE
 VEINS THE ARTERIES THE VESSELS
 THE NERVES⁹⁰

Wittig attempts to write a body unmarked by any economy of meaning. Intestines, eyes, blood vessels, even those parts of the body which are not typical components of erotic or common discourse (who stops to think about the occiput?) become objects of desire. Bodies flow, intermingle, penetrate and sometimes violate one another in nearly unimaginable and often disturbing ways:

M/y most delectable one I set about eating you, m/y tongue moistens the helix of your ear delicately gliding around, m/y tongue inserts itself in the auricle, it touches the antihelix, m/y teeth seek the lobe, they begin to gnaw at it, m/y tongue gets into your ear canal. I spit you, I fill you with saliva. Having absorbed the external part of your ear I burst the tympanum, I feel the rounded hammerbone rolling between m/y lips, m/y teeth crush it, I find the anvil and the stirrup-bone, I crunch on them, I forage with my fingers, I wrench away a bone, I fall on the superb cochlea bone and membrane all wrapped round together
 . . . 91

This prose is unabashedly disturbing, most especially in its violation of bodily integrity, even as it partakes of a powerful erotic dimension.

In contrast to other attempts to write the body, Wittig's approach steers clear of a sentimentalization of the female body. This lesbian passion is not the stuff of an idealized or typical femininity. It also avoids any hint of a fetishization of body parts, except in the

particular moments of particular passions. By the end of the text, no body part is more privileged than any other, in clear contrast to Irigaray's celebration of two lips. Note too that there are no mothers in this discourse. But like Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray, Wittig's exploration of the body provides a marked contrast to the erotic language associated with the specularizable penis.

What is notably at stake in French feminisms is the problem of the subject who is linguistically structured within social relations. Each of the French feminists presented here partake, in measurable and significant ways, of a view of language as a significant constructor of social relations and identity. Their shared focus on language bears witness to their common interest in criticizing and modifying language as a central feature of feminist theorizing and practice. That all of these writers turn to a language of the body speaks to their desperate search for something/anything that might partially elude existing linguistic structuring.

The question of the extent to which human beings are constituted by the symbolic orders under, through, and within which they live is an exceedingly difficult and important one. For those who would tend to grant language a preeminent and highly constitutive role in social organization, human relations, and subjective identity, "difference" can be posed in two slightly different ways.

The first is what I would call the escape or marginality thesis, which argues that women tend to avoid a complete structuration within the social order because they are absent from language and denied public accessibility and representation as speaking subjects. As Cixous has put it, "There's no room for her if she's not a he."⁹² This would seem to be Kristeva's position. The other approach looks to women's constitution as the Other within the symbolic order and then seeks to deconstruct it. This is the method which Irigaray develops. Cixous seems to be playfully situated between these two, at times invoking "the mother . . . who stands up against separation; a force that will not be cut out but will knock the wind out of the codes," at others asserting that "there are no grounds for establishing a discourse, but rather an arid millennial ground to break. . . ." ⁹³ With Irigaray and Kristeva, Cixous celebrates the multiplicity of difference. The final option is rendered by Wittig, who would expunge "difference" altogether as an overloaded term.

For those who would prefer to retain a version of subjectivity that is not totally constructed by language, Kristeva seems to provide a tangible critical stance by establishing a kind of unpredictable holding pattern. That is, her subject is not entirely constructed within symbolic discourse. Her evocation of a semiotic realm establishes some tangible ground for criticism. Unfortunately, an

inescapable side effect of her method is to cast criticism in a perpetual stance of negativity. "Woman" is interesting for Kristeva precisely because of her critical negative impact on a symbolic order that must deny her. Within this formulation "Woman as such" is a means for cultural criticism rather than an end in herself. A clear implication of Kristeva's work is that feminism will only remain critical so long as it remains on the margins. This, of course, raises serious problems for those feminists who envision concrete changes and improvements for women as being of urgent importance. Perpetual negativity, some might argue, is an unaffordable luxury for those who have been on the margins long enough, for those women who are poor, sexually and physically and mentally abused, for those who are politically disenfranchised.

