AN INTRODUCTION TO

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES

This compilation book is as the basic material that integrate five points, introduction to prose, basic terms related to gender, introduction to feminist concepts & issues, introduction to women's fiction, and the female author & her selected short story. Therefore, this book will give the basic knowledge to help the students to able to understand, see, analyze women and gender crisis in particular the literary work that is narrated in the selected short story. Furthermore, introduction to prose, introduction to women's fiction, the female author & her selected short story which are provided among basic terms related to gender and introduction to feminist concepts & issues have the pair reasons that are to meet the instructional objectives of teaching prose to undergraduate students as well as increase their awareness, empathy, solidarity, and spirit towards women and gender crisis that is happened up to present and becomes global issue. Additionally, the specific instructional objectives and exercises are provided for each chapter to measure how well their understanding towards the material discussed in particular the issues relating women and gender in the particular prose and their social surroundings in the real life, media electronic, and social merdia.

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PREFACE

The textbook is provided for the undergraduate students of English Study Program, Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences, University of Trunojoyo Madura who enroll the course of Prose. It is a subject which is offered by the Program for the students of the first semester of third year. It contains three credits. The textbook is entitled *An Introduction to Women and Gender Studies*. The textbook is divided into six chapters which meet the general and specific instructional objectives of the course. The first chapter has four sub chapters regarding introduction to prose. The second chapter consists of six subchapters about terms related to speaking about gender. The third chapter is divided into eleven sub chapters regarding terms related to thinking about gender. The fourth chapter has five sub chapters about introduction to feminist concepts and issues. The fifth chapter consists of three subchapters relating to introduction to women's fiction. The sixth chapter is divided

into two subchapters about Alice Munro and her short story. Each chapter begins with the specific instructional objective so that the students will understand with the specific instructional objectives they should achieve from the material provided. Each chapter ends with the exercises so that the students will evaluate themselves whether they have achieved the specific instructional objectives or not.

All the materials provided here are necessary to build the students' knowledge regarding prose as one of the genres of literature, terms relating to gender, feminist concepts and issues, women's fiction, and one of the outstanding woman author and her fiction. The knowledge is required to explore women issues embedded in the prose based on the feminist concepts. Hence the students will have awareness to gender problems in their circumstances and do actions to solve the problems as well. The reason why prose course is focused to women and gender study because women issues are always interesting to discuss due to the unsolved worlwide cases

Bangkalan, 26/11/2021

SUCI SURYANI

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO PROSE

The specific instructional objectives of the chapter are the students will be able to distinguish between literature and non literature, define prose, and identify the characteristics and types of prose works.

a. The chapter will discuss the definition of literature, prose, narrative, and novel.
b. Having learned the material in this chapter the students will be able to:
    1. distinguish between literature and non literature
    2. define prose .
    3. identify characteristics of prose works
    4. recognize the types of prose works

1.1. Literature

The question "What are English literary studies?" does not look complex at first sight. However, the

answer is not as simple as one might imagine. One answer students may obviously give is that English literary studies deal with English literature. Thus, literary studies differ from other branches of the subject, namely linguistics, where the main focus is on the structures and uses of the English language, and cultural studies where students learn how the various cultures in English-speaking countries have been constructed over centuries. And yet, what is English literature?

First of all, do we talk about literature written in England or do we take into account other Englishs peaking countries such as Ireland, Canada, USA, Australia, etc.? And how about the diversity of cultures and literatures within the United Kingdom, e.g., Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish? To make matters even more complicated, a great many authors from former colonial countries in Africa, India, etc., write in English, and literature from immigrant writers in the US, e.g., Chicano literature, has increasingly received interest from literary scholars. In other words: It is very difficult to draw a clear line, and perhaps one cannot and should not delimit the subject area at all, given the diversity of texts written in English today. 'Literature' is a complex term. It can be used to describe a range of linguistic techniques and strategies which generate, for instance, a resonant image, or a sense of irony, or

purposeful ambiguity, the effects of which would lead us to describe the writing which embodied it as 'literary'.

Another question that arises is: What is literature? Although most people have some idea of what the term 'literature' means, the concept often remains vague and students, when asked about distinct features of literary texts, start to falter. What is Literature? In the attempt to define the term 'literature', one can distinguish between two general directions: a broad and a narrow definition. The broad definition incorporates everything that has been written down in some form or another, i.e., all the written manifestations of a culture (hence, there are terms such as 'research literature', 'the literature on civil rights', etc.). Needless to say that such a broad definition is problematic as it does not really facilitate communication about the topic.

Furthermore, this concept neglects the fact that in many cultures in the past and for a number of indigenous peoples today, literature has not been captured in written media but has been passed down in a long oral tradition of storytelling, myths, ritual speeches, etc. Attempts to come up with a narrow definition have, however, led to such a diversity of approaches that one can hardly talk about 'the' narrow definition. Nevertheless, it is possible to sift out some of the criteria scholars have applied in order to demarcate

'literary texts' from 'non-literary texts'. These criteria include: • fictionality • specialised language • lack of pragmatic function • ambiguity

1.2. Prose

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines prose as 'straightforward discourse' or 'the ordinary form of written or spoken language'. The ordinariness of prose makes it different from poetic language, which, at its most characteristic, is recognisable from the presence of rhyme or metre. This ordinariness is a strength from the perspective of communicative efficiency and flexibility

Prose is the medium I am writing in now, and it could equally be used to introduce readers to the use of computer software:'This introductory section of the Microsoft Windows User's Guide provides a guide to the documentation – so you know where to find information about working with Windows.' 1 But this rather militates against the literary credentials of prose, a point recognised by the journalist Andrew Marr when reviewing The New Oxford Book of English Prose (1998): 'prose is such a general commodity that a real anthology of English prose is unthinkable.

It would spread too widely, from computer manuals to Sun editorials, and would be unreadable.' 2 Marr's comment raises two questions that will

concern us. The first relates to his sense of prose as a 'general commodity': if prose is so ubiquitous, why are certain forms of prose adjudged distinctive? The second question raised by Marr is that of readability: if an anthology of the totality of English prose would be so inclusive as to be unthinkable, what is it that makes some forms of prose more pleasurably readable and thus selectable than the variety found in computer manuals? One answer to that question must be: narrative.

1.3. Narrative

In fact, the majority of anthologised pieces in The New Oxford Book of English Prose are from either novels or short stories, forms cast in narrative. In 1752, the poet and critic Samuel Johnson reflected on why narrative is so captivating:

No Stile of Conversation is more extensively acceptable than the Narrative. He who has stored his Memory with slight Anecdotes, private Incidents, and personal Particularities, seldom fails to find his Audience favourable. Almostevery Man listens with Eagerness to contemporary History; perhaps almost every Man has some real or imaginary Connection with a celebrated Character, some desire to advance, or oppose a rising Name … He that is a Hearer in one Place, qualifies himself to become a Speaker in another;

for though he cannot comprehend a Series of Argument, or transport the volatile Spirit of Wit without Evaporation, yet he thinks himself able to treas ure up the various Incidents of aStory, and pleases his Hopes with the Information which he shall give to some inferior Society.

Skilfully told stories give pleasure to their listeners. As Johnson indicates, narrative consists of 'Incidents' or events arranged into a story. These events are related by a 'Speaker', or narrator, and they are addressed to a 'Hearer'. The popular and non-specialised nature of narrative is evident from the way in which 'Hearers' can themselves become 'Speakers' or narrators in turn.We will all, at some points in our conversational lives, be narrators in ways that will not lead us all to be poets. Johnson reflects on the ordinary, everyday status of narrative as a conversational genre – a genre is a regular (conventional) way of speaking or writing – which highlights similarities between this mode of communication and prose.

1.4. Novel

A defining feature of the novel is that it does not belong to any single genre, yet participates in all genres. Whitcomb's rhetorical approach to the novel acknowledges its borrowings from the conventions which distinguish other literary modes and prose

genres. Thus Whitcomb saw the novel as a 'complex, composite …type' (p. 218) which was made up from 'literature itself'. By 'literature' Whitcomb meant a vast field in which writings and generic conventions circulated. It included drama, which provided conventions for representing the speech, thought and action of characters. It also included the prose genres of the narrative history (such as Carlyle's French Revolution), which provided models for plotting the passage of time and processes of social change and continuity. The prose genre of documentary reportage provided models for writing about the observation of social life and manners on which the 'realistic' effects of novels often depend.

This way of seeing the novel needs to be blended with the very factors that grant novels their privileged position in the cultural field, which is based on the subjective investments and involvements that they invite of their readers. Novels engagingly dramatise conflicts over truth and value through stories about character formation and relationships in recognisable social settings, where the everyday materials of manners, morals, customs and beliefs seem to be like life itself. In other words, readers can generally seek the pleasurable surface presence of a mimetic 'picture of social culture', to use Whitcomb's words again. But this

is an effect, an artfully constructed alibi to deflect from the contest of discourses that is being waged.

The novel can be defined as an extended work of prose fiction. It derives from the Italian novella ("little new thing"), which was a short piece of prose. The novel has become an increasingly popular form of fiction since the early eighteenth century, though prose narratives were written long before then. The term denotes a prose narrative about characters and their actions in what is recognizably everyday life. This differentiates it from its immediate predecessor, the romance, which describes unrealistic adventures of supernatural heroes.

The novel has developed various sub-genres: In the epistolary novel the narrative is conveyed entirely by an exchange of letters. (e.g. Samuel Richardson, Pamela.) A picaresque novel is an early form of the novel, some call it a precursor of the novel. It presents the adventures of a lighthearted rascal (pícaro=rogue). It is usually episodic in structure, the episodes often arranged as a journey. The narrative focuses on one character who has to deal with tyrannical masters and unlucky fates but who usually manages to escape these miserable situations by using her/his wit. The form of the picaresque narrative emerged in sixteenthcentury Spain. Examples are: Cervantes, Don Quixote; and in the English tradition: Thomas Nash, The Unfortunate

Traveler; Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders.

The historical novel takes its setting and some of the (chief) characters and events from history. It develops these elements with attention to the known facts and makes the historical events and issues important to the central narrative. (e.g. Walter Scott, Ivanhoe; Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities). The bildungs roman (novel of education) is a type of novel originating in Germany which presents the development of a character mostly from childhood to maturity. This process typically contains conflicts and struggles, which are ideally overcome in the end so that the protagonist can become a valid and valuable member of society. Examples are J.W. Goethe, Wilhelm Meister; Henry Fielding, Tom Jones; Charles Dickens, David Copperfield; James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

The gothic novel became very popular from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. With the aim to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and a variety of horrors, the gothic novel is usually set in desolate landscapes, ruined abbeys, or medieval castles with dungeons, winding staircases and sliding panels. Heroes and heroines find themselves in gloomy atmospheres where they are confronted with supernatural forces, demonic powers and wicked

tyrants. Examples are Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto; Ann Radcliffe, Mysteries of Udolpho; William Faulkner, Absalom! Absalom!

The social novel, also called industrial novel or Condition of England novel, became particularly popular between 1830 and 1850 and is associated with the development of nineteenth-century realism. As its name indicates, the social novel gives a portrait of society, especially of lower parts of society, dealing with and criticizing the living conditions created by industrial development or by a particular legal situation (the poor laws for instance). Well-known examples are: Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton; Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist; Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil and Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke.

Science fiction is a type of prose narrative of varying length, from short-story to novel. Its topics include quests for other worlds, the influence of alien beings on Earth or alternate realities; they can be utopian, dystopian or set in the past. Common to all types of science fiction is the interest in scientific change and development and concern for social, climatic, geological or ecological change (e.g. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein; H.G. Wells, The Time Machine; Aldous Huxley, Brave New World; George Orwell, 1984; Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange). Meta fiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously

and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. It concentrates on the phenomenological characteristics of fiction, and investigates into the quintessential nature of literary art by reflecting the process of narrating. (e.g. Laurence Sterne, The Life and Opinons of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman; John Fowles, The French Lieutenant's Woman; Doris Lessing, The Golden Notebook)

A romance is a fictional narrative in prose or verse that represents a chivalric theme or relates improbable adventures of idealized characters in some remote or enchanted setting (Lethbridge, 2004). It typically deploys mono dimensional or static characters that are sharply discriminated as heroes or villains, masters or victims. The protagonist is often solitary and isolated from a social context, the plot emphasizes adventure, and is often cast in the form of a quest for an ideal or the pursuit of an enemy. Examples: Anonymous, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Sir Philip Sidney, Arcadia; Percy B. Shelley, Queen Mab; Nathaniel Hawthorn, The House of the Seven Gables. A short-story is a piece of prose fiction marked by relative shortness and density, organized into a plot and with some kind of dénouement at the end. The plot may be comic, tragic, romantic, or satiric. It may be written in the mode of fantasy, realism or naturalism.

1.5. Exercises

1. What is literature? And What is non fictional text?
2. What is prose? and what is the language used?
3. What are the forms of prose? and what is the use of narrative?
4. What is novel? how is it provided? and how is the material of everyday customs embedded in the novel?
5. What are the types of prose fiction?
6. Mention the title of every type of prose fiction. And mention the title of non fictional text.

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CHAPTER II

TERMS RELATED TO SPEAKING ABOUT GENDER

The specific instructional objectives of the chapter are the students will be able to elaborate the terms regarding gender studies as well as history reflecting and shaping the attitudes and values and to reveal the complexities of gendering practices in the society .

a. The chapter will discuss gender, sex and sexuality, the modern subject, institution, patriarchy, and identity.
b. Having learned the material in this chapter, the students will be able to:
    1. elaborate the terms.
    2. describe the history that reflects and shapes the attitude and values.
    3. reveal the complexities of gandering practices in the society.

In this chapter, we explore many of the terms which recur in our discussions of gender and sexuality, to discover what their actual history is and how this history reflects and shapes attitudes and values. We also begin to look at how subjectivity is formed, and provide some of the initial terms that you will need to navigate through the complex terrain of the various hypotheses on what processes govern the formation of the self. To think about gender is to think about the self, or the subject, in formation. Let us start with the most obvious term: gender.

2.1. Gender

Gender divides humans into two categories: male and female. It is a system which organises virtually every realm of our lives; whether we are sleeping, eating, watching TV, shopping or reading, gender is at work. Yet because it is everywhere, it is sometimes difficult to see it in operation. Imagine trying to escape the division of gender in our daily lives – without the birth certificate which records our gender, we could not get a passport, or driver's licence (which also record our gender). But say we had managed to get by without paperwork. Every trip to a public toilet would demand that we declare our gender by which door we choose. Every human body in modern societies is assigned a place in a binary structure of gender.

Not only does the system of gender divide the human race into two categories, it privileges the male over the female. Gender operates as a set of hierarchically arranged roles in modern society which makes the masculine half of the equation positive and the feminine negative. We can trace this way of dividing up the world as far back as the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in Western European history (see Synnott 1993). In his Metaphysics Aristotle summarises what he calls the Pythagorean table of opposites and it shows clearly how these divisions work. On the one side are terms such as Limit,Odd, One, Right, Male, Resting, Straight, Light, Good, Square; on the other side, Unlimited, Even, Plurality, Left, Female, Moving, Curved, Darkness, Bad, Oblong (Aristotle 1968–69).

Aristotle sets one series of nouns against another, sorting them into opposites, where the obviously opposite pairs reinforce the oppositionality of the merely different pairs (male is to female as an oblong is opposite to a square?). Aristotle took his curious set of binary oppositions even further in his Economics where he states that men were stronger, women weaker; men courageous, women cautious; men the outdoors type, women domestic; men educate children, women nurture them (Aristotle 1968–69). An examination of TV ads shows that ancient Greek

philosophy continues to have its influence centuries later. Beer commercials show men shooting dangerous rapids, while women are pictured elsewhere decorating the home. Even our language is gendered: nouns which are feminine in English (as in many other languages) more often than not have negative connotations. A buddy (a word derived from brother) is a good thing to have, but no one wants to be a sissy (derived from sister).

This binary division of gender can take several forms. The two halves can be seen to be equal but opposite, in a complementary relationship, as in the Ying/Yang symbol of Chinese philosophy. However, often the two halves will be typified as opposite and with the female in the inferior position. An example of this can be found in the nineteenth-century work of Paul Broca, who weighed male brains against female ones, and came up with some rather dubious conclusions about male superiority based on his findings. Another formulation of the binary division has it that the two halves are opposite and the female is naturally superior. The pioneer of education, Maria Montessori, held opinions which would exemplify this view: she saw women's superiority in their guardianship of human morality, affectivity and honour (for a longer discussion of the binary division and more examples, see Synnott 1993).

We have here several ways of configuring the relationship between the two sides of gender (equal but opposite; opposite but female-negative; opposite but female-positive; and so on), but while these formulations might reflect different political agendas, and different ways of understanding the world, they all share the view that human gender is binary, is made up of two halves, which each define the other. The male side of the equation is generally coded as the positive one, and so becomes the standard by which all others are judged; in effect it becomes the norm. This privileging of the masculine is generally the case in Western societies.

When gender is used in feminist analysis, it is traditionally defined in relation to sex: gender as the cultural or social construction of sex. As a sociological or anthropological category, gender is not simply the gender one is, that is, a man or a woman, but rather a set of meanings that sexes assume in particular societies. The operation of gender in our society takes up these sets of meanings, organises them as masculinity or femininity, and matches or lines them up with male and female bodies. Received opinion about gender would have it that a female body produces feminine behaviours, a feminine identity.

Cross-cultural research from anthropologists such as Margaret Mead (1949) has often been used by

feminists to show that if sex is a biological given, gender is a social construct (see also section on 'Sex'). This research has also made clear that a particular behaviour which is coded as masculine in one society may becoded feminine in another. A man holding hands with another man in public is interpreted as feminine behaviour in many Western nations. In countries in the Middle East, however, this activity would be coded as acceptable masculine behaviour. Moreover, in the nineteenth century in England, a man would often stroll arm in arm with another male friend without this being coded as effeminate. This allows us to consider the historical and cross-cultural constructedness of femininity and masculinity, of gender itself.