If Kristeva wants to invoke a language of masculine/feminine difference to promote critique, but nonetheless avoids their reification within an instituted discourse, Irigaray and Cixous, focussing more directly and unabashedly on female experience and imagery, seem less fearful of positively invoking those categories which have been used against women. They are willing to play difference out for all that it is worth. While their deconstructive method has yielded rich insights, it could be criticized for taking too much from the symbolic order. A more important critique of their ultrasexualized language

is that it reproduces the tendency within modern culture, brought to critical light by Foucault, of equating sex with truth.⁹⁴ On this view, those who think they have found something fundamental when they dig it out of repressed or forbidden terrain are actually playing right in to the prevailing construction of truth. In defense of Irigaray and Cixous, we should note that they deliberately situate themselves against any singular definition of sex, that they stress the multiplicity of sexualities and 'truths' suggested by women's repressed erotic.

In a different key, Wittig, echoing Marx's youthful call for a "relentless criticism of everything", would have us dispense with difference altogether. Her argument that we must repudiate the category "woman" overemphasizes the closed hegemony of language, while the presumption that we can do so ignores this power. Less ambitious than Wittig in this sense, the deconstructive methods of Irigaray and Cixous grant language a significant power, but do not view it as a thoroughly closed system of meaning. If language is where we are situated, they might say, this is where we must struggle to articulate counter-truths and alternate meanings.

"Difference" has been stretched to the limits of its critical applications and implications by these French feminists, who provide a wealth of indications concerning the rich suggestiveness of the theme, along with a host of

problems engendered by its explicit use. For all of its promise in raising the question of "who is speaking" in terms that move beyond content to the very organization and form of language, the problems associated with "difference" cannot be denied. They include: the problem of accounting for the critical consciousness of women; the question of whether "difference" may in fact recapitulate too much of the old thinking to get beyond it; and the question of whether "woman" is useful or adequate for getting at the diverse experiences of women divided in cultural, economic, racial and economic terms. In the United States, at least, it is clear that "woman" functions all too often as a premature and even racist term, one that has substituted a white female for a masculine stance.⁹⁵

Time, practice, and further dialogue will help to clarify the issues at stake. With careful handling, "difference" offers the possibility of as yet unarticulated, but potential alternatives to predominant conceptions of politics. It suggests that these alternatives might be rendered visible through a sustained focus on female experiences. And it provides intimations of a critical method for those of us engaged with male-identified and -dominated discourses.

FOOTNOTES

¹Two anthologies have recently made this material available to American audiences: Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine, eds., The Future of Difference (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), esp. part 2, "Contemporary Feminist Thought in France: Translating Difference," pp. 71-122; and Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., New French Feminisms (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980). Three especially helpful review articles are: Josette Féral, "Antigone or The Irony of the Tribe," rev. of Luce Irigaray, Speculum De L'Autre Femme (1974), Ce Sexe Qui N'En Est Pas Un (1977), and Julia Kristeva, Polylogues (1977), in Diacritics 8 (3), pp. 2-14; Ann R. Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of L'Ecriture Féminine," in Feminist Studies 7 (2): 247-263; Deborah Melmann, "Feminist Explorations: Life Under Patriarchy," rev. of New French Feminisms, in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory 4 (2), pp. 64-68. See also Yale French Studies 62 (1981), Diacritics 12 (2); and Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 7 (1).

²Jacques Derrida, Spurs/Esperons, cited in Carolyn Burke, "Irigaray Through the Looking Glass," in Feminist Studies 7 (2), p. 288.

³Alice Jardine, "Prelude: The Future of Difference," In The Future of Difference, pp. xxv-xxvii, esp. p. xxv.

⁴Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. H.M. Parshley, (New York: Random House, 1974), esp. pp. 157-223.

⁵Josette Féral, "The Powers of Difference," in The Future of Difference, p. 88.

⁶What I have in mind here is C.B. MacPherson's The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁷Féral, "The Powers of Difference", p. 89.