Many socialist feminists and theorists such as Christine Delphy (1984) maintain that sex roles became part of our bodies, not because they expressed masculinity or femininity, but because of a hierarchical division of labour which initiated the elaboration of hierarchies. For Delphy, gender came into being to reinforce an already existing dichotomy between workers and owners. For some theorists, gender and sex are overlapping constructs that differ in emphasis, where our understanding of biological sex is likely to be shaped by our culture's notion of gender. Other theorists argue that there is no body, no biological

sex, outside gender; that in becoming human, one is always already gendered.

2.2. Sex and Sexuality

Sex is a theory about human beings which divides them into two biologically based categories – male or female. While the debate over which comes first, gender or sex, may be a red herring, a discussion of how people have understood what sex is would seem to be crucial to a discussion of gender. We all know what sex is, don't we? It's easy to demonstrate. You point to someone's body to prove they're a man or woman, a boy or a girl. The idea of sex is so naturalised that it is hard to see it at work. Of course sex is natural. Men and women fit together, don't they? As only one chromosome out of 46 determines sex, human beings are biologically, or genetically, more similar than we are different. Yet this idea of sex, of a natural biological coupling and equivalence, is part and parcel of the establishment in certain Western cultures of a battle of the sexes, of a binary opposition, which makes this distinction and mutual exclusiveness between men and women appear natural.

To start thinking about what sex is, we must first concentrate on its naturalness. We believe that proof of the existence of two sexes is on the body, in the body; it is the body. Yet biologists are not necessarily

uninfluenced by their own cultural beliefs about what is natural. The anatomist Herophilus of Alexandria, who assumed that women were imperfect men, dissectedcadavers and found the proof for his theory; he thought he saw testes and seminal ducts connected to the neck of the bladder, using the male body as a template (see Synnott 1993). Of course, what he saw were ovaries and Fallopian tubes, which do not connect to the bladder.

We began with the naturalness of sex, and now move to its binary quality. Common knowledge has it that there are two sexes. How do we know? Administrative forms ask us to tick male or female, doors to public toilets make us choose one or the other, the birth of a new baby is invariably greeted with the question, 'Boy or girl?' Many psychologists, biologists and medical practitioners in particular rely on definitions of sex which refer to a person's biological maleness or femaleness.

When, in modern societies, a child is born with ambiguous genitalia, parents are asked to make a difficult decision: which of the two sexes will they choose for the sex of rearing? This decision is framed by medical expertise, made largely on the basis of the reproductive possibilities of the infant or its real genetic sex. In our highly medicalised modern societies, the resolution of ambiguous sex reveals how

our bodies are rigorously policed into two sexes – male or female. Sigmund Freud (1925, 1931, 1933), the 'father of psychoanalysis' who developed his theories quite early in the twentieth century, didn't think that the little boys and girls growing up into proper mothers and fathers was the only possibility (although he did think it was the only sane one). He imagined that this sexual distinction could be upset, and reviewed the possibilities of other developmental trajectories, such as various forms of homosexuality ('inversion') and modes of anatomical hermaphroditism. But in our society it is increasingly difficult to think outside the frame of male and masculine, female and feminine.

What then is the relationship between gender and sex? There have been quite important and consequential formulations of the distinction between sex and gender, for example, in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1972), 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman', and in cultural anthropology where gender does not reflect or express sex as a primary given, but is the effect of social and cultural processes. The 'sex/gender system' is a term feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin (1974) coined to explain the variable ways that kinship organisations produce gendered beings out of sexed bodies. In 1974, she argued that all societies had a sex/gender system, and that this system produced social conventions on

gender from the biological and anatomical raw material of human sex and procreation. Rubin's essay argues with the work of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Rubin questions Levi-Strauss's analysis of the universality of kinship relations. Levi-Strauss believed that universal structures required every human to submit to the incest taboo in order to enter into kinship and the cultural status of the human subject.

Only through subjecting incestuous impulses to this taboo do subjects emerge. In other words, to have the status of a person, to be able to say 'I', everyone must first be positioned within kinship, that is, become a daughter, sister, brother, son. The individual is prohibited from desiring or becoming members of their own kinship group (family or clan) – the incest taboo. So human subjects emerge on the condition that they are first gendered through kinship relations. Rubin goes on to explain that the law of kinship produces human subjects, by prohibiting not only incest, but also homosexuality; gendered subjects are thus produced through a series of prohibitions which regulate not only sexual behaviour, but sexual desire itself. One is a man to the extent that one does not desire other men, but desires only those women who are substitutes for the mother; one is a woman to the extent that one does not desire other women (the spectre of that desire has

been transformed into an identification, into wanting to be like that woman rather than wanting that woman) and desires only those men who are substitutes for the father.

For both Levi-Strauss and Lacan, it is only through being subjected to this process of heterosexualised gendering that viable or coherent human subjects are produced. So, 'one' is not a one, that is, a speaking, human subject, except through subjection to this heterosexual imperative. For Lacanian-based feminist psychoanalysis, this doesn't quite measure up. If feminists take Lacan seriously, then gender cannot be said to be the cultural construction of sex, for sex is established through the linguistic effect of sexual difference, and this effect is coextensive with language, and hence, culture as such. The initiation into language is the primary process by which sexual difference is required and constituted.

If this scheme is right, gender cannot be overthrown, and the very wish to do so is a fantasy which is inevitably thwarted by the constraints of language itself. Such a view has critical implications for any effort to consider gender as that into which one is socialised, for the 'one' is always already marked by sexual difference; constituted in culture as a sexed being before the process called socialisation. Understanding how the sex/gender system establishes

not only the sex of bodies, but also the kinds of desire they can have is very important. The way that some kinship systems make all homosexual practices taboo, and others do not, is important for thinking about the ways in which heterosexuality is made natural by culture. Feminism has argued that these gendered, heterosexual positions are not as stable as some might have us believe. Some feminists think that our unconscious fantasies threaten the stability of the structure, or that these are historically specific ideas about becoming human, and so may be different in other cultures, and subject to change in the future.

Informed by feminist and gay cultural movements, the future of kinship relations could lead to the destabilisation and overthrow of gender itself. Imagine a world with five sexes, say, lesbian, man, hermaphrodite, woman and cyborg. This would be a project which would involve reinventing everything which surrounds us, language, architecture, painting, advertising and, most of all, ourselves.

Sexuality is a set of social processes which produce and organise the structure and expression of desire. What is clear about the definitions and discussions of gender and sex is that ideas about sexuality are so intimately tied up with gender, that it is sometimes difficult to see where one ends and the other begins. To begin with, the hierarchy that privileges the

male in dualist systems of gender, also gives the structure for how sexuality works in Western society. Female sexuality is marked as naturally masochistic, narcissistic and passive; male sexuality is inscribed as naturally aggressive, sadistic and active. Traditional notions of women's sexuality make it virtually synonymous with her reproductive function. Motherhood is seen as the natural expression of female sexuality. The myth of the vaginal orgasm (that is, the belief that an orgasm triggered by vaginal rather than clitoral stimulation is superior and normal for women), for example, is caught up in this notion that pleasure and desire in women will be tied to child-bearing. (This myth is one of Freud's less laudable contributions to thinking on gender and sexuality, and is one reason why his theories have been viewed with some suspicion by feminist theorists.)

2.3. The Modern Subject

Several times in the first three sections of this chapter we have used the word 'subject' rather than the word 'individual' or even 'self'. Writers in this field often refer not only to the self, or the individual, but at times to the subject, and subjectivity. Much of the work in this book will consist of suggesting ways to think about how we come to be who we are. We will be analysing what it means to be human. In focusing on

gender, sex and sexuality, we are focusing on the subject. For some analysts of what being human involves, gender is a supplemental category – for example the optional extra of air conditioning in an expensive car. For those who think it is a bit more crucial (the wheels? the chassis?), it then becomes important to choose appropriate theories of being human. When we think of our self, our ideas are formulated not only by our original insights into what it means to be, but also in part by what prominent philosophers have speculated about the self over the last few centuries. We will be gradually introducing this concept of the subject and subjectivity and its importance throughout the book, but we start here by discussing what is understood by the word 'individual' and what some of the major differences are between it and the modern subject.

When we speak about the self, we often imagine the individual, someone who knows their own mind, acts on their rational assessments of situations. For example, a friend decides to move cities to take a new job. When we ask them why, it is likely that they will present a series of reasons – that the money is better, that the work is more challenging. We, in turn, will probably accept that this is an appropriate way to talk about the situation. We will assume that someone acting in the world can take it upon themselves to make

such a decision, to act autonomously. We are unlikely to hear from them an explanation that as their childhood was troubled, they neurotically move from place to place; that they have seen a vision from God which initiated their departure; that their boss has commanded that they do so; or that their parents have insisted. Of course, these are possibilities, but when people represent their actions to others, they generally like to show themselves as reasonable, and the source of their own decisions, that is, autonomous. 'Yes, my boss was very insistent, but finally, I am the one who made the decision.'

The model of the self, or subject, which is being used in this scenario, is one of the individual – an autonomous being who acts and thinks rationally, for whom flights of fancy, madness or spirit are aberrant, not part of a properly functioning self. Like many of the concepts we review in this book, this one is also not as natural as it seems at first glance. It comes to us from early modern European philosophers, and can be most clearly seen in René Descartes' treatise on scientific method (1979). Descartes, a seventeenth-century French philosopher and scientist, is generally acknowledged in Western thought to be the founder of modern scientific method. His famous dictum cogito ergo sum – 'I think therefore I am' – establishes the rational individual as the centrepiece

of a variety of interlocking practices of knowing. This thinker is self-defining and self-sufficient. Coded as male, he is fully conscious to himself, in control of his actions, thoughts and meanings.

The Cartesian method also sees knowledge or science itself as universal, available to all who follow the appropriate rules of investigation. This implies that the idea of mind is a disembodied universal. Knowledge, particularly rationality, is imagined as the universal property of human beings. Not only does the thinking subject transcend its own corporeality in this model of knowledge, but it also sees itself as a neutral observer. This transcendent subject – the one which establishes itself by announcing, 'I think therefore I am' – is also capable of neutral observation.

This is the self upon which much of liberal politics is based. The self which acts as a citizen is, in this humanist political philosophy, a liberal self, one for whom individual rights are secured. This kind of humanism assumes that the individual, man, has individual free will and is autonomous; that is, that individuals can define themselves independently of the social structures and physical relations of which they are a part. Autonomy, free will and rationality – these capacities are defined as natural to humans. One could ask: what's wrong with being rational, self-controlled and neutral? If certain qualities such as

rationality are seen as coming naturally to certain kinds of humans (white European heterosexual men), it doesn't leave much space for women and other people who don't fall into those categories to see themselves as human. Two thinkers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century began to challenge these ideas of the individual, and their challenges had a lasting impact on the ways we imagine that our selves function.

In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx articulated a powerful vision of the way that humans in capitalist society are shaped and determined by their work, by whether, how, to whom they sell their labour, by the kinds of work they do, and their relations to what he called the mode of production. For Marx, whether one worked in a factory or owned the factory made a big difference to what kind of self one might have. Marx argued that consciousness is determined by social and economic systems rather than the other way around. This puts paid to the idea of the sovereign individual who's running the show. For Marx, the economic system of capitalism makes the worker in our scenario a mobile one, and not his/her individual decisions. Certainly, such decisions are important for that person, but as a model for understanding the motivations and functioning of selves, Marx needed a theory of the subject that would take into account

people acting collectively, and being acted upon collectively. The collective subject, the idea that based on the subjective shared experience of material circumstances we develop a collective identity, is one that we can trace to Marxism.

A second prominent thinker also upended these common notions about how people might develop. Psychoanalyst and philosopher Sigmund Freud undertook a detailed elaboration of the functioning of the human mind and the mental mechanisms by which it becomes adapted to the world. Two important innovative ideas are central to Freud's new perspective. First, that sexuality can be a source for somatic (physical) illness for both sexes at all ages, including children; second, that sexuality is linked to unconscious processes. Freud posited that all subjects have areas and activities of the mind not accessible to consciousness, repressed material including infantile aggressions, resentments, traumas and fixations too painful or conflicted for consciousness to bear but which nevertheless inform human actions, language and thought. He called this the unconscious.

This had enormous implications for concepts of subjectivity. Whereas since Descartes the individual had been conceived as autonomous, rational and masterful, Freud emphasised the structuring role

played by the unconscious. The psychoanalytic concept of the 'subject', in opposition to the humanist term 'individual', implies that subjectivity is more than and goes beyond, even eludes, the conscious self. For Freud, subjectivity is a laborious and endless process, in which the subject is torn back and forth between desires and drives on the one hand and cultural and social demands on the other. Freud developed a model of the psyche which breaks it into three parts, and which reflects the fragmentation of the subject into dynamic components: the unconscious (the id), the conscious personality (the ego) and the cultural and symbolic image of the self (the superego).

2.4. Institution

In the discussion of the term 'sexuality', we mentioned the 'patriarchally dominated institutions of sexuality'. Let us examine what we mean by these terms. By 'institution' we mean a set of relationships and/or practices which are expressions of mainstream social values and beliefs: for example, relationships such as the family, practices such as parliamentary democracy, the legal system and general education. In each case a specific form of the institution is given broad social approval and support – rhetorical and/or material. So in the case of the family, contemporary Western societies tend (in most cases) to favour the bourgeois nuclear family, and so family comes to

mean that specific formulation: heterosexual, discrete, isolated and constituted on the basis of patrilinearity. Now this is not the only family structure to be found in contemporary Western societies; however, it is the structure which is assumed in government policy, and so receives the benefit – rhetorical and material – of government and its ministries.

When a particular set of relationships and practices attains the status of an institution, therefore, a number of consequences can be seen:

1. A specific formulation of this set of relationships and/or practices is not only identified with the institution, but as the institution – with the consequent exclusion of different formulations.
2. The institution effectively positions all individuals within the society as either part of it, or potentially part of it – with the consequent disapprobation of those who cannot or will not participate.
3. That formulation of the institution, which is the institution, is supported not only by general (although not unanimous) approval, but also by economic and other institutional advantage.

Taking the family as our example again, we might trace these consequences in its operation. For example, because the family assumed in government policy and in many of the cultural productions of Western

societies is the bourgeois nuclear family, it is very difficult for other family formations to be granted legitimacy and the material and other support which make it possible to operate. For example, a family comprising a same-sex couple frequently encounters difficulties with regard to issues such as bank loans, workplace acceptance of the same-sex partner, sick leave to attend a same-sex partner and spousal allowances of many kinds (government and workplace). Afamily comprising same-sex partners with children encounter many of these issues as well as issues specifically concerning the children: who to contact in the case of illness, availability of sick leave to attend children and custody issues in the case of separation. Because this family arrangement is not socially legitimated (via policy arrangements and general social attitudes), its members encounter difficulties, and they are excluded from both the material benefits and social reinforcement offered to the institutional (bourgeois nuclear) family.

The coercive power of the institution in relation to individuals can be seen in the pressure on women and men to settle down and have a family. For those whose inclinations – sexual or otherwise – do not necessarily dispose them to this lifestyle (and note again that family here implicitly means a bourgeois, nuclear, patrilineal family), then social disapprobation

is expressed in many ways; at its least virulent in slighting references to the individual's sexuality, fertility and/or social responsibility. While this may have a minimal effect on some people, for others it may be a constant reproach, a source of insecurity and even self-loathing.

As stated above, the family which is not the bourgeois, nuclear, patrilineal family may find it impossible to access the kinds of material benefits which society offers the correct family; for example in taxation allowances, sick leave entitlements and insurance payments. Alternative family structures also do not receive the social approval expressed in cultural productions such as advertisements, television programmes and films, and, in fact, are often defined negatively by contrast with the institutionalised family. An institution is a set of relationships and/or practices which are expressions of mainstream social values and beliefs, and have the support – explicit and implicit – of other social and cultural institutions.

2.5 Patriarchy

The institution which is probably the most talked about in feminist theory is patriarchy. The concept and widespread use of the term 'patriarchy' grew out of feminist debates about gender in the 1960s and 70s. Patriarchy replaced the earlier term 'sexism',

emphasising the importance of institutions in gender oppression, rather than individual prejudice (Edley and Wetherell 1995). It is still used as a shorthand to indicate a social system in which maleness and masculinity confer a privileged position of power and authority; where man is the Self to which woman is Other. It was taken from anthropology where it referred to a kinship system in which the eldest male, sometimes literally the father or patriarch, was invested with authority over other men and over women. In this model of patriarchy, which continued in apprentice crafts in the early modern period, old men held authority, younger males were subservient, and women were excluded. Early feminist theorists used the term strategically to highlight men's dominance of women in the private (the family) and the public (work, politics, culture) spheres. Now, however, it is generally used to refer to the systematic structural differences in the cultural, economic and social position of men in relation to women.

Patriarchy is a social system in which structural differences in privilege, power and authority are invested in masculinity and the cultural, economic and/or social positions of men. Under a patriarchal regime, women are, by definition, excluded from positions of power and authority – except where that power and authority works to

support individual men or the social system as a whole. So a woman might be authoritative towards her children in the home, in order to provide a calm and supportive environment for her husband. She might be authoritative as a teacher, in order to reinforce the values and attitudes constitutive of the social system. When writers refer to the patriarchy or patriarchal values, they indicate a set of values and beliefs which positions the male and masculine as the site of authority and power in society. Women are excluded from this power and authority unless it ultimately serves the ends of that social system, and then its actual status as power and authority may be challenged.

However, patriarchy has become a controversial term; it has been critiqued for its monolithic construction of men and masculinity as the enemy and the oppressor; for its lack of precision and its inability to account for complex social processes and cultural dynamics. For example, a working-class man may be subservient to a wealthy woman in social interactions, illustrating that the factor of class is one of the processes involved in the dynamics which some uses of the term patriarchy overlook. When 1970s' feminism spoke of patriarchy as the master pattern in human history, the argument was over- generalised. But the idea well captured the power and intractability of a massive structure of social relations:

a structure that involved the state, the economy, culture and communications as well as kinship, child-rearing and sexuality (Connell 1996).