⁸Shoshana Felman, "Rereading Fertility," in Yale French Studies 62 (1981) , p. 25.

⁹Féral, "The Powers of Difference," pp. 90-91.

¹⁰Julia Kristeva, Polylogues, cited in Féral, "The Powers of Difference," pp. 92-93.

¹¹Alice Jardine, "Prelude: The Future of Difference," p. xxvi.

¹²Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961). See also Adrienne Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, and Gynephobia," in her On Lies, Secrets, and Silence (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), pp. 275-310; and Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature," in Heresies #13 4 (1), pp. 12-16.

¹³Féral, "The Powers of Difference," p. 62.

¹⁴Cited in Féral, "The Powers of Difference," p. 92.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁶Julia Kristeva, Preface to Desire in Language, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. x.

¹⁷Kristeva, "The Ethics of Linguistics," in Desire in Language, p. 31.

¹⁸Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in Desire in Language, p. 65.

¹⁹Kriteva, "The Ethics of Linguistics," p. 23.

²⁰Kristeva, About Chinese Women, trans. Anita Barrows (New York: Urizen Press, 1977), Afterword to the American ed., p. 208.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., pp. 12-13.

²³Ibid., p. 14.

²⁴Ibid., p. 15.

²⁵Ibid., p. 18.

²⁶Ibid., p. 19.

²⁷Ibid., p. 20.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹See Wolfgang Lederer, The Fear of Women (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968) and Rosemary Ruether, New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

³⁰See Lederer and Ruether (n. 29 above), along with the following, for related analyses of pre-Christian cosmologies employing female and specifically maternal symbolism: Murray Bookchin, The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution Hierarchy (Palo Alto, Ca.: Cheshire Books, 1982); Peggy Reeves Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Frederick Turner, Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

³¹While her analysis is in many ways similar to those developed by Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnerstein, her interests extend beyond the question of psychology and women's experiences within the familial and social order, to linguistic and symbolic analysis as well. French feminists often criticize their American counterparts for failing to extend their analyses to the symbolic and linguistic arenas, arguing that without such an analysis, feminist criticism is easily accommodated and de-radicalized within the existing terminology.

³²Kristeva, About Chinese Women, p. 208.

³³Ibid., p. 30.

³⁴Ibid., p. 35.

³⁵Ibid., p. 34.

³⁶Ibid., p. 31.

³⁷Ibid., p. 35.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 35-36.

³⁹Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 37.

⁴²Kristeva, Preface to Desire in Language, p. xi.

⁴³Kristeva, About Chinese women, p. 23.

⁴⁴For an unfortunate American mis-reading of Irigaray's work, see Nancy Chodorow, "Feminism and Difference: Gender, Relation and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective," in Socialist Review 46 (July-August 1979), pp. 51-70.

⁴⁵Since I am not fluent in French, these observations derive from a small dose of intuitive osmosis and a working through of the many detailed footnotes and introductions to Irigaray's work provided by her translators, especially Carolyn Burke. See her "Irigaray Through the Looking Glass," and "Introduction to 'When Our Lips Speak Together'," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 6 (2): 66-68. See also Louise Marcile-Lacoste, "The Grammar of Feminine Sexuality," rev. of Speculum de L'Autre Femme and Ce Sexe qui N'en pas Un, in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory 4 (2), pp. 69-74; and Domna Stanton, "Language and Revolution," in The Future of Difference, pp. 73-87.

⁴⁶Carolyn Burke, "Irigaray Through the Looking Glass," p. 301.

⁴⁷Luce Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," trans. Carolyn Burke, in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 6 (1), p. 73.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 69-70.

⁴⁹Luce Irigaray, "Women's Exile," trans. Couze Venn, in Ideology and Consciousness 1 (1), p. 62. For an Anglo approach to male-constructed language, see Dale Spender, Man-Made Language (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).

⁵⁰Helene Cixous, "Castration or Decapitation?" trans. Annette Kuhn, in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 7 (1), p. 44.

⁵¹Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 73.

⁵²Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (4), p. 887.