While many feminists are now wary of using the term, scholars of masculinity have retained the term but use it in conjunction with more detailed considerations of the relation between patriarchy and capitalism, and patriarchy and male hegemony, in an attempt to understand the multidimensional and historically and culturally specific forms of male dominance. Importantly, ways of Talking 15it is one of the few contexts in which 'the man question' or 'the man problem' can be raised. In almost all other social theories, the issue of gender is raised in terms of 'the woman question' or 'the woman problem'.

Recent studies in a wide range of disciplines (sociology, social psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, history and cultural studies) have focused on the importance of thinking structurally rather than personally about the issue of gender oppression. Contemporary studies of masculinity have turned their attention to several sites – capitalist work practices, the division of labour, the family, the state, colonialism, empire, rationality, sexuality and culture – as important patriarchal structures. In understanding Masculinities, Martin Mac An Ghaill (1996) is concerned to build up a more complex

model for understanding masculinity and male domination as cultural and social practices that are part of large-scale social structures and processes. Yet while Connell (1996) points out that 'the main axis of power in the contemporary European/American gender relations' remains 'the overall subordination of women and dominance of men – the structure Women's Liberation named "patriarchy"' (p. 74), the phrases 'male hegemony' or 'hegemonic masculinity' are used by some instead of the term 'patriarchy' in reference to the widespread domination of men in the social, economic and cultural spheres.

Male hegemony or hegemonic masculinity refers to the widespread domination of men in the social, economic and cultural spheres. The concept of 'hegemony' refers to 'the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life' and is borrowed from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations (Connell 1996, p. 77). Hegemonic masculinity consists of the current practices and ways of thinking which authorise, make valid and legitimise the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. This hegemony exists through institutions such as the family, corporate business, government and the military.

Connell uses the phrase 'patriarchal dividend' to refer to the ways in which all men benefit from

patriarchal privilege without personally being engaged in direct acts of aggression or oppression of women. There is, he suggests, a widespread 'complicity with the hegemonic project' even among men who are never violent towards women, who do their share of the housework and make extensive compromises with women rather than exercising naked domination or uncontested displays of authority. (This does not mean that violence is not used in the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity; male on female domestic violence is still significantly present.)

David Buchbinder (1994, 1998) suggests that patriarchal social structures are not positive for men either. In addition to the subordination of women, he points out that in modern Western patriarchal societies there is also 'a differential power relationship among men', with access to power depending on 'physical build, and strength, age, (official) sexual orientation and prowess (even if only rumoured), social class and advantage, economic power, race of the individual, and so on' (1994, p. 34). Throughout their lives, boys and men find themselves under the supervision and surveillance of other males. Under these conditions many men come to feel that they may be publicly humiliated and deprived of their status as men. As a consequence of this, they may strive for 'an excessive masculinity, whether signified by a huge,

muscular body, an impressive sexual scorecard', 'a powerful car or a high-flying job', or 'acts of violence toward women and children, and other men, especially gays, as an attempt to assert their masculinity in the eyes of their fellows' (p. 36). This rivalry towards other men, which is also a feature of hegemonic masculinity, leads to men's demands for unequivocal emotional support from women, which in turn leads to domestic violence if the woman is unable or unwilling to give it.

Patriarchy remains a contested term. But whether one speaks of patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity, conceiving of gendered differences in power and authority as structural allows scope to both men and women to work for changes in social policy, for childcare provisions, for flexible working conditions and working hours, and for policies that monitor the abuse of power and violence.

2.6. Identity

Identity is a concept which enables groups to come together around the articulation of shared experience. In the discussion of the word 'gay' and the ways in which it has been used strategically by people choosing to identify as being gay, we have opened up the question of what identity is. The concept of identity, like that of the subject and subjectivity which we

discussed early in this chapter, has undergone something of a major revision in our postmodern times. Earlier views of individuals as self-determined, integrated beings have been replaced by a more complex notion of individuals as multiple subjectivities, sometimes described as fractured or split (to make the difference from the earlier concept clear). In this postmodern revaluation of the concept of subjectivity, we might question the fate of a concept related to both subjectivity and experience – identity.

As we have seen in our discussion of the production of the homosexual as a negative classification, identities can sometimes be turned around, and mobilised for positive political ends. For many people identity has been a very useful concept in that it enables them to discuss their common experience of the world with others whom they regard as like them; that is, others who share what they see as crucial features of their social positioning (such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and so on). The example of being gay has been extensively outlined above. This has been particularly important for those whose experience has been devalued by normative or regulatory notions of experience derived from the interrelationships of one or moregroups privileged (by access to institutional power and/or force) within society. For those excluded from influence and so from

the validation of their experience, the notion of shared identity – and hence shared experience – enabled them to move beyond an internalised sense of inferiority; a notion that they did not have the normative experiences (and behaviours, feelings and thoughts) because they were personally inadequate. Instead it acknowledged that they shared their difference with many others, who were not personally inferior, but who had a different set of interrelationships with the world. Their experience was different (from the normative) and so their world was different (from the normative), because they were different (from the normative). Their experience was not valued not because it was inherently inferior, but because they were socially and politically less powerful. By providing such groups with a way of sharing experience and discussing their differences from the norm, identity was an extremely powerful social an political tool.

Cultural critic bell hooks (1990) has written of the anxiety felt by some African-Americans, therefore, at the deconstruction of identity which has accompanied the postmodern interrogation of subjectivity. She reports the response: 'Yeah, it's easy to give up identity, when you've got one' (p. 28). And she comments that African-Americans might be wise to question the deconstruction of subjectivity

and identity when it occurs just as they are achieving a socially acknowledged subjectivity and identity for the first time.

Nevertheless, hooks goes on to argue for a postmodern concept of identity, one which is not based in a unitary or monolithic concept of subjectivity and so an essentialist notion of identity:

Such a critique allows us to affirm multiple Black identities, varied Black experience. It also challenges colonial imperialist paradigms of Black identity which represent blackness one-dimensionally in ways that reinforce and sustain white supremacy. (hooks 1990, p. 28)

That is, hooks recognises in essentialist notions of identity a regulatory or normative force, even where the identity being addressed is not a socially influential one. Class theorists have noted the same problem with essentialist concepts of class. If working-class identity is equated with a particular set of characteristics, is there a point at which an individual is effectively debarred from working-class identity (for example through education or employment)? And if education and employment can be seen as determining class identity, then does that not paralyse working-class culture, producing the kind of one-dimensional

identity that hooks notes as a feature of colonialist views of black identity?

Another important feature of postmodernist (multiple, split, fractured) identity relates to its political function, and is perhaps the way past the concern that postmodernist interrogations devalue shared experience and shared identity:

> 'Postmodern culture with its decentered subject can be the space where ties are severed or it can provide the occasion for new and varied forms of bonding' (hooks 1990, p. 31).

If identity is seen as fluid, rather than fixed, but as capable of points of (temporary or conditional) stasis, then its political force is not lost, but enhanced. So, for example, a working-class Anglo gay man might be able to form a temporary or conditional identification with a middle-class Asian gay man on the grounds of shared sexual identity (and despite differences of class and ethnicity) for the purpose of shared social, cultural and/or political communication and activity. The identity here is conditional, in that both individuals will be aware of their differences (of class and ethnicity), yet it enables kinds of sharing and activity which less flexible notions of identity would tend to devalue. In the postmodern scenario, identity is not an essentialist attribute of an individual but a strategy which

individual (complex, multiple) subjects can use to create new and varied alliances.

The concept of the 'nomad' is used by philosopher Rosi Braidotti (1994) to explore this strategic use of identity. The nomadic subject, says Braidotti, is a fiction which enables her to think about and beyond well-known categories such as class, race, ethnicity, gender, age and so on, without being confined or limited by those categories. It enables her to think of the individual subject in relation to many of these categories at once, even where they sometimes contradict; as she says, 'blurring boundaries without burning bridges' (Braidotti 1994, p. 4). This concept of the nomad is also prominent in the work of the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1983, 1987) where it argues for the strategic alliances made possible by self-aware, conditional, socially grounded interrelationships. In other words, they argue that such alliances are only possible when people do not deny or refuse to acknowledge their differences, as normative identities would demand, but instead make the combination of differences and commonalities a positive and powerful feature of a conditional, temporary alliance.

The anxiety reported by bell hooks is still there as an echo in these arguments. Is there a danger that this strategic sense of identity might be

romanticised in such a way that the history and actual experiences of (some of) those involved may be lost? If that happens, is it not likely to be the experiences of those who have least social influence? An example of this kind of problem arose within the feminist movement when it was found, after the euphoria of the 1960s, that the experience and history of women who were not Anglo, not middle class and not heterosexual (among other things) was not voiced and not validated in feminist theory. Strategic alliances had been formed often by women from varied backgrounds, but those differences had not been acknowledged. As a result, the only experience and history which was theorised was that of the socially powerful groups within the movement – predominantly Anglo, middle-class heterosexuals. The consequences of such exclusions become clear when the theory is translated as policy and the women's movement became preoccupied with issues which related solely to the experience of that (socially privileged) group.

2.7 Exercises

1. How do you 'do' gender? What things do you do to your body to claim a gender (for example think of hair, clothing and so on); how do you interact non-verbally (for example how do you sit, eat, move); verbally (for example interrupt, level of voice, and so on); and what activities do you engage in (for example watching football doing masculinity and so on)?
2. How is sexuality policed in your community? Imagine three or four different events, public and private – a religious ceremony, dinner party, home and school meeting, office party, and so on. How does this change the planning for the event or the event itself?
3. In what ways do people begin marking a child's gender after its birth? How soon does this take place?
4. How would you specify your own identity? What features of your background, education, physical presentation, work experience and so on do you think are important in specifying that identity? How do different situations in which you are involved influence your expression of that identity?
5. How is postmodern define identity? Can you find it by your around? How do find any differences in terms of the society respond to?

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CHAPTER III

TERMS RELATED TO THINKING ABOUT GENDER

The specific instructional objectives of the chapter are the students will be able to elaborate a wide range of disciplines regarding gender, describe gender based on historians and philosophers, explain new perspectives on gender from feminist theorists, and decipher the deconstruction of identity politics by poststructuralist theory.

a. The chapter will discuss gender & subjectivity, psychoanalisis & gender, more than one freud, rethinking gender: feminism & identity, the question of identity politics, difference, psychoanalisis & the other, the other within, cyborg feminism, embodiment, queer (non) identities.
b. Having learned the material in this chapter, the students will be able to:
    1. elaborate a wide range of disciplines regarding gender
    2. describe gender based on historians and philosophers.
    3. explain new perspectives on gender from feminist theorists.
    4. decipher the deconstruction of identity politics by poststructuralist theory

3.1. Gender and Subjectivity

Femininity and masculinity are ideologies in the Althusserian sense, discussed in the last section, and operate in such a way that they appear natural and inevitable. The process of forming the subject as masculine or feminine starts early. A pregnant woman will often be told that she is carrying high, a sure sign of a boy child, and any feisty kicks will be then read as a confirmation of the child's gender. Behaviour, being, gender are linked together before an infant draws its first breath. Boys are likely to be rewarded for vigorous, aggressive activity, while girls are likely to be discouraged for the same behaviour. The conditioning begun in infancy and continued in school carries over into relationships and the workplace. It is played out in the media, in talk-back radio, current affairs programmes and mainstream films.

Australian sociologist Bob Connell (1987) uses the phrase 'gender regime' to refer to the gendered social practices characteristic of various institutional sites (family, school, workplace) in which one lives out one's daily life. In this, he is drawing on both Marxist and Foucauldian thoughts on subject formation.Teresa de Lauretis, a feminist film critic, has drawn on the work of Althusser, and particularly Foucault, to describe what she calls a 'technology of gender' (de Lauretis 1987). She makes four very

important points. First, gender is a representation; it is semiotic. It works through discourse, images and signs which only function in relation to one another. Gender is not something which exists in bodies but is, in Foucault's words, which she quotes, 'the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviours, and social relations' by the deployment of a 'complex political technology' (1987, p. 3) and she sees this construction of gender, this set of effects, as reproduced through what Althusser called the 'ideological state apparatuses', the media, schools, the courts, the family and so on. Moreover, de Lauretis sees herself involved in reproducing gender, in constructing it herself, by theorising about what it is.

The construction of gender is, in her view, 'the product and the process of both representation and self-representation' (1987, p. 9, italics in original). This means, as Althusser pointed out, that no one is outside ideology. What goes on in the intellectual community, in avant-garde artistic practices or local feminist politics is involved in dismantling and simultaneously constructing gender. And the question which de Lauretis asks is one which is very important to feminism:

> 'If the deconstruction of gender inevitably effects its (re)construction, the question is, in which terms and in whose interest is the de-re-

construction being effected?' (1987, p. 24, italics in original).

This is a question which working-class women and women of colour have asked of second-wave feminism. It is a question that we take up in the section on critiques of identity politics. So, in de Lauretis' writing, the influence of the major theorists discussed earlier in this chapter can be seen, inflected specifically for the study of gendered subjectivity. While many of the major male theorists of subjectivity suppress the issue of gender, theorists such as Teresa de Lauretis employ the same negotiative model of subject formation to explore gender as both representation and self-representation.

3.2 Psychoanalysis and Gender

While many theories of subjectivity pay little attention to the productive role of gender in the formation of the subject, psychoanalysis, for all its limit- ations, has always been interested in gender as primary in the production of subjects. Freud articulated the Oedipus complex to understand the process of becoming a subject, of taking up gendered subjectivity, or, put more simply, the road to becoming a woman or a man. For Freud, this complex is a useful story to explain how an infant comes to deal with its incestuous desires – both erotic and destructive – for its parents.

The Oedipus complex plays a fundamental part in the structuring of the personality, and in the orientation of human desire.

Freud imagined the libido (human desire) as a great reservoir of psychic and sexual energies which were channelled through particular drives (sometimes called 'impulses' or 'pulsions'). Like many writers of his day, he used modernist metaphors of industrial production in his theories; Freud's libido resembles a hydraulic power plant which sends out and receives great flowing gushes of libido. These metaphors of hydraulics outline how the flow of sexual energy is regulated through apparatuses, production processes and mechanisms (Ferrell 1996). Through a process called 'cathexis' we channel our libidinal energy to one object or another; we choose the object of our affections and direct the flow of our desire to it, him or her. This process of object choice is crucial to Freudian theory, as it is one of the mechanisms that seems to explain the operation of compulsory heterosexuality at an individual and unconscious level.

Freud argued that infant sexuality is unchannelled and 'polymorphously perverse'. Its 'libidinal economy' is unstructured. That is, the infant loves everything and everyone: grabs all fingers; enjoys farting; believes that breasts are part of the giving universe; plays with him/herself; thinks

peeing is fun; and, generally, is not quite sure where his or her own body leaves off and others begin. Breasts, fingers, toes – these are all part of the extension of the infant's body. In other words, many ('poly') forms ('morph') of pleasure (perverse) appeal to the infant. How then to turn this squeezing, farting, peeing good-time baby into a proper girl or boy and, subsequently, a heterosexual, 'well-adjusted' adult?

The Oedipus complex describes the psychic operation of a complex of attraction, desire, love, hatred, rivalry and guilt that the child feels towards his or her parents. It takes place around the age of three to five years and explains how the child comes to identify with the same-sex parent. In classical Freudian theory, the Oedipus complex comes in two flavours, one for boys, one for girls (Freud 1925, 1931). Both are outlined below. In the pre-Oedipal phase children of both sexes are one with their mother. In this state of 'polymorphous perversion' there is no formation yet of sexual desire; the child experiences primarily oral and anal drives (impulses, forces of desire, needs and wants). When the child separates from its mother and breaks out of this close unity with her, the path for each gender differs.

The little boy takes the road through the positive Oedipus complex, where he desires his mother and identifies with his father. (At the end of a positive

Oedipus complex the love object is the opposite sex; the negative Oedipus complex produces a same-sex object of desire. The normative beliefs of his society operate in the names Freud gave his complexes.) Freud speculates that when the boy child becomes aware of sexual difference, he is concerned with the mother's lack of a penis and assumes that she has been castrated by the father (the castration complex). According to Freud, because of its visibility, the penis is the most important reference in the organisation of sexuality; in contrast, the female genitalia lie hidden, which is the cause of male castration anxiety: 'the fear of nothing to see'. The young boy goes through a twofold motion: he discovers the absence of the penis and consequently fears that the father will punish him for his forbidden love for his mother by taking away his penis, too. He gives up his love for the mother, and his rivalry with the father, and identifies with his father, thereby taking on a masculine identi- fication. By repressing his desire for his mother, he forms a strong and strict superego. His drives change from oral and anal to phallic or genital drives.

Freud posited this story as a way of explaining how the boy child grew psychically and consolidated the functions of the ego and superego. The little girl takes a different route after the pre-Oedipal stage; she too enters the genital/phallic stage in which she

loves her mother actively. In this stage her drives are focused on the clitoris, which is considered by Freud to be an inferior sort of penis. When the young girl makes the dramatic discovery that she has no penis, she develops a castration complex, which involves self-hate and resentment towards the mother. The castration complex results in penis envy, which forces the girl to enter the positive Oedipus complex. According to Freud, the girl substitutes a yearning for a baby for this penis envy. For the girl, the Oedipus complex involves giving up the fiercely desired penis and replacing it with the desire for a baby; to do this, she redirects her desire towards her father. Freud adds that only by bearing a (male) child does a woman achieve full access to mature femininity.

Freud argues that the route to femininity is more tortuous; the little girl is initially a little man but becomes passive when she discovers that she is castrated. Feeling wounded and resentful at her lack of a penis, she turns away from the mother as a love object and towards the father with the desire to bear a child of her own to compensate for her lack of a penis. In the Oedipal stage, then, the young girl has to make two libidinal shifts: she replaces the erotogenic zone of the ('phallic') clitoris with the ('female') vagina, and she shifts the object of her love from the mother to the father. For the girl, the psychological consequences

of the Oedipus complex are permanent: penis envy gives her a sense of being castrated and therefore injured. The psycho- logical scar of this wound to her self, this narcissistic wound, will leave the girl with a permanent sense of inferiority.

Because the girl's Oedipus complex is not destroyed by castration anxiety as it is in the young boy, the Oedipal stage is never wholly resolved and, as a consequence, the girl has a weaker need for repression. As a result of this, says Freud, the girl scarcely develops a superego and remains morally defective. Repression leads the subject to the need for sublimating his/her drives, just as artists sublimate their desires and aggression through the creation of works of art. Castration anxiety is a precondition for sublimation which, according to Freud, explains the limited participation of women in culture.

3.3. More Than One Freud

It is important to note that there is more than one way to read Freud. People taking up Freud's ideas have turned them to their own uses. Generally, different psychoanalytic theories mobilise different concepts and often different assumptions – there is no unified body of thought called 'psychoanalytic theory'. With its link to clinical practice, it is a body of writing that is very much caught up in changing personal,

cultural and social stories. This gives it a provisional quality – a 'let's see if this works' aspect – and keeps psychoanalysis from becoming fixed in a disciplinary regime. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to study; there are many forms of psychoanalytic thought.

For now, let us mention a few of the more important versions of psychoanalysis for considerations of gender. It makes a big difference to the account of subjectivity whether you choose a theorist who emphasises the mother (Klein 1963; Winnicott 1975; Chodorow 1978a, 1978b) or one who emphasises the father (Freud, Lacan). The early female analysts used their own mothering experience and that of their patients to lay stress on the interpersonal factors which modified the instinctual drives. They pointed to processes of identification (Deutsch 1944), internalisation and projection (Klein 1963), maternal separation and loss (Anna Freud 1967), the influence of the social (Horney 1973) and intersubjectivity (Benjamin 1988).

Gender as a category in feminist psychoanalytic discourse circles around the question of how and where to formulate the problem of cultural construction. There are three major strands of this debate: one comes from Lacanian psychoanalysis; another from the school of Object relations; and the third, radical gender and

queer theory, comes through in the reworkings of gender by women such as Gayle Rubin and Judith Butler. We will hold off on this third strand until later in this chapter and Chapter 4. The strand of psychoanalytic theory known as Object relations theory is associated with a group of writers and analysts following the work of Melanie Klein: for example, Winnicott (1975) in Britain, Chodorow (1978a, 1978b) and Guntrip (1968, 1971) in the USA. Whereas the focus of classical Freudianism was primarily on theconflict between instinctual drives and the frustrations of external reality which produce repression, Object relations theory focuses more on the child's relations with its real or fantasised others.

It provides a more intersubjective and socially oriented account of psychic reality. Nancy Chodorow's (1978b) book The Reproduction of Mothering is generally seen as part of this strand; it has been one of the most influential psychoanalytic texts for women in the United States. Jessica Benjamin (1988) is another contemporary theorist who adopts this more intersubjective approach, and there is currently a great deal of interest in her work. Dorothy Dinnerstein (1976) and Nancy Chodorow (1978a, 1978b) take up work by Melanie Klein and argue that the cultural institution of women's mothering is the key factor in gender development – since children of both sexes inevitably

identify with their first carers. According to these theorists, children consolidate a core gender identity in the first two years of life, well before the Oedipus complex articulated by Freud. This research demonstrates that maternal identification is the initial orientation for children of both sexes. However, the girl sustains the primary identification with the mother, while the boy repudiates maternal identification in favour of identification with the father. These analysts point out that under gender arrangements in which the mother is often trapped in the home as the primary carer, the child perceives the mother as extraordinarily powerful and not lacking, as Freud would have it.

In this context, the father represents to the child the possibility of separation from the mother and progress towards individuation. However, in a society in which the genders are not equally valued, the repudiation of the mother becomes a repudiation of the qualities associated with her (relation, connection, nurturance) and with femininity in general. According to Jessica Benjamin (1988), an identification with the father becomes a denial of dependency. We will look at the impact of these ideas a little later in the chapter when we discuss difference, and the relations between Self and Other. Freud's theories of the psyche, subjectivity, masculinity and

femininity made the impact of the unconscious all-pervasive. So all-pervasive is it that even rational science has been affected, and acquired an unconscious. For if all meaning-making processes are thus caught up in the unconscious, this would include, of course, forms of knowledge. It would include, in fact, the very science of psychoanalysis which Freud was developing, and as Freud himself showed so clearly, the formation of the unconscious and sexual difference are bound up together. Writers such as Luce Irigaray put psychoanalysis on the couch, and analyse its own unconscious (1985a). However, we can't embark on a psychoanalysis of psychoanalysis until we know a bit more about it.

3.4. Rethinking Gender: Feminisms and Identity

What is clear from the preceding two sections is that understanding how subjects are formed is a crucial question to understanding how gender functions socially and psychically. What modern theories of the subject offer people studying gender is the idea that identities are not fixed. Freudian theory gives us a sense of how conflicted and precarious our hold on gendered subjectivity is. At the same time, work by Foucault and Althusser reminds us how interested institutions are in fixing our identities, to further their own purposes. Having examined the question of the subject

quite closely, we can see why the politics of identity are so crucial to gender analysts. Understanding the ongoing processes of subject formation shows us that the very categories of man and woman are constructed. Recent feminist writings in other arenas have also grappled with the concept of identity and the category of woman; these writings are concerned with how women can both recognise their differences and form alliances across those differences. They give us another view on the question of gendered subjectivity, on what a woman is.

3.5. The Question of Identity Politics

For women of colour, working-class feminists and lesbian feminists, the major feminist theories failed to provide a voice, as did the major conservative discourses and social practices in which these women were involved or embedded. Put most simply, the major strands of feminist thought, as it was being constructed at the time (Marxist, liberal, socialist feminism), all tended to assume that they spoke for all women, and they could do that because they were generated by women. The feminist theorists whose work constitutes the female liberation movements spoke to a universal sisterhood of women and for that universal sisterhood. They consistently failed to recognise that there were crucial differences between

themselves and many of the women for whom they spoke; primarily between themselves and the women who had very different life experiences and backgrounds from them.

Not surprisingly, many of these theorists were white and middle class women from privileged backgrounds who were in a position to write and publish theory. The problem was not that they did so, but that they failed to see that their experience – and subsequently the theory based on that experience – was specific to women of their own background. The further problem with that failure of recognition was that it constructed a universal woman who effectively disenfranchised, silenced, those women who did not fit her description. Barbara Omolade, for example, wrote in 1985 about the failure of white feminists to include the 'history and culture of women of color' in their writings. She writes:

We assert simply that Black women are not white women with color but are women whose color has obscured their historical and cultural experience as Africans, as chattel slaves and as more than half the population of the black community. (Omolade 1985, p. 248).

Omolade traces the differences in the experiences of black and white women over several centuries,

noting, for example, that in the Middle Ages when the social position and status of Western European women was very poor, black women enjoyed 'high status, and the civil and human rights accorded all tribal members' (p. 247). Also, between 1500 and 1700, while in Europe tens of thousands of women were burned at the stake as witches, 'female organisations in Western African tribes flourished and were responsible for educating women about sexuality, obstetrics and gynaecology' (p. 249). Closer to the present day, Omolade records the leading role that black people had in the fight against slavery in the United States, another fact largely ignored in official histories. She notes also that contemporary feminist organisers, too, have largely ignored the skills of black women and their input to the feminist struggle. Instead they have defined the aims of feminism in terms such as 'employment opportunities and changing sex roles' which, Omolade notes, 'ignore the history of Black women as workers in Africa and this country, which have proven that economic independence from men is not iberation' (p. 255). In some of the basic principles of feminist politics there are established cultural differences between white and black women which feminism has ignored: for example for many (white) feminists, child-bearing is a sign of 'oppression and restriction' yet

'Africans viewed motherhood as an honour necessary for the tribe's continuance' (p. 249).

In other words, there are very concrete differences in the experiences of black and white women which Western feminism has ignored. Not only has this greatly impoverished feminism as a politics, but it also has contributed to the silencing and negating of racism which is the history of African-Americans. Audre Lorde's letter to Mary Daly after the publication of her book, Gyn/Ecology (1978) makes the same point (Lorde 1984). As she read through Daly's stories of the goddess, Lorde notes, she asked herself: 'why doesn't Mary deal with Afrekete as an example? Why are her goddess images only white, western european, judeo-christian?' (Lorde 1984, p. 67). Her first thought was that Daly was only dealing with the ecology of Western European women, in which case her choices were valid. However, she subsequently found that the book does deal with non-European women 'but only as victims and preyers-upon each other' (p. 67). So by selectively not citing the cultural heritage of non European women who do, after all, feature in the study, Daly makes that heritage invisible. The consequence is the assumption that the herstory and myth of white women is the legitimate and sole herstory and myth of all women to call upon for power and background, and that nonwhite women

and our herstories are noteworthy only as decorations, or examples of female victimization. (Lorde 1984, p. 69)

Because of its universalising strategy, Daly's book is part of the silencing of black women's history, and so part of the oppression of black women. In her essay 'Third World Diva Girls', bell hooks begins by noting that 'no one really speaks about the way in which class privilege informs feminist notions of social behavior, setting standards that would govern all feminist interaction' (hooks 1990, p. 89). So hooks argues that standards are set for appropriate interaction between women without any recognition of the fact that such standards derive from a particular class and the interactions which characterise it. hooks writes about the assimilationist drive within any institution which coerces all working within it to act in a way which accords with its cultural history: to 'talk the right kinda talk'. Her response is to reject that coercion because of how 'radically disempowering it is for people from underprivileged backgrounds' (p. 90). In other words, hooks does not simply fake it and act like she belongs, but maintains the signifiers of her own class background. This has disadvantaged her in many ways as an academic – because her writing is perceived as less theoretical and so less valuable than that of others, and because she does not engage in

the same bourgeois competitive behaviours as her colleagues.

Equally disempowering is the fascination she detects in white feminists as they observe dissent among black feminists which, in them (black women), is perceived not as laudable competitiveness (as it is among white women/feminists), but as affronting good taste – the standards of scholarly debate. In other words, classism and racism combine to produce an environment which is radically disempowering for many black women. Working-class white women report similar problems with early feminisms: the demands that they should speak openly in contexts which were alien to them not only because they were women, but also because they were working class and so voiceless in that context; the denigration of motherhood to women from a culture in which motherhood held high status; the drive for career advancement in a competitive environment for women whose acculturated (working-class) drive or desire is to/for solidarity rather than competition and individuation. Again such class-blind standards for feminist women alienated many working-class women, and also failed to use their wisdom.

Pamela Farley Tucker also writes about the exclusions within feminism by noting that, apart from male–female difference, 'other differences, such as

those of color and sexual identity, which are also used oppressively, are simultaneously glaring and invisible' (Farley Tucker 1985, p. 267). For many lesbian feminists, the assumption of heterosexuality in a lot of feminist writing was problematic not only for its failure to recognise that not every woman shared this sexuality, but also because it ignored the misogyny which fuels homophobia (you might refer back to Chapter 1 here). That is, the taboo againstnlesbianism is a reflection of the social constitution of femininity: 'the dependency of "men" upon "women" is a great secret of History' (Farley Tucker 1985, p. 271, italics in original). Ignoring differences in sexuality, then, contributes to the maintenance of conservative (patriarchal) society.

These criticisms of feminism are not raised simply in order to denigrate feminism. By focusing on the role and status of women they began our contemporary reassessment of all aspects of gendering. However, while providing much useful commentary on and theorisation of gender, these feminisms often also tended to universalise the experience of oppression. In doing so, they unwittingly contributed to the strategy of Othering, which is fundamental to the conservative gender politics against which they struggled. As Audre Lorde notes, 'Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders

as surplus people' (Lorde 1984, p. 115). The distinction Lorde draws here is between the notion of 'Other' (outsiders) and that of 'difference'. Lorde identifies here the institutional strategy of creating Others, people who are alien to everything a society and its citizens represent: these Others are, literally, non-citizens.

The binary they inhabit is: citizen/non-citizen. They have no independent, autonomous existence as 'different from' US citizens: there are only US citizens or non-US citizens. From Lorde's perspective, this is because the capitalist economy needs a supply of expendable people, who can be treated as non-citizens and given no rights. She goes on to note that there are many differences between us – 'of race, age, and sex' – but that these differences are not what separate us: 'It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects on human behavior and expectation' (p. 115). So, she notes of class difference, that 'unacknowledged class differences rob women of each others' energy and creative insight' (p. 116) and of race:

> As white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define woman in terms of their own experience alone, then women of Color become 'other', the outsider whose experience and tradition is too 'alien' to comprehend. (p. 117)

3.6. Difference

'Difference', for Lorde, is a concept which allows the recognition of another's specificity. It works against the silencing impulse of Othering and its refusal to accept the Other as autonomous, but different. Difference encodes a recog- nition that universalism is a strategy of the victor, not an egalitarian gesture; the only people who can write as if their experience is shared by all are those who are in positions of social dominance. So difference can be a powerful strategy, deconstructing binaristic thinking. Trinh Minh-Ha also writes that 'Difference is not otherness'. She goes on:

> Difference always implies the interdependency of these two-sided feminist gestures: that of affirming 'I am like you' while pointing insistently to the difference; and that of reminding 'I am different' while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at. (Trinh 1991, p. 152)

For Trinh, Lorde, hooks and others, difference provides a basis for the simul- taneous recognition of similarities and the acknowledgment of difference for sharing but not suppressing. It has become an indispensable conceptual category for contemporary gender theorists. The concept of 'difference' is a way of acknowledging difference while also recognising

similarities, unlike the notion of 'otherness' which suggests total incompatibility. It enables conditional alliances to be made on the basis of shared purpose, without suppressing the differences between those involved. Hélène Cixous, in the opening section of 'Sorties' (Cixous 1981, pp. 90–1), revisits the list of binaries we quoted in Chapter 1 – binaries such as man/woman and father/mother are equated by Cixous with others such as activity/passivity, culture/nature, intelligible/sensitive, logos/pathos and sun/moon. Cixous explains the significance of this binary by noting how it appears throughout Western literature, philosophy, representation and critique as a central and structuring metaphor. She then goes on to suggest a way in which they can be undone – not by reversing or revalorising them (making some of the terms currently not valued seem valuable, and the reverse), but by an explicit acknowledgment of their hierarchical nature. What she means by this is that the terms of the oppositions in her list, such as sun/moon and man/woman, are not equal; instead one dominates the other. The oppositions are hierarchical. Sun and moon are not equal and different, nor are man and woman. In this metaphorical way of thinking that characterises Western societies, the first term in the opposition dominates the second.

The simple step of recognising that these oppositions are hierarchical was a major break-through in our study of social, including gendering, practice. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1978) also wrote about the privileging of one term in these oppositions – the equivalent to Cixous's hierarchy. Derrida explained that not only is one term privileged above the other, but that the secondary term in the binary is central to the definition of the privileged term. The first term could not exist or function without the second unprivileged term. The secondary term is therefore permitted no autonomy but derives its meaning purely through its opposition to the nature of the privileged term. Its only functional role seems to be to act as a support to the meaning of the primary term. So, in an opposition such as man/woman, the term 'man' is privileged; it exists as the dominant term in the hierarchy, man/woman. Also the term 'woman' has no independent existence, no autonomy; it exists as the negative or opposite of the primary term, 'man'. Man is defined as what woman is not – activity, sun, culture, father, head, intelligible, logos. So when Freud charted the semiotic (meaning-making) practices of his own time, it is not surprising that he recorded that woman has no autonomy, sexual or otherwise. She is simply the 'other' of man. In the terms Freud recorded at the beginning of the twentieth century, man/woman

did not equate with penis/clitoris (or clitoris + labia), but with penis/no penis; that is, woman is sexually a void, a receptacle of sexuality that is essentially male.

Lorde and others use a similar deconstructive practice; rather than reverse the opposition, instead they reveal how the hidden secondary term is pivotal for the meaning of the primary term and deconstruct its position as primary. The other term in the binary is recognised as a construction that defines, by opposition, the dominant term. In this sense, there is no other term (that is, man/woman is, more correctly, man/not man; there is no woman). As Lorde says, it is ignored; we refuse to recognise it. A politics of difference, on the other hand, is based on a foregrounding of that recognition. It demands relational, rather than oppositional, thinking. By placing the secondary term of the binary at the heart of the dominant term, this relational thinking deconstructs not only the power relation in which the terms are engaged, but also the meaning of each term – the dominant term (why is it defined in certain ways?), but also the absent secondary term (who does this term refer to? How is it related to their actual conditions of being?).

This relational thinking had many ramifications for feminists. For example, the notion of 'patriarchy' came under challenge since it assumed that male or masculinity inevitably equated with power and

privilege. Yet, it was clear that to be male and black did not automatically equate with privilege in every situation, nor did male and working class. So the simple category man was seen as not sufficient when a particular situation or event or individual was considered. It contributed to the working out of power relations in the situation or the event or person, but it was not the sole determinant. So, gender was seen to be just one factor operating in the production of an event or an individual subjectivity, and it needed to be considered in relation to other factors, such as class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on.

3.7. Psychoanalysis and the Other

It is obvious that psychoanalysis too will have a great deal to offer in terms of thinking about the relations between selves and others. Probably most important to thinking about the question of the Other in feminism and psychoanalysis are the revisions to the classic Freudian story of the Oedipus complex, and the various feminist challenges and reinterpretations of it. Psychoanalysts of all kinds are interested in how those others outside us are drawn inside of us; how our 'others' come to reside within us. Both the French feminists and Object relations theorists are keenly interested in the relations between the Self and the Other.

We mentioned earlier the work of Dorothy Dinnerstein and Nancy Chodorow: they elaborate on early work by Melanie Klein (1963) on mothering as the key factor in gender development. Dinnerstein and Chodorow are interested in the way children consolidate a core gender identity in the first two years of life, long before the moment where Freud imagined children entered the Oedipus complex. These theorists put the emphasis on the importance of the mentally healthy child's integration of the various love objects into his or her ego, and stress that the power differential in current parenting arrangements makes it unlikely that a healthy, balanced ego will be produced. The close union with the mother is repudiated, in part because of her devalued status, and the child turns to the father for a source of identification. As we said earlier in this chapter, this psychoanalytic approach provides a more intersubjective and socially oriented account of psychic reality.