⁵³Ibid., p. 88.

⁵⁴Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 78.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 76.

⁵⁷Féral, "The Powers of Difference," p. 91.

⁵⁸Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 75.

⁵⁹I am grateful to the following sources for help in understanding Lacan's difficult approach: Malcolm Bowie, "Jacques Lacan," in Structuralism and Since, ed. John Sturrock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 116-153; Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, Language and Materialism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977); Anika Lemaire, Jacques Lacan, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977); Jacqueline Rose, "Introduction II," in Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the "École Freudienne", eds. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1982), pp. 27-58; Sherry Turkle, Psychoanalytic Politics: Freud's French Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1978). See also Lacan's writings on feminine sexuality in Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., Feminine Sexuality: Jacques and Lacan and the "École Freudienne".

⁶⁰See Ros Coward, Sue Lipshitz and Elizabeth Cowie, "Psychoanalysis and Patriarchal Structures," in Papers on Patriarchy (Brighton: Women's Publishing Collective, 1978), pp. 6-22. In the same collection, see Cora Kaplan, "Gender and Language", pp. 23-37.

⁶¹For help in approaching the work of Derrida, I am indebted to the following: Coward and Ellis, Language and Materialism; Jonathan Culler, "Jacques Derrida," in Structuralism and Since, pp. 154-180; Guayatri Spivak, Introduction to her translation of Derrida's Of Grammatology (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977); D.C. Wood, "An Introduction to Derrida," in Radical Philosophy 21 (Spring 1979), pp. 18-28.

⁶²Irigaray, "That Sex Which is Not One," in Language, Sexuality and Subversion, Working Papers Collection 1, eds. Paul Foss and Meaghan Morris (Darlington, Australia: Feral Publications, 1978), pp. 161-171.

⁶³"When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 73.

⁶⁴Jacques Derrida, Positions, cited in Culler, "Jacques Derrida," p. 164.

⁶⁵"When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 73.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁷Helene Cixous, cited in Domna Stanton, "Language and Revolution: The Franco-American Dis-Connection," in The Future of Difference, pp.73-74.

⁶⁸Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 63.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 64.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Irigaray, "And the One Doesn't Stir Without the Other," trans. Helen Vivienne Wenzel, in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 7 (1): 60-67.

⁷²Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 64.

⁷³Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 74.

⁷⁴Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 64.

⁷⁵Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," p. 73.

⁷⁶Irigaray, "That Sex Which Is Not One," p. 162.

⁷⁷Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 64.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 66. Nietzsche was also on to this sexual morphologic of Western discourse. See his Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future, trans. R.H. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1973), esp. p. 147.

⁸⁰Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together," pp. 77-78.

⁸¹Irigaray, "Women's Exile," pp. 64-65.

⁸²Her mother-infant daughter dialogue, "And the One Doesn't Stir Without the Other," is fascinating precisely for the absence of this typical maternal imagery.

⁸³Monique Wittig, The Lesbian Body, trans. David Le Vay (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. x. For a similar analysis of women's relationship to the generic masculine

83 (cont'd) pronoun in the English language, see Dale Spender, Man-Made Language.

84 Monique Wittig, Les Guérillères, trans. David Le Vay (New York: Avon Books, 1971), p. 57.

85 Monique Wittig and Sande Zeig, Lesbian Peoples: Materials for a Dictionary (New York: Avon books, 1979), p. 165.

86 Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman," in Feminist Issues 1 (2), pp. 48 and 51, respectively.

87 Ibid., p. 57.

88 Wittig, Les Guérillères, p. 107.

89 Ibid., pp. 63-64.

90 The Lesbian Body, p. 26.

91 Ibid., p. 32.

92 Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," p. 888.

93 Ibid., pp. 882 and 875, respectively.

94 Michel Foucault, Introduction to Herculine Barbin, trans. Richard McDougall (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980; Editions Gallimard, 1978).

95 See Gloria T. Hull, et al., eds., But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies (Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1982), esp. Alice Walker, "One Child of One's Own: A Digression Within the Works," pp. 37-44.

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