Jessica Benjamin (1988) has argued that the devaluation of the need for the Other becomes the touchstone of adult masculinity. She further argues that Western culture has privileged and institutionalised the masculine ideal of separation, autonomy, self-reliance and individualism as the model for subjectivity, and relegated the qualities associated with the feminine, such as connection, relation and

nurturance, to the private sphere. Her point is that all people regardless of gender need to balance agency and mutuality, self-assertion and recognition of the other, in order to achieve maturity and individuation.

French feminist psychoanalysis, which is associated with writers such as Luce Irigaray (1985b), Julia Kristeva (1982) and Catherine Clément (1989), has a different approach to this question of the Other. They have retained and developed Freud's ideas of drives, for they are very interested in different mechanisms of desire – drives, impulses, object choices and so on. Their approaches stress the internal splitting and division of the self, where Object relations theory is more likely to stress the integration of different parts of the self in healthy development, with splitting (disavowal) seen as a mark of pathology. To understand what French feminism means by splitting, we must return to Lacan's theory of the infant's move into the Symbolic order. Earlier we discussed Lacan's argument that the unconscious is structured like a language. He also argued that language acquisition marks the child's break with the mother and his or her socialisation into the dominant social order, which Lacan called 'the Symbolic order'. Lacan characterises the symbolic order as a patriarchal order dominated by paternal law, which he called le nom du père.

In Lacan's original French text, this is a play on words. The nom means name and refers to the father as head of the household, the social system of patrilineality. But it also sounds like non, no in French. Father says No! While Freud speculated that the father is the third side in the triangle which prohibits union with the mother (incest prohibition), and breaks up the happy couple of mother and infant, Lacan used a paternal metaphor, an idea of the fundamentally patriarchal nature of symbolic systems as the agent that prohibits or renders impossible the complete fulfilment of the child's wishes and fantasies. So this outsider, this 'other' which is language begins a process of loss. The child will try to get back what the nom of the Father has taken through language. Lacan saw the operation of Oedipus as an example of metonymy.

Metonymy is like metaphor, except that instead of making meaning through association, metonymy makes meaning through substitution. The classic example of metonymy is 'all hands on deck'. Read literally, it conjures up a picture of a galleon with fifty sailors with their hands flat down on the deck like a maritime game of Twister. Read figuratively, metonymically, it is understood that it means all fifty sailors should be standing on the deck, ready for the captain's orders. Language will substitute for the loss the child has suffered.

3.8. The Other Within

So, with the no of the father, the infant starts to separate from the mother, and transfers its desire for its mother to an Other. But how does this Other come into being Lacan devised the idea of the 'mirror stage' to explain how the infant begins the process of emerging from the symbiosis with the mother (1977a). Sometime between the ages of 6–18 months, he says, the infant is able to recognise its own image, its own physical unity in a mirror or through an external relation. In the mirror stage, the infant ascribes to this Other of itself, this mirror image, the same all-powerful status that it imagines its m/Other to have. The infant has also been developing a notion that there is a being who is all-powerful, as is indeed the case in early life. Mother controls food and comfort, and until the infant confronts castration, it will start to hypothesise the existence of a supremely powerful being. The infant begins to separate from the m/other, seeing her as a whole being separate from itself, and then, in a flash, seeing itself, also as a wholly separate being.

In the moment this realisation takes place, the infant installs within itself a fantasy of itself as all-powerful, holding on to the first notion that it had of the omnipotent carer in its universe. It installs an Other within itself. To add a Freudian spi to what we explained about the operation of gender in Chapter 1,

one is a man to the extent that one does not desire other men, but desires only those women who are substitutes for the mother; one is a woman to the extent that one does not desire other women and desires only those men who are substitutes for the father. And this is how Lacan imagines that the Oedipus complex generates these identifications and new desires: as a system of substitutions, exchanges, of one love object for another. So in other words, in order to become a subject, the principle of otherness must be internalised. It desires a fantasy, a fantasy of itself as whole, complete, omnipotent. In Lacan's version of Oedipus, both men and women are deprived of the phallus, both are castrated in the sense that both have lost the sense of plenitude and the fantasy of omnipotence experienced in early symbiosis with the mother. For Lacan the acquisition of language is the moment of castration.

3.9. Cyborg Feminism

One exciting voice in this contemporary feminist debate is Donna Haraway (whose work on identity was referred to earlier). In her essay 'A Cyborg Manifesto', Haraway (1991) used the concept of the cyborg, the hybrid beingwith no natural origin or identity (for example Frankenstein's Creature, the androids of Blade Runner, the cyborgs of Star Trek), to deal figuratively with the development of new

technologies and their impact on human society – both the material transformation of the workplace and the sociocultural tranformation of individual subjectivities. It also enabled Haraway to address the need for feminists to think strategically in the way Sandoval suggests.

Haraway acknowledges the negative potential of these new technologies and their workplace consequences – the creation of a disempowered, vulnerable and culturally impoverished – feminised – workforce. She also records the 'high-tech gendered imaginations', the militarised imaginary which characterises the video game culture (Haraway 1991, p. 168). However, Haraway's response is not a quiescent one. Rather than retreat from this domain, Haraway engages with it, reworking its imagery – its own mythical history – with the Frankensteinian figure of the cyborg.

Shelley used her cyborg figure, the Creature, to critique the society of her own time; Haraway does the same thing. Haraway uses the notion that the cyborg is a human, not natural, creation, combined with the perception that the development of twentieth-century information technology had made all of us cyborgs, to suggest that we are all human, not natural creations. So any notion of identity based in some natural or essentialist category (race, ethnicity, class, gender) is

doomed to failure, since all of those categories are also human creations.

This perception is crucial for all gender theorists. Haraway writes of its impact on white feminists: 'White women, including socialist feminists, discovered (that is, were forced kicking and screaming to notice) the non-innocence of the category "woman"' (Haraway 1991, p. 157). In other words, there is no neutral (innocent) category 'woman' to which an individual can claim identity, because the question of what constitutes woman is itself implicated in the power relations of those controlling the definition. That is, the definition of woman will always be decided by those with the power to do so, and that definition may well be blind to factors in the lives of the non- powerful, including cultural imperatives and material conditions.

So, for example, if the definition of woman included an assumption that a woman will naturally want to stay at home with her young children, how might that impact on the lives of those women who are economically unable to do so, even if they want to? By that definition, those working women are less womanly than more affluent women. The definitions – the identities – can themselves operate, as the criticisms by women of colour had pointed out, as silencing and oppressive, not liberating, categories.

'Cyborg feminists have to argue that "we" do not want any more natural matrix of unity and that no construction is whole' (Haraway 1991, p. 157).

Haraway refers to the work of Chela Sandoval who identifies herself as a US Third World feminist; that is, a feminist living in the USA from a social and cultural group which is oppressed within US society. Haraway found a model for her own notion of cyborg feminism in Sandoval's notion of 'oppositional consciousness'. She glosses Sandoval's own argument about what constitutes the identity 'US women of colour' in this way:

> This identity marks out a self-consciously constructed space that cannot affirm the capacity to act on the basis of natural identification, but only on the basis of conscious coalition, of affinity, of political kinship. (Haraway 1991, p. 156)

This notion of strategic alliance on the basis of shared ideas and ideals is the basis of cyborg feminism. Sandoval (1995) later responded to 'The Cyborg Manifesto' in an essay which clarifies the critique of institutionalised feminism, but also extends her vision of strategic alliance. She notes the institutional use of Haraway's work to appropriate the critical theories and methodologies of those from non-traditional disciplinary and sociocultural positionings; US Third

World feminist criticism is now read, Sandoval argues, as an example of cyborg feminism, rather than the reverse. However, Sandoval goes on to applaud Haraway's ongoing struggle to break down disciplinary boundaries and gain recognition for the work of 'the different social subject', such as women of colour or US Third World feminists.

This challenge to feminist theory – indeed, we can read it as a challenge to all social movement theory – represents a powerful theoretical and political shift, and if answered, has the potential to bring feminism, into affinity with such theoretical terrains as post-colonial discourse theory, U.S. third world feminism, postmodernism, and Queer Theory. (Sandoval 1995, p. 415) For Sandoval, too, then the recognition of difference (see above) and the rejection of essentialist notions of identity (which have, ironically, allowed middle-class white feminists to speak for – and silence – all other, or different, women) will enable feminism to form strategic alliances with transdisciplinary studies ('theoretical terrains') which will inform feminist theory and practice. In particular, as Sandoval's own work shows, this cross-fertilisation of critical theories and perspectives has meant that gender itself is recognised as just one factor influencing the lives of individuals in our society; class, ethnicity, sexuality and age are just some of the other factors which determine the

experience of the individual at a specific location and time. In the next three sections – Queer Identities, Masculine Identities and Embodiment – we will be looking closely at three areas where contemporary writing is coming to terms with the impact of difference, the particularity of the subject and new meanings of gender.

3.10. Embodiment

'Embodiment' and 'the body' have become key terms in recent writings on subjectivity and identity, at least partly because they provide a way of exploring differences. In the discussion of experience, it was noted that 'experience' is a relational term describing the interrelations of individual subjects with other people and with things or activities; those interrelations having a bodily impact. So the body is seen as the site at which experience is realised. That experience might be interpersonal or institutional; it might be physical or symbolic; the result of actual material practice or the consequence of ideas and value systems. For Braidotti (1994) the body is 'a point of overlapping between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological' and also 'a layer of corporeal materiality, a substratum of living matter endowed with memory' (p. 165). The second definition is reminiscent of an episode of Star Trek:

The Next Generation in which the android first officer, Commander Data, was threatened with being dismantled – disembodied – for purposes of scientific research. In Data's defence, Captain Jean-Luc Picard cites a shameful human history of slavery – of appropriating the bodies of others for purposes of labour and/or pleasure. Perhaps this is where the discussion of embodiment and the body should start.

Embodiment can be seen as an incorporation of the interrelationships which constitute experience into the constantly evolving body. That incorporation may be primarily physical or emotional or psychological or intellectual or spiritual – or a combination of these. When individuals were stolen from their homes and families and taken to be slaves, they did not experience this violence only intellectually or only physically, but as a combination of all the factors cited above. Their bodies became that experience and the experiences which followed: that is, that incorporation of experience became an integral feature of their corporeality. Less traumatic experiences also have an effect:

> young girls are taught by experience to modify their behaviour so that they do not appear too masculine, and young boys are taught to modify their behaviour so that they don't appear too feminine.

The result of this learning (acculturation) is to produce their bodies in particular ways – creating certain postures, mannerisms, physical abilities and limitations, which are their bodies. So it is not that they have a real body underneath crying to get out; but that the body they develop is the result of their acceptance and/or rejection of a range of learning experiences. They have embodied a range of social and cultural demands related to gender. Sometimes those demands are complied with – many girls stop being so physically active in adolescence while boys continue or become more so; at other times the demands are rejected – some girls continue their physical activities while some boys refuse to be coerced into displays of physical strength – although not without consequences. In each case, however, the demand is experienced and action is taken, with theresultant effect on the individual's body. Perhaps the most surprising consequence of this understanding of embodiment is that there is no such thing as a natural body.

Every/body is socially and culturally produced. In the 1930s, sociologist Marcel Mauss (1992) observed the ways people from different cultures walk; in particular, he compared US and French walking and he noticed that, as US films became more available in France, the French began to walk in the same way as US

screen idols. To begin with, they may simply have copied the walk but soon that American walk became their walk. He went on to examine different modes of walking in a range of societies and concluded:

> There is perhaps no "natural way" for the adult' (Mauss1992, p. 460). Nothing about the body is 'natural', in the sense that it is a consequence of a non-acculturated interface with people or things or activities.

Another example might be found in the attribution of body colour to individuals as a marker of race. British cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1992, 1996b) and others argue that this is a colonialist concept – a way of signifying otherness by the colonial ruler – and is not transparently related to any aesthetic conception of colour. So, in England, Caribbean-British are black, whereas Anglo-Saxon-British are white. However, Indian-British and Pakistani-British are also black, although they apparently share few cultural characteristics with the Caribbean-British. And in the nineteenth century the Irish were black –although again sharing few cultural features with Caribbean, Indian or Pakistani citizens.

The property, black, then seems not a material attribute –actually related to a physical property such as skin pigmentation – but a signi- fier of social and political positioning. At the same time, through its

symbolic significance and the association of that with particular physical characteristics, those characteristics are aligned in commonsense knowledge as black – and the people who are then identified as black come to experience themselves as black. This can be painful and traumatic if the individual also internalises the negative attitudes associated with being black. However, Stuart Hall (1992, p. 308) points out that, since the mid-twentieth century, Caribbean-, Indian- and Pakistani-British have subsequently used their identity as black as an act of political solidarity and subversion. It is subversive of the colonialist attitude which would tend to isolate them as inferior non-whites, rather than as autonomous, strong, independent (black) citizens, and as a result functions as a strategy in the political battle against colonialist and racist attitudes. Again the point is that, for socialised, acculturated human beings, there is no such thing as a natural body.

Finally, it is instructive to consider why embodiment became such a popular topic that it made it into the script of Star Trek: The Next Generation. This was because the notion of a natural body had made the body theoretically invisible. In other words, if the body is conceived as natural, then there is no point theorising about it, discussing it, arguing about it; it just is. Except that it isn't. As many critics began to point out, this untheorised acceptance of body meant that there was a

body assumed in theoretical accounts of life, subjectivity, experience and identity, and, on closer analysis, that body was male, white, Anglo, middle-aged or slightly younger, middle class; not natural or impervious to specification, but a very particular embodiment. Which meant that when issues to do with equal opportunity in employment were made into policy with this concept of the natural body, there was no provision for pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, menstruation, menopause, and all of those feminine events were pathologised as aberrations, as illnesses.

Embodiment became an important concept because it expresses the unnatural state of the body, the notion that the bodies in which we live are formed through our experiences of the world – inscribed by those experiences (Algerian writer Frantz Fanon (1967) describes his pain as a child on discovering that his (North African) body was regarded as ugly in mainstream Euro-pean discourse) and formed within those experiences (as the French patterned their walking gait on that of US film stars). Embodiment can be seen as an incorporation into the constantly evolving body of the interrelationships which constitute experience.

3.11. Queer (Non) Identities

Among those many factors which help to determine the kind of life an individual experiences, sexuality is most obviously linked to the individual's constitution as a gendered subject. So any individual who is not heterosexual is not only unacceptably or non-viably sexed, but also unacceptably or non-viably gendered. And because we relate an individual's subjectivity to their gender, then such a person is not a viable or acceptable subject. In the terms of the old Soviet regime, she or he is a non-person. For those who identify as non-heterosexual, then, gender is a major issue, and theorists writing from the perspective of a non-heterosexual subject have contributed greatly to the development of gender studies.

As we discussed when identity is fixed as an attribute of individuals, it inevitably involves the (self-)recognition of certain defining characteristics. Gender activists and theorists at times found themselves confronted with versions of gay and lesbian identity which they did not recognise; for some the version of gay identity with which they were asked to identify was too middle class; for some lesbians that gay identity was predominantly a white, male, middle-class identity, and the inclusion of 'lesbian and …' in many publications and activities was simply an after-thought; for others gay identity

was too restrictive in terms of its permitted range of sexual activity and/or self-presentation. In other words, queer was one response to the restrictions which attend the naturalisation of any notion of identity, whereby the identity is no longer recognised as a strategy or political practice, but is naturalised as an attribute of individuals themselves.

When this happens, individuals are positioned by the discourse which supports and reinforces that identity to be judged and regulated. Queer was/is used to challenge that naturalisation or essentialising of identity. According to the SOED (3rd edition), queer means 'Strange, odd, peculiar or eccentric, in appearance or character'; it also means 'Not in a normal condition; out of sorts; giddy, faint or ill'. Another use is 'Bad; worthless'. As a verb, it is used to mean 'To quiz or ridicule; To impose upon; to cheat; and 'To spoil, to put out of order'. In the Addendum to this edition of the SOED, queer is also defined as meaning 'A homosexual'. Jeffrey Weeks, writing about the transformation in meaning of the word 'gay', notes that '"Queer" was the universally used word, the definition of the oppressor, and the term symbolising the accepted oppression' (Weeks 1977, p. 190).

This use of queer to refer to a homosexual person, then, brings with it the derogatory meanings which accrue to the word in other circumstances – not

normal, bad or worthless, cheat, spoil. As Weeks notes, this is the judgement of the heterosexist order onthe individual who refuses to comply with compulsory heterosexuality; furthermore, it comprises the set of negative terms which constitute one part of the binaristic construction of heterosexuality – as normal, good, worth-while, true, pure. Interestingly, in England at least, queer also had class connotations – as discussed above in relation to gay.

While gay was associated with apparently opulent venues (classier clubs) frequented by the wealthy, queer was used to refer to the gathering places of the workers (queer pub or cottage) (Weeks 1977, p. 190). So queer has been used to refer to homosexual people; it was – and is – often derogatory, and in England it has also been classed. In the early 1990s, however, queer was redefined. We discussed earlier how the term 'gay' was adopted by many people in the 1960s and 70s as a positive term of (self-)identification. Recently, queer has been given a new set of meanings by some gender-based political activists and some gender theorists. Of course, the immediate difference we might note is that the term 'gay' has always had some positive connotations, whether in its more banal usage as airy or off-hand (as in expressions such as 'gay blade', meaning, ironically enough, a carefree

young heterosexual man), or as a positive attribute of (heterosexist) women.

These ambiguities and the general sense of light-heartedness associated with the term make its choice as a term of positive self-identity and community formation very attractive. Queer, on the other hand, does not have the same kind of semantic history. It has almost always been abusive and its connotations, as noted above, are mostly negative. So we might wonder why it has been adopted so readily by some as a useful term. And note that the qualifier 'some' is used earlier in the description of its supporters (some … activists; some … theorists) to indicate that this is a controversial usage. One reason for concern about the use of queer derives from the fact that, as do many poststructuralist theorists, queer theorists and activists challenge the very idea of identity. (You might want to refer back to early sections of this chapter for a review of the current poststructuralist writing on identity.) So, for example, some gay theorists and activists are concerned that using the term 'queer' means the loss of the identities gay and lesbian and the positive sense of (self) identity and community they have engendered.

Their concern echoes the complaint reported by bell hooks: 'Yeah, it's easy to give up identity, when you've got one' (hooks 1990, p. 28). Having fought for

that identity and the benefits it offers, they argue, why give it up? And the queer response, like that of bell hooks, is to challenge the mechanism of identity as a regulatory force:

> as Annamarie Jagose notes: 'queer marks a suspension of identity as something fixed, coherent and natural' (1996, p. 98). For hooks the critique of identity enables an affirmation of 'multiple black identities, varied black experience'; at the same time it 'challenges colonial imperialist paradigms of black identity which represent blackness one-dimensionally in ways that reinforce and sustain white supremacy' (hooks 1990, p. 28).

In the same way, queer activists use the concept 'queer' to affirm multiple non-heterosexist identities and varied non-heterosexist experience. They also challenge the construction of a one-dimensional version of lesbian and gay identity which reinforces and sustains heterosexism. And it is worth noting that this one-dimensionality has often meant the supression of lesbian identity and experience. What remains is a notion of gay which is the defining 'other' of heterosexual. How ironic, then, that one of the earliest uses of the term 'queer' in academic circles (by Teresa de Lauretis (1991) in a copy of the feminist cultural studies journal, differences) was written as a protest against the suppression of lesbian identity and

experience in much contemporary writing on homosexuality. Interestingly, de Lauretis herself rejected her own term, because it 'has very quickly become a conceptually vacuous creature of the publishing industry' (de Lauretis 1991, p. 6).

Here de Lauretis refers to a use of queer also cited by theorist Annamarie Jagose when she writes:

> 'Often used as a convenient short hand for the more ponderous "lesbian and gay", "queer" is a boon to sub-editors' (Jagose 1996, p. 97).

Jagose goes on to quote from Rosemary Hennessy's (1994) argument that the queer project marks an effort to speak from and to the differences and silences that have been suppressed by the homo-hetero binary, an effort to unpack the monolithic identities 'lesbian' and 'gay', including the intricate ways lesbian and gay sexualities are inflected by heterosexuality, race, gender, and ethnicity. (p. 99) Hennessey's argument reflects de Lauretis' original paper, as reported by David Halperin:

> both to make theory queer, and to queer theory to call attention to everything that is perverse about the project of theorising sexual desire and sexual pleasure … to introduce a problematic of multiple differences into what had tended to be a comparatively monolithic, homogenizing discourse of (homo)sexual difference, to offer a way out of the hegemony of

> white, male, middle-class models of analysis, and to resist intellectual domination by the empirical social sciences. (1996, online)

In other words, the strategy of de Lauretis and other theorists in using the term 'queer' was to challenge the mechanism of identity and its inevitably regulatory and delimiting function. Queer challenges the concept of identity and the binaristic (self/other) thinking it encodes. It rejects the binaristic definitions of gender and sexuality that construct hetero normative descriptions of male/female, masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual. It may be useful at this point to note also the activist derivation of queer. The emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic necessitated a range of responses which challenged established notions of identity. For example, the need to contain the epidemic meant that safe-sex education had to be directed to all whose sexual activities might put them at risk. At first, this was assumed to mean gay men only, but research soon showed that sexual behaviour is far more complex and far less normative than heterosexist discourse allowed.

As researchers soon discovered, there are heterosexual men who have sex with other men, but do not consider themselves gay; there are heterosexual couples who engage in sexual activities which might formerly have been considered gay male practices. The

only solution was to focus the educational material not on sexual identity but on sexual practice. However, since heterosexist discourse assumes a transparent, naturalised relationship between identity and practice, this move was fundamentally disruptive of notions of identity and, therefore, of heterosexual discourse itself. Equally the activism around the epidemic which united gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, sex workers, parents and friends of AIDS sufferers, and people with AIDS suggested a new definition of identity, based not on some essentialist quality but on a mutual interest; a strategic sense of identity and community. So the lived experience of AIDS and activist responses to both the epidemic and the homophobic hysteria it raised in the heterosexual community also led to an interrogation of the concept of identity.

As both de Lauretis and Jagose have noted, however, queer has also been used in ways that have tended to corrupt that critical function. Or as Halperin writes, once queer theory became Queer Theory: 'Far from posing a radical challenge to current modes of thought, queer theory is in the process of becoming a game the whole family can play' (1996, online). Halperin's observation succinctly captures the potential and the problem with current formulations of queer. On the one hand, queer offers a challenge to current ways of thinking via its problematising of the concept of

identity, and this challenge extends beyond the parameters of gender. As Sandy Stone (1991) predicts in her 'Posttranssexual Manifesto' and Rosemary Hennessey (1994) in the statement quoted above ('an effort to unpack the monolithic identities "lesbian" and "gay", including the intricate ways lesbian and gay sexualities are inflected by heterosexuality, race, gender, and ethnicity'), queer is not necessarily confined to the interrogation of gender or sexual identities, but can also be used to explore the ways in which individuals experience identity across a range of signifiers (for example race, ethnicity, class).

On the other hand, queer's deconstruction of identity is experienced by some as destructive of lesbian and gay identities and community/ies. Its apparent failure to limit membership, to act as an identity, is seen as facilitating the heterosexist assumption of gay and lesbian identity; the troublesome, dangerously embodied terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' disappear in favour of the queer who can be anyone who fancies her or himself outside the boundaries of (normalising) heterosexism. So queer itself becomes a kind of fashionable non-identity, which is an identity.This debate continues today, and it may be argued that this attests to the value of queer as a concept – that it provokes debate, destabilises identities and challenges attitudes and values.

Furthermore, it should be noted again that queer accords with poststructuralist understandings about the nature of subjectivity – that it is a process of constant negotiation, not of stable identity, and so challenges stereotypes of gender and sexuality.

3. 12. Exercises

1. Apply Althusser's ideas about the connection between ideology and subjectivity to one of the ideological state apparatuses with which you are involved (for example the education system). Are there ways in which you think you resist the coercive power of ideology?
2. How does a focus on the father or the mother in psychoanalytic theory change the ways in which the individual is conceptualised or understood? Applying these different paradigms to your own experience, which seems more productive, and why?
3. How does the concept of 'difference' help you to understand your own experience? How does it expand or enhance the way we think about identity, especially as strategic? Apply this concept of difference to how you understand your own subjectivity and relationships.
4. How are difference and otherness related – or different? Can you give examples of how the two concepts might be employed to conceptualise other

people? And how do they function in our understanding of ourselves?

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CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST CONCEPTS & ISSUES

The specific instructional objectives of the chapter are the students will be able to reveal the feminist concepts and issues.

a. The chapter will discuss intersectional feminism, redefinition of gender, postcolonial & transnational feminism, feminist theorize colonial/postcolonial, oppression, age, race, class & sex: women redefining difference.
b. Having learned the material in this chapter the students will be able to:
    1. explain the intersectional feminism.
    2. redefine gender.
    3. elaborate postcolonial & transnational feminism.
    4. describe feminist theorize colonial/postcolonial.
    5. reveal oppression.
    6. depict age, race, class & sex to redefine difference among women.

Feminism has many different definitions and facets. A popular definition of feminism is"the radical notion that women are people." The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines it as "1: the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes; 2: organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests." Feminism thus includes both scholarship and activism. African American public intellectual bell hooks takes issue with a narrow definition of feminism that focuses only on seeking equality with men. She importantly asks, to which men do which women seek to be equal, given that not all men are equal? She highlights the extent to which this narrow definition of feminism only focuses on gender issues and therefore applies best to the situation of white, middle-class women. She goes on to redefine feminism more broadly and radically:

> "Feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression directs our attention to systems of domination and the inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression".

The most complete definition of feminism is probably that of Black lesbian writer-activist Barbara Smith:

> "Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color,

working-class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women – as well as white, economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement".

4.1 Intersectional Feminism

Smith's and hooks's definitions are intersectional, a term that means that they do not only focus on one issue such as gender but broaden the analysis to encompass other vectors of identity and of human domination such as race and racism, social class and classism, sexual orientation, colonialism and imperialism, disability, national origin, religion, and age. This wide-ranging approach, which has created a paradigm shift in Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, and other fields, has come to be known as intersectionality (Crenshaw) but is also variously termed "Black feminist thought" (Collins), "multiracial feminism" (Zinn and Dill), "multicultural feminism" (Shohat), "US Third-World feminism".

(Sandoval), "multiple consciousness" (King), and multi-axial approach (Brah 189). Intersectionality can be traced back to African American activist-intellectuals Sojourner Truth and Anna Julia Cooper in the nineteenth century. While others had also made connections between some issues such as gender and class, gender and sexual orientation, race and class, or race and colonialism, the focus on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as profoundly interwoven and interlocking vectors is an original contribution to scholarship by 1970s and 1980s US feminists of color. 1 They theorized the interrelatedness of race, gender, and

imperialism (e.g., Elizabeth "Betita" Martinez in 1972; Mitsuye Yamada in 1981); race, gender, and class (e.g., Angela Davis in 1981); race, gender, class, and sexual orientation (e.g., the Combahee River Collective in 1977; Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa in 1981; Audre Lorde; and Adrienne Rich); colonialism, race, class, and gender (e.g., Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in 1985). Starting around the 1990s, scholars from various countries addressing the intersections among gender, race, and nationalism (e.g., Ella Shohat; Deniz Kandiyoti; Floya Anthias; and Nira Yuval-Davis) and among disability and other vectors such as gender (e.g., Susan Wendell) and geder, race, and class (e.g., Rosemarie Garland Thomson and Jenny Morris) have made important additions to this scholarship. By the year 2000, gender identity had been added as a key factor that LGBTQQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and intersex) activists urged must be considered in discussions of oppression and identity. A central lesson feminists have learned through debates between single-focus and intersectional approaches is that our standpoint (our worldview, the ways in which we make sense of our life experiences and of the world around us) is influenced by our social location (the time and place in which we live and the information to which we have access, as

well as the social categories or groups to which we are perceived as belonging).

The readings in this introductory section illustrate some of the main issues discussed above. Chicana creative writer Sandra Cisneros's chapter, "My Name," from her acclaimed novel The House on Mango Street, first published in 1984, opens the anthology. The character of young Esperanza shares her standpoint with readers with respect to the difficulties of having multiple identities in a world that fragments you because it expects you to be only one thing. Bilingual and bicultural, Esperanza struggles to find her place. Her first name, Spanish for hope, is also related to the verb esperar, to wait. This double meaning reflects her sense of double belonging – being between Anglo and Latino cultures – and her hope for a better future for women. Her sense of connection to the strong woman in her lineage after whom she was named makes her reflect on the dual meaning of her name – both hope and waiting, a metaphor for the need to be able to fit in your lineage and cultures without letting them completely determine your identity or your place in society. Her attentiveness to various levels of linguistic meaning reflects her awareness of the different value associated with Anglo and Latino cultures in the United States – her "silver"-sounding name in Spanish sounds like "tin," a much less valued metal, in English.

In her book The Politics of Reality (1983), from which a portion of the chapter on "Oppression" is excerpted here, white lesbian feminist philosopher Marilyn Frye provides a critical definition of oppression as "a system of interrelated barriers and forces which 4 Introduction to Feminist Concepts and Issues reduce, immobilize and mold people who belong to a certain group, and effect their subordination to another group". Oppression is a system that unfairly targets certain people based on their perceived group membership (for example their perceived race, gender, social class, or sexual orientation), rather than judging them on their individual characteristics. It includes specific unpaid or poorly paid functions that members of the oppressed group are expected to provide to members of the dominant group. Fryegives the example of women being expected to provide service work of a personal, sexual, and emotional nature for men (9). She highlights the fact that oppression is made to appear natural so oppressed people internalize it through socialization. Internalized oppression leads people who are the target of one form of oppression to believe the negative messages against their groups and sometimes to end up acting against their own self-interests. Conversely, internalized domination leads members of a dominant group to believe that they are naturally entitled to a superior status and to the advantages

derived from that status. It thus serves to hide the existence of dominant group privilege (see Adams, Bell, and Griffin).

Afro-Caribbean lesbian writer Audre Lorde's essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" (1984) develops central concepts for wide-ranging feminist social justice projects: the dangers of a world view that arranges perceived group differences into hierarchical binary oppositions such as male/female, white/black, mind/body, self/other, or culture/nature; the ways in which various forms of oppression are structured similarly to create a norm that is seen as superior (the "mythical norm"); the need to recognize each other's oppression and resistance ("the edge of each other's battles"); the need to learn from histories of oppression and resistance so we do not have to reinvent the wheel generation after generation; and the need for intersectional activist approaches so that an inclusive feminist agenda does not solely focus on gender issues but includes a commitment to fighting for racial and economic justice and against heterosexism (the primacy of heterosexuality) and ageism (privileging adults versus older people and children). In beautifully evocative language, Lorde invites us to imagine "patterns for relating across our human differences as equals," a project that is as central to a socially just future today as it was in the early 1980s

when she first articulated it. For instance, pretending to be color-blind and to not "see" differences (especially racial ones) only leads us to conceptualize equality in terms of sameness and to feel guilty over noticing differences, thus resulting in avoidance of the topic and immobilization rather than social justice activism. The ideology of color-blindness implies that difference is bad and that it is therefore impolite to notice or dialogue about differences. More problematically, it encourages the denial of racism (Frankenberg) and of the existence of power differences between groups, makes racism a taboo topic, and signals that people of color are expected to act white and assimilate (Sue). Instead, Lorde invites us to explore differences and create new ways of working together as equals through differences.

Because feminists active in the movement have tended to be the ones with more access to financial resources, time, and education, the leadership of the movement has historically tended to be primarily white, middle/upper-class, and heterosexual. Debates over whether feminism should focus on gender issues narrowly defined or should adopt a broader, intersectional focus have to do in great part with who sets the agenda and what issues are primary in their lives. As a result, issues of importance to women of color, working-class women, women with disabilities,

indigenous women, and lesbians or queer people have historically not been fully included in feminist agendas. While many feminists of color focused on redefining feminism more broadly, as explained above, some selected a different term altogether to reflect their intersectional approaches in reaction against mainstream feminism's inability to fully include race issues in the 1970s and early 1980s. In her book In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose (1983), African American novelist Alice Walker famously coined the adjective "womanist" and created a definition of the term that mimics the standard format of a dictionary definition. Her definition is purposefully grounded in African American vernacular language, history, and culture and progressively broadens to include lesbian existence, female solidarity, and men, culminating in a holistic and spiritual view of feminism based on love. It is to be noted that while many critics refer to Walker's concept as womanism, Walker herself only coined the adjective womanist – presumably seeking to create an intersectional approach that many could identify with rather than trying to impose a new doctrine or movement.

Feminists of color have disagreed with some white radical feminists and lesbian separatist feminists who called for women to separate from men as a

solution to sexist oppression and male domination. While feminists such as hooks, Lorde, Walker, Martinez, and others have taken men from their own cultural backgrounds to task for engaging in sexist oppression, they also insist that these men are their allies in the fight against racism and white supremacy. As early as 1972, Martinez insisted that Latinas "have the right to expect that our most enlightened men will join in the fight against sexism; it should not be our battle alone". Lorde also powerfully reminds white feminists that female cross-racial solidarity is not a given but something that must be achieved through recognition of the different issues with which various women struggle: "Some problems we share as women, some we do not. You fear your children will grow up to join the patriarchy and testify against you, we fear our children will be dragged from a car and shot down in the street, and you will turn your backs upon the reasons they are dying."

In "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity" (1994), white sociologist Michael S. Kimmel picks up on Lorde's concept of the mythical norm. The gender-based mythical norm is often referred to as "hegemonic masculinity" (a term coined by R. W. Connell and various collaborators), which Kimmel defines as the masculinity of those who have power in society. As Lorde described hierarchical binary oppositions,

Kimmel shows that hegemonic masculinity defines itself in opposition to anything feminine and teaches men that the only emotion appropriate for them to display is aggression (Frye similarly refers to anger), which leads to violence. Since men are not supposed to be feminine, they are encouraged to look down upon women, distance themselves from men who are perceived as being gay, and attack the masculinity of men who have less power in the culture, such as men of color. Kimmel shows how homophobia, sexism, and racism can be wielded by men to defend their own sense of masculinity. Lorde's insight that the "mythical norm" is set up in such a way that very few people can feel that they are a part of it and Frye's distinction between oppression and suffering can help explain what 6 Introduction to Feminist Concepts and Issues. Kimmel describes as a major "paradox in men's lives, a paradox in which men [as a group] have virtually all the power and yet do not feel [individually] powerful," thus leading yet again to frustration and anger.

In an essay that is widely available online, white anti-racist feminist activist Peggy McIntosh makes a similar point with respect to white people and race, claiming that "whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege." Internalized domination serves to hide the existence of dominant group

privilege. McIntosh points out that it is easier for people in general to see the ways in which we are oppressed than it is to recognize ways in which we are privileged. Privilege is the flip side of oppression, and she challenges white readers to become more aware of the ways in which whiteness functions as a mythical norm granting whites "unearned privileges." A dominant upbringing systematically trains white people to become blind to white privilege or to see it as a natural entitlement, and McIntosh provides many daily examples of how white privilege functions for individuals in society. By focusing on men and white people, Kimmel and McIntosh demonstrate that analyses of oppression can yield important insights into the role that privilege and internalized domination play in the maintenance of structures of oppression, as well as open up avenues for self-awareness and social change through alliance politics.

4.2. Redefinitions of Gender

As scholars have widened the purview of feminism from a single-minded focus on gender to intersectional approaches, they have also refined and redefined what we mean by gender and women in significant ways. Whereas the generic definitions of sex and gender are that sex refers to the biological sexual characteristics with which one is born and gender to

social constructions of sex, feminists such as anthropologist of sexuality Gayle Rubin have complicated our understandings of the relationship between the two terms. For Rubin, the "sex/gender system" is "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity" (159). This definition acknowledges that sex and gender cannot be easily pulled apart along the lines of nature versus culture but that they constantly interface with one another. This redefinition is important because women's oppression is often justified with reference to female biology (the ideas that women bear children and are supposedly more emotional and naturally inclined to raise children and to work out of love – that is, for free). White postmodernist feminist and queer studies scholar Judith Butler reverses the biological justifications for women's secondary status by claiming that since we can only conceive of sexual difference through our cultural understandings of it as male and female, "perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender" and sex turns out "to have been gender all along" (7, 8). In "Abandon Your Tedious Search: The Rulebook Has Been Found!" (1994), white transgender intellectual, activist, and performance artist Kate Bornstein participates in this debate by deconstructing

the "rules of gender," our society's expectation of rigid distinctions between males and females.

Through the use of analysis, personal examples, and humor, she demonstrates that these supposedly natural rules are in fact constructions that contribute to marginalizing gender-nonconforming people. The binary opposition between male and female obscures the existence of people who do not fit into either category: intersex people (who are born with some male and female physical sexual characteristics) and transgender people (people whose gender identity – that is, their personal and psychological sense of being male or female or on a continuum – is at odds with their sex assigned at birth, or people whose gender identity does not fit easily into the male/female, heterosexual/homosexual binary). Sometimes the terms trans*, transgender, and queer are used interchangeably. For transgender persons, being referred to as one's gender of choice – signified by correct and preferred name and pronouns – is a major issue in the struggle for respectful recogni-tion. Feminists have long fought for gender-inclusive language (e.g., firefighter instead of fireman, mail carrier for mailman, or staffing the desk instead of manning the desk). Transgender activists have coined gender-neutral pronouns such as "ze" and "hir" (Bornstein, My Gender Workbook 36); others use

they/them/theirs to refer to one person. Children's coloring book authors Jacinta Bunnell and Nat Kusinitz's thoughtful cartoon "The New Pronoun They Invented Suited Everyone Just Fine" (2010) illustrates this issue and encourages us to be creative in modifying language to reflect more inclusive ways of perceiving identities for future generations.

4.3. Postcolonial and Transnational Feminisms

As feminists from various locations have developed intersectional definitions of oppression and feminism, they have also focused on strategies of resistance to oppression and on the importance of women's agency (the awareness that women are not just oppressed and victimized but that they also find ways, both large and small, of setting their own course and making their own decisions even in contexts in which they have very limited options). Even in situations of oppression that are marked by what Frye calls the double bind – the absence of viable choices – it is important to recognize that people still manage to exert some amount of agency and should not only be seen as disempowered victims. For instance, Cisneros ends her chapter with her protagonist selecting a new, mysterious name full of promise for herself. Walker highlights a history of African American women's

organized resistance to slavery, referencing Harriet Tubman's participation in the Underground Railroad.

Feminists focusing on the lives of women in colonized parts of the world have similarly insisted on the importance of acknowledging the agency and resistance of women to three specific forms of oppression. The first form of oppression is created by colonialism and imperialism, which rely on a discourse of Third World women as victims of their own cultures and religions to justify military intervention, conquest, and the exploitation of natural resources and human labor in the colonies. The second one comes from masculinist (male-dominated) nationalist resistance to colonialism that equates liberation from colonial domination with regaining manhood (which entails keeping women in secondary positions – see hooks, "Reflections"). The third difficulty originates 8 Introduction to Feminist Concepts and Issues with Western feminists who, when they only focus on gender issues, ignore the detrimental impact that their own colonizing governments have had on women from colonized countries and may end up reinforcing colonial oppression under the guise of so-called feminist sisterhood. In "Feminists Theorize Colonial/Postcolonial" (2006),

Indian postcolonial feminist scholar Rosemary Marangoly George clarifies the central contribution of

postcolonial feminist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak to the field. Spivak explained that between the colonialist discourse of "white men saving brown women from brown men" and the male "nativist" (nationalist) argument that local women who conform to oppressive cultural or religious practices are doing so entirely of their own free will, there is almost no space for local women to express their concerns in ways that will actually be heard on their own merits as opposed to being coopted, reframed, and manipulated by either side. The problems are compounded when Western feminists exhibit colonialist attitudes and start acting as "white women saving brown women from brown men." In that difficult context, postcolonial/Third World/transnational feminists are often attacked and dismissed in their own countries as being Westernized and inauthentic representatives of their cultures by a masculinist leadership that does not want to question male privilege (see also Narayan). In the West, their critiques of Western colonial practices and discourses often go unheard, and their complex feminist positions are simplified and used to justify a colonialist critique of their cultures or religions as being backwards and in need of Western salvation. With the renewed Islamophobia in the West after the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, and the state of permanent warfare

in which the West has been engaged ever since, creating new waves of refugee populations from the Middle East, these patterns have gained renewed centrality and call for careful analysis on the part of scholars and citizens alike.

Finally, Spivak distinguishes between two meanings of the term "representation": it can refer to political representation (gaining the right to vote, having politicians who speak for their various constituent groups) and visual or textual representation (the ways that various groups are portrayed in society through stereotypes, as well as counter-narratives and resistance to stereotypes). Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary field (it includes scholars trained in various fields, from English and Comparative Literary Studies to the Social Sciences and History, and increasingly includes researchers in the Natural Sciences). It focuses on analyzing, critiquing, and bettering women's status in society and promoting activism for social justice. In general, humanities scholars will tend to focus on issues of cultural/visual/textual representations and social science scholars on political representation and access. Both aspects of representation are important for all social justice projects and will be addressed in various chapters in the volume.

4.3 Feminists Theorize Colonial/Postcolonial

Postcolonial feminist theory's project can be described as one of interrupting the discourses of postcolonial theory and of liberal Western feminism, while simultaneously refusing the singular "Third World Woman" as the object of study. From the early 1980s onward, postcolonial feminism in the West has been centrally concerned Rosemary Marangoly George with the terms in which knowledge about non-Western women was produced circulated, and utilized. In postcolonial literary analyses, issues of location, of representation, of "voicing" female subjecthood, and of the expansion of the literary canon emerged as important foci. As a critical approach, the postcolonial literary feminism that would radically alter the study of literature in the Western academy can be traced to a few key critical essays written in the early 1980s. In this essay I discuss a range of the most significant contributions to postcolonial literary feminism and situate them in relation to the work of numerous scholars in the fields of colonial and postcolonial studies and feminist literary scholarship. I will present Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a feminist and cultural theorist, born and educated in India and based in the United States as an exemplary critical figure; a discussion of the trajectory of her work will allow us to consider some of the major ideas in the field.

Postcolonial feminist literary critics negotiate with a wide range of related discourses in order to revise the terms in which the location of the critic and of the literary subject are understood. Indeed, postcolonial feminist criticism contests the very location of literature itself.

Much of the theoretical energy of early postcolonial feminist scholarship focused on challenging Western feminist literary theory's investment in first world women's texts, in uninterrogated national literary traditions, and in a benevolent, ultimately patronizing, reception of third world women, in and out of literary texts. At the same time, postcolonial feminists scrutinized the gendered blind spots of the mostly masculinist postcolonial critique of relations of power in colonial contexts and newly independent states. Thus postcolonial feminist scholarship has as its characteristic markings: the fashioning of cautionary signposts, the disclosure of absences, an insistence on what cannot be represented in elite texts, an emphasis on the more than "purely literary," and the persistent embedding of gendered difference in a larger understanding of race, nationality, class, and caste. Despite the disciplining tone of many of the occasions for such scholarship, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a postcolonial feminist approach harnesses the wisdom of many different

critical strands; a coalitional scholarship, it is indebted even as it contributes to scholarship in a range of fields that extend feminist discourse beyond any simple notion of the literary or of gender.

I use the term "postcolonial" in this essay to refer to a critical framework in which literary and other texts can be read against the grain of the hegemonic discourse in a colonial or neocolonial context: this framework insists on recognizing, resisting, and overturning the strictures and structures of colonial relations of power. It takes its inspiration from and constantly refers to the intellectual work that contributed to the end of Europe's colonial occupation of the globe, from the mid-twentieth century to the present. But the postcolonial critical framework is more than a condensed theory of decolonization. Rather, it is a methodology especially invested in examining culture as an important site of conflicts, collaborations, and struggles between those in power and those subjected to power. While colonial control over far-flung empires was largely accomplished through use of force, the "superiority" of the colonizer was crucially reinforced through cultural "persuasion."

British colonizers spread the secular scripture of English literature through the colonial education system as a means of establishing the "innate" superiority of British culture (and therefore of British

rule) in the minds of the native elites. As Cheikh Hamidou Kane, the Senegalese writer, noted in his 1963 novel, Ambiguous Adventure: "The cannon compels the body, the school bewitches the soul. "Anticolonial national struggles and postcolonial literary discourse developed an implicit conviction that cultural sites have the potential to change social and political reality. Indeed, the urgency to end colonial rule was often first publicly expressed in cultural texts. In the present, the term "postcolonial" is differently invoked by different practitioners. For the most part, however, this critical stance counters the usual relations of power between First and Third World locations in the linked arenas of economics, politics, and cultural production.

Like other scholars and cultural practitioners arguing from the margins in the 1980s and 1990s, postcolonial theorists in the West and elsewhere were engaged in the task of widening the range of literary texts and practices understood as worthy of scholarly attention, that is, as canonical. In order to achieve this goal, the role of literary texts in society had to be retheorized: thus, for instance, Ngugi Wa Thi-ongo argued for two literary categories: the literature of oppression and the literature of struggle; he thus challenged the conventional practice of distinguishing among literary texts solely on the bases of form (Writers in Politics, 1981). Other scholars, for example, those

working on testimonials or on transcribed oral texts, argued for a reevaluation of the type of texts considered worthy of analysis.

Concurrently, post-colonial literary criticism finally put to rest the humanist notion that the best literary texts transcended politics by carrying within them the pearls of what would be universally acknowledged as wisdom. By disclosing, as Edward Said did in Orientalism (1978) and Culture and Imperialism (1992), that literary texts were shaped by and in turn shaped the ruling ideologies of their day, they demonstrated the logic of tracing both colonial and anticolonial ideologies through literature. 2 Postcolonial feminists intervened to insist that men and women experience aspects of colonialism and postcolonialism differently. Yet they also vigorously maintained that gender was not invariably a fundamental marker of difference. Postcolonial feminists have noted, for example, that European women in the colonial period wrote frequently about their "Eastern Sisters," but that there were very few instances in which alliances between women as women overcame the difference of race under a colonial system. As a result, gender must be understood as operating in tandem with the pressures of race, class, sexuality, and location.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, postcolonial theorists were very invested in reexamining colonial and "native" discourses from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, produced and circulated in Europe and in the colonies, especially those that constructed "modernity" in opposition to "traditional" or "native" customs. European texts repeatedly justified and explained colonial domination by reinforcing a series of hierarchized oppositions such as civilized/savage, modern/traditional, mature/childlike, and, most significantly, rational/irrational. Dipesh Chakrabarty's Provincializing Europe (2000) is an example of a postcolonial critical text that attempts to undo the central position that Europe has held as "the Universal" in non-European locations thanks to the legacy of these colonialist oppositions. While Europe in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is clearly no longer the embodiment of the universal human, a certain Europe still occupies a central position in the scholarly imagination. Postcolonial criticism aims to "provincialize Europe" and to counter the hegemonic weight of an Enlightenment universalist world view by insisting on the humanity of colonized peoples and on the value of non-European thought and culture. Postcolonial feminists bring to this revisionary reading of center and periphery a keen sense of the gendered

dynamics of knowledge production in colonial discourse and in the postcolonial critique of the same.

Arguably, one of the inaugural moments of postcolonial feminist literary criticism in the West was the publication of Spivak's "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" in the Fall 1985 issue of Critical Inquiry. In this short essay, Spivak forced a rethinking of the ways in which literary texts, especially those written by women, had been deployed in feminist arguments. Spivak brilliantly focuses on Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, one of the "cult texts" of Western academic feminism; she argues that in the novel, as in twentieth-century feminist criticism, Jane Eyre and Bertha Mason Rochester become who they are – heroine and less than human, respectively – because of the politics of imperialism. Prior to Spivak's essay, the authoritative feminist critical analysis of Jane Eyre was the lynchpin chapter in Sandra Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's hugely successful The Madwoman in the Attic (1979).

Despite titling their book after the experiences of Jane Eyre's Creole Bertha, who is declared insane and locked in the attic of her husband Mr. Rochester's English country house, Gilbert and Gubar were quite oblivious to Bertha's significance, except insofar as she served as Jane's "dark double": Bertha would do for Jane what Jane could not herself do. Gilbert's and

Gubar's reading of the novel brought to a crescendo the feminist celebration of Jane as the solitary heroine who begins life "without connections, beauty or fortune" and ends having acquired all three and the power to narrate her version of the story of her life. In these readings Jane's triumph is her transformation, seemingly through the power of her first-person narrative, from a timid, impoverished governess into a desirable woman the hero cannot live without. When the first-person narrator begins the last chapter of the novel with "Dear Reader, I married him," the immolation of Bertha and her leap to her death (the plot event that allows Jane finally to accept Mr. Rochester's marriage proposal) is quite easily forgotten in the celebratory conclusion to the romance plot."Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" made the feminist argument exemplified by Gilbert's and Gubar's work completely untenable, by demonstrating how "the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction," the fully individual feminine subject that is the apotheosis of liberal feminism, comes into being through violence done to the Other.

Spivak argues that this becoming of the subject/the individual is brought about not just by marriage and childbearing, but by "soul making" – a task that requires the violence done to the soulless, less than human Other. With much assistance from the

Caribbean novelist Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1965), Spivak demonstrates that "so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism." 3 Using Rhys's narrative, which tells Bertha's version of the story of her marriage to Mr. Rochester, Spivak deftly demonstrates that "the active ideology of imperialism … provides the discursive field" for the Brontë novel. Following Spivak, we might ask: Where do Mr. Rochester's wealth and Jane's fortune come from? Why is Bertha initially considered an attractive match? And how is it that her legal rights as Mr. Rochester's wife are so easily disregarded by the narrative and the reader? The resulting discussion of the novel's imbrication in the global relations of domination established under British imperialism significantly alters our understanding of the gendered politics of fiction. If the study of eighteenth-century English novels and conduct books demonstrates, as Nancy Armstrong argues, that "the modern individual was first and foremost a female," in the wake of Spivak's essay postcolonial feminists argued that the nineteenth- and twentieth-century English woman of liberal feminism was first and foremost authorized by the economic, political, social, and cultural axioms of British imperialism.

The 1990s saw the publication of many essays, special editions of journals, and books that reexamined

the much-trammeled terrain of eighteenth- to twentieth-century British literary, legal, and other texts with a view to explicating the investment in Empire that had gone unnoticed in earlier scholarship. Of these projects, Lata Mani's analysis of the British colonial discussion of the custom of sati (spelt "suttee" in the colonial period) in nineteenth-century India illustrates colonial discourse's construction of "native custom and practice" as barbaric, thus rationalizing the imposition of a "civilizing" European colonial rule. But Mani also interrogates the patriarchal "native" representation of this custom in which newly widowed wives immolated themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres. As she shows, sati was not a practice followed all over the Indian subcontinent, nor was it the necessary fate of all widows in a particular or class.

Rather, it was practiced sporadically in scattered incidents that were, however, scrupulously recorded by British observers. Mani's study discloses the use to which the burning widow (referred to as the sati) was put in simultaneously furthering the colonial project and protecting indigenous patriarchal power. Mani argues that the satis "become sites on which various versions of scripture/tradition/law are elaborate and contested" (p. 115). 5 She demonstrates that the elaborate narratives compiled by eyewitnesses contain no record of the widows' motivations, utterances,

reasoning, or subjectivity, or even of their pain. In Mani's words: "… even reading against the grain of a discourse ostensibly about women, one learns so little about them … neither subject, nor object, but ground – such is the status of women in the discourse on sati" (p.

118). Despite the colonizers' stated concern for the wellbeing of native women, the real purpose of this debate around the practice of sati was to reinforce the "necessity" of the regulatory presence of British colonial rule.

In her 1988 essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak succinctly notes that the same nineteenth-century descriptions of sati (even after the abolition of this rite by William Bentinck in 1829) allow us to understand the way in which colonial rule presented itself: as "white men saving brown women from brown men." Against this colonialist reading of the anti-sati campaign, Spivak places the Indian nativist argument, which she condenses into the phrase, "the women actually wanted to die." She argues that "the two sentences go a long way to legitimize each other. One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness. Such a testimony would not be ideology-transcendent or 'fully' subjective, of course, but it would have constituted the ingredients for producing a countersentence." 6 Spivak points to what

will become a major preoccupation of postcolonial feminist writing: namely, if and how disenfranchised women can represent, speak, and act for themselves, despite oppressive conditions. Postcolonial feminism unflinchingly acknowledges that there are many obstacles in the path of securing such "voice-consciousness." Yet, despite the odds, postcolonial feminist discourse strives to create the space for this "countersentence" to be spoken by the "gendered subaltern."

Postcolonial feminist criticism developed in this period in relation to other critical feminist projects as well. From the early 1960s onward, there was a powerful and multifaceted movement by US-based "women of color" (as they began to call themselves) for equal rights in all spheres of life. This struggle emerged from and alongside the feminist and civil rights movements of the 1960s–1970s, with women of color insisting on the double oppression they faced on account of their race and gender. As part of their resistance to racial and gendered prejudices, women of color in the United States also developed powerful critiques of mainstream white feminism for its race-related blind spots, and against the masculinist bias of nationalist struggles for racial uplift within their own communities. Like postcolonial theorists, these women were inspired by nationalist struggles in the third

world. Thus women of color in the United States argued that they were also "third world women," despite the irony of their geographic location.

4.4. Oppression

It is a fundamental claim of feminism that women are oppressed. The word "oppression" is a strong word. It repels and attracts. It is dangerous and dangerously fashionable and endangered. It is much misused, and sometimes not innocently. The statement that women are oppressed is frequently met with the claim that men are oppressed too. We hear that oppressing is oppressive to those who oppress as well as to those they oppress. Some men cite as evidence of their oppression their much-advertised inability to cry. It is tough, we are told, to be masculine. When the stresses and frustrations of being a man are cited as evidence that oppressors are oppressed by their oppressing, the word "oppression" is being stretched to meaninglessness: it is treated as though its scope includes any and all human experience of limitation or suffering, no matter the cause, degree or consequence. Once such usage has been put over on us, then if ever we deny that any person or group is oppressed, we seem to imply that we think they never suffer and have no feelings.

We are accused of insensitivity; even of bigotry. For women, such accusation is particularly intimidating, since sensitivity is one of the few virtues that has been assigned to us. If we are found insensitive, we may fear we have no redeeming traits at all and perhaps are not real women. Thus are we silenced before we begin: the name of our situation drained of meaning and our guilt mechanisms tripped. But this is nonsense. Human beings can be miserable without being oppressed, and it is perfectly consistent to deny that a person or group is oppressed without denying that they have feelings or that they suffer …

The root of the word "oppression" is the element "press." The press of the crowd; pressed into military service; to press a pair of pants; printing press; press the button. Presses are used to mold things or flatten them or reduce them in bulk, sometimes to reduce them by squeezing out the gasses or liquids in them. Something pressed is something caught between or among forces and barriers which are so related to each other that jointly they restrain, restrict or prevent the thing's motion or mobility. Mold. Immobilize. Reduce.

The mundane experience of the oppressed provides another clue. One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the double bind – situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them

expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation. For example, it is often a requirement upon oppressed people that we smile and be cheerful. If we comply, we signal our docility and our acquiescence in our situation. We need not, then, be taken note of. We acquiesce in being made invisible, in our occupying no space.

We participate in our own erasure. On the other hand, anything but the sunniest countenance exposes us to being perceived as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous. This means, at the least, that we may be found "difficult" or unpleasant to work with, which is enough to cost one one's livelihood; at worst, being seen as mean, bitter, angry or dangerous has been known to result in rape, arrest, beating and murder. One can only choose to risk one's preferred form and rate of annihilation. Another example: it is common in the United States that women, especially younger women, are in a bind where neither sexual activity nor sexual inactivity is all right. If she is heterosexually active, a woman is open to censure and punishment for being loose, unprincipled or a whore.

The "punishment" comes in the form of criticism, snide and embarrassing remarks, being treated as an easy lay by men, scorn from her more restrained female friends. She may have to lie and hide her behavior from her parents. She must juggle the risks of unwanted

pregnancy and dangerous contraceptives. On the other hand, if she refrains from heterosexual activity, she is fairly constantly harassed by men who try to persuade her into it and pressure her to "relax" and "let her hair down"; she is threatened with labels like "frigid," "uptight," "man-hater," "bitch" and "cocktease." The same parents who would be disapproving of her sexual activity may be worried by her inactivity because it suggests she is not or will not be popular, or is not sexually normal. She may be charged with lesbianism. If a woman is raped, then if she has been heterosexually active she is subject to the presumption that she liked it (since her activity is presumed to show that she likes sex), and if she has not been heterosexually active, she is subject to the presumption that she liked it (since she is supposedly "repressed and frustrated").

Both heterosexual activity and heterosexual non-activity are likely to be taken as proof that you wanted to be raped, and hence, of course, weren't really raped at all. You can't win. You are caught in a bind, caught between systematically related pressures. Women are caught like this, too, by networks of forces and barriers that expose one to penalty, loss or contempt whether one works outside the home or not, is on welfare or not, bears children or not, raises children or not, marries or not, stays married or not, is heterosexual, lesbian, both or neither. Economic necessity; confinement to racial

and/or sexual job ghettos; sexual harassment; sex discrimination; pressures of competing expectations and judgments about women, wives and mothers (in the society at large, in racial and ethnic subcultures and in one's own mind); dependence (full or partial) on husbands, parents or the state; commitment to political ideas; loyalties to racial or ethnic or other "minority" groups; the demands of self-respect and responsibilities to others.

Each of these factors exists in complex tension with every other, penalizing or prohibiting all of the apparently available options. And nipping at one's heels, always, is the endless pack of little things. If one dresses one way, one is subject to the assumption that one is advertising one's sexual availability; if one dresses another way, one appears to "not care about oneself" or to be "unfeminine." If one uses "strong language," one invites categorization as a whore or slut; if one does not, one invites categorization as a "lady" – one too delicately constituted to cope with robust speech or the realities to which it presumably refers. The experience of oppressed people is that the living of one's life is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and

among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction.

It is the experience of being caged in: all avenues, in every direction, are blocked or booby trapped. Cages. Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire any time it wanted to go somewhere. Furthermore, even if, one day at a time, you myopically inspected each wire, you still could not see why a bird would have trouble going past the wires to get anywhere. There is no physical property of any one wire, nothing that the closest scrutiny could discover, that will reveal how a bird could be inhibited or harmed by it except in the most accidental way. It is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere; and then you will see it in a moment. It will require no great subtlety of mental powers. It is perfectly obvious that the bird is surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, no one of which would be the least hindrance to its flight, but which, by their relations to each other, are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon.

It is now possible to grasp one of the reasons why oppression can be hard to see and recognize: one can study the elements of an oppressive structure with great care and some good will without seeing the structure as a whole, and hence without seeing or being able to understand that one is looking at a cage and that there are people there who are caged, whose motion and mobility are restricted, whose lives are shaped and reduced. The arresting of vision at a microscopic level yields such common confusion as that about the male door-opening ritual. This ritual, which is remarkably widespread across classes and races, puzzles many people, some of whom do and some of whom do not find it offensive. Look at the scene of the two people approaching a door. The male steps slightly ahead and opens the door. The male holds the door open while the female glides through. Then the male goes through. The door closes after them. "Now how," one innocently asks, "can those crazy womenslibbers say that is oppressive? The guy removed a barrier to the lady's smooth and unruffled progress."

But each repetition of this ritual has a place in a pattern, in fact in several patterns. One has to shift the level of one's perception in order to see the whole picture.The door-opening pretends to be a helpful service, but the helpfulness is false. This can be seen by noting that it will be done whether or not it makes any

practical sense. Infirm men and men burdened with packages will open doors for able-bodied women who are free of physical burdens. Men will impose themselves awkwardly and jostle everyone in order to get to the door first. The act is not determined by convenience or grace. Furthermore, these very numerous acts of unneeded or even noisome "help" occur in counterpoint to a pattern of men not being helpful in many practical ways in which women might welcome help. What women experience is a world in which gallant princes charming commonly make a fuss about being helpful and providing small services when help and services are of little or no use, but in which there are rarely ingenious and adroit princes at hand when substantial assistance is really wanted either in mundane affairs or in situations of threat, assault or terror.

There is no help with the (his) laundry; no help typing a report at 4 a.m.; no help in mediating disputes among relatives or children. There is nothing but advice that women should stay indoors after dark, be chaperoned by a man, or when it comes down to it, "lie back and enjoy it." The gallant gestures have no practical meaning. Their meaning is symbolic. The door-opening and similar services provided are services which really are needed by people who are for one reason or another incapacitated – unwell, burdened

with parcels, etc. So the message is that women are incapable. The detachment of the acts from the concrete realities of what women need and do not need is a vehicle for the message that women's actual needs and interests are unimportant or irrelevant. Finally, these gestures imitate the behavior of servants toward masters and thus mock women, who are in most respects the servants and caretakers of men.

The message of the false helpfulness of male gallantry is female dependence, the invisibility or insignificance of women, and contempt for women. One cannot see the meanings of these rituals if one's focus is riveted upon the individual event in all its particularity, including the particularity of the individual man's present conscious intentions and motives and the individual woman's conscious perception of the event in the moment. It seems sometimes that people take a deliberately myopic view and fill their eyes with things seen microscopically in order not to see macroscopically. At any rate, whether it is deliberate or not, people can and do fail to see the oppression of women because they fail to see macroscopically and hence fail to see the various elements of the situation as systematically related in larger schemes. As the cageness of the birdcage is a macroscopic phenomenon, the oppressiveness of the situations in which women live our various and different lives is a macroscopic

phenomenon. Neither can be seen from a microscopic perspective. But when you look macroscopically you can see it – a network of forces and barriers which are systematically related and which conspire to the immobilization, reduction and molding of women and the lives we live.

4.5. Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference

Much of Western European history conditions us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior. In a society where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some group of people who, Audre Lorde through systematized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior. Within this society, that group is made up of Black and Third World people, working-class people, older people, and women. As a forty-nine-year-old Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an inter-racial couple, I usually find myself a part of some group defined as other, deviant, inferior, or just plain wrong. Traditionally, in american society, it is the members of oppressed, objectified groups who are expected to stretch out and bridge the gap between the

actualities of our lives and the consciousness of our oppressor.

For in order to survive, those of us for whom oppression is as american as apple pie have always had to be watchers, to become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adopting them for some illusion of protection. Whenever the need for some pretense of communication arises, those who profit from our oppression call upon us to share our knowledge with them. In other words, it is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistakes. I am responsible for educating teachers who dismiss my children's culture in school. Black and Third World people are expected to educate white people as to our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. Lesbians and gay men are expected to educate the heterosexual world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade responsibility for their own actions. There is a constant drain of energy which might be better used in redefining ourselves and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future.

Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to

the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion. Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation.

Racism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance. Sexism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance. Ageism. Heterosexism. Elitism. Classism. It is a lifetime pursuit for each one of us to extract these distortions from our living at the same time as we recognize, reclaim, and define those differences upon which they are imposed. For we have all been raised in a society where those distortions were endemic within our living. Too often, we pour the energy needed for recognizing and exploring difference into pretending those differences are insurmountable

barriers, or that they do not exist at all. This results in a voluntary isolation, or false and treacherous connections. Either way, we do not develop tools 18 Introduction to Feminist Concepts and Issues for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives. We speak not of human difference, but of human deviance.

Somewhere, on the edge of consciousness, there is what I call a mythical norm, which each one of us within our hearts knows "that is not me." In america, this norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian, and financially secure. It is with this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society. Those of us who stand outside that power often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves may be practicing. By and large, within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word sisterhood that does not, in fact, exist.

Unacknowledged class differences rob women of each other's energy and creative insight. Recently, a women's magazine collective made the decision for one

issue to print only prose, saying poetry was a less "rigorous" or "serious" art form. Yet even the form our creativity takes is often a class issue. Of all the art forms, poetry is the most economical. It is the one which is the most secret, which requires the least physical labor, the least material, and the one which can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, on the subway, and on scraps of surplus paper. Over the last few years, writing a novel on tight finances, I came to appreciate the enormous differences in the material demands between poetry and prose. As we reclaim our literature, poetry has been the major voice of poor, working-class, and Colored women. A room of one's own may be a necessity for writing prose, but so are reams of paper, a typewriter, and plenty of time. The actual requirements to produce the visual arts also help determine, along class lines, whose art is whose. In this day of inflated prices for material, who are our sculptors, our painters, our photographers?

Where we speak of a broadly based women's culture, we need to be aware of the effect of class and economic differences on the supplies available for producing art. As we move toward creating a society within which we can each flourish, ageism is another distortion of relationship which interferes with our vision. By ignoring the past, we are encouraged to repeat its mistakes. The "generation gap" is an

important social tool for any repressive society. If the younger members of a community view the older members as contemptible or suspect or excess, they will never be

able to join hands and examine the living memories of the community, nor ask the all-important question, "Why?" This gives rise to a historical amnesia that keeps us working to invent the wheel every time we have to go to the store for bread.

We find ourselves having to repeat and relearn the same old lessons over and over that our mothers did because we do not pass on what we have learned, or because we are unable to listen. For instance, how many times has this all been said before? For another, who would have believed that once again our daughters are allowing their bodies to be hampered and purgatoried by girdles and high heels and hobble skirts? Ignoring the differences of race between women and the implications of those differences presents the most serious threat to the mobilization of women's joint power. As white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define woman in terms of their own experience alone, then women of Color become "other," the outsider whose experience and tradition is too "alien" to comprehend. An example of this is the signal absence of the experience of women of Color as a resource for women's studies courses. The literature of

women of Color is seldom included in women's literature courses and almost never in other literature courses, nor in women's studies as a whole. All too often, the excuse given is that the literatures of women of Color can only be taught by Colored women, or that they are too difficult to understand, or that classes cannot "get into" them because they come out of experiences that are "too different." I have heard this argument presented by white women of otherwise quite clear intelligence, women who seem to have no trouble at all teaching and reviewing work that comes out of the vastly different experiences of Shakespeare, Molière, Dostoyevsky, and Aristophanes.

Surely there must be some other explanation. This is a very complex question, but I believe one of the reasons white women have such difficulty reading Black women's work is because of their reluctance to see Black women as women and different from themselves. To examine Black women's literature effectively requires that we be seen as whole people in our actual complexities – as individuals, as women, as human – rather than as one of those problematic but familiar stereotypes provided in this society in place of genuine images of Black women. And I believe this holds true for the literature of other women of Color who are not Black. The literatures of all women of Color recreate the textures of our lives, and many white

women are heavily invested in ignoring the real differences. For as long as any difference between us means one of us must be inferior, then the recognition of any difference must be fraught with guilt. To allow women of Color to step out of stereotypes is too guilt provoking, for it threatens the complacency of those women who view oppression only in terms of sex.

Refusing to recognize difference makes it impossible to see the different problems and pitfalls facing us as women. Thus, in a patriarchal power system where whiteskin privilege is a major prop, the entrapments used to neutralize Black women and white women are not the same. For example, it is easy for Black women to be used by the power structure against Black men, not because they are men, but because they are Black. Therefore, for Black women, it is necessary at all times to separate the needs of the oppressor from our own legitimate conflicts within our communities. This same problem does not exist for white women. Black women and men have shared racist oppression and still share it, although in different ways. Out of that shared oppression we have developed joint defenses and joint vulnerabilities to each other that are not duplicated in the white community, with the exception of the relationship between Jewish women and Jewish men.

On the other hand, white women face the pitfall of being seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretense of sharing power. This possibility does not exist in the same way for women of Color. The tokenism that is sometimes extended to us is not an invitation to join power; our racial "otherness" is a visible reality that makes that quite clear. For white women there is a wider range of pretended choices and rewards for identifying with patriarchal power and its tools. Today, with the defeat of the ERA, the tightening economy, and increased conservatism, it is easier once again for white women to believe the dangerous fantasy that if you are good enough, pretty enough, sweet enough, quiet enough, teach the children to behave, hate the right people, and marry the right men, then you will be allowed to coexist with patriarchy in relative peace, at least until a man needs your job or the neighborhood rapist happens along. And true, unless one lives and loves in the trenches it is difficult to remember that the war against dehumanization is ceaseless.

But Black women and our children know the fabric of our lives is stitched with violence and with hatred, that there is no rest. We do not deal with it only on the picket lines, or in dark midnight alleys, or in the places where we dare to verbalize our resistance. For us, increasingly, violence weaves through the daily tissues of our living – in the supermarket, in the classroom, in

the elevator, in the clinic and the schoolyard, from the plumber, the baker, the saleswoman, the bus driver, the bank teller, the waitress who does not serve us. Some problems we share as women, some we do not. You fear your children will grow up to join the patriarchy and testify against you, we fear our children will be dragged from a car and shot down in the street, and you will turn your backs upon the reasons they are dying.

4.7. Exercises

1. In what ways do Cisneros's and Walker's essays demonstrate an intersectional approach? What vectors of identity are most salient for each? How are these vectors presented as interrelated?
2. Why does Frye argue against too broad a definition of oppression? What problems does she envision if oppressors can also be viewed as oppressed?
3. Explain Frye's theory of the double bind oppressed people experience. Can you think of some examples? Explain her analogy of oppression as a bird cage. What makes this analogy rhetorically effective?
4. In what ways are the poetic style used by Cisneros and Lorde and the humorous style used by Cisneros and Bornstein particularly effective to convey their message? Why and how does style give their message a more powerful punch?

5. George explains that nineteenth-century "European texts repeatedly justified and explained colonial domination by reinforcing a series of hierarchized oppositions such as civilized/savage, modern/traditional, mature/childlike, and, most significantly, rational/irrational. Can you think of some examples that show that these patterns of colonial thinking continue today? For example, which cultures are still described in popular media as uncivilized, which religions as traditional, and which gender as irrational?
6. How do you define feminism? Has your definition been somewhat modified after doing the readings in this chapter? Why, or why not?

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CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S FICTION

The specific instructional objectives of the chapter is the students will be able to describe the position of women's fiction in the society, the effort of women's writers, and the difference between women's and men's writing

a. The chapter will discuss describe the position of women's fiction in the sociarety, the effort of women's writers, and the difference between women's and men's writing.

b. Having learned the material in this chapter the students will be able to:

1. describe how society response to women's fiction at first appeared
2. elaborate the effort of women's writers to show their works .
3. distinguish women's and men's writing

5.1. The Position of Women's Fiction in the Society

Women's fiction has typically received just as little respect; in fact, as Juliette Wells points out, there has been «a long tradition of discounting women writers and their readers» (Wells, 2006: 48). Much of this criticism has attempted to «justify the assumption that novels by women would be recognizably inferior to those by men» (Showalter, 2009: 63). Women's literature has rarely received the recognition it deserves. Indeed, until relatively recent times, most female writers «were scorned by the male intellectual elite because of their «low-brow» appeal» (Rakow, 1998: 282). Additionally, women's writing was virtually excluded from the literary Canon, while «critical issues of quality have been used to question the validity of writings by women, from the authenticity of their authorship [...] to the validity of what they write about and what they produce» (Warhol and Hernol, 1997: 74).

Female writers have long experienced severe difficulty in terms of gaining recognition and respect for what they write. This tradition of criticizing women writers and their work, «and dismissing certain literary trends as feminine rubbish [...] has a history as long as the popular fiction itself» (Traister, 2005: par. 4). In fact, since the birth of the English novel in the eighteenth century, «critics moaned about the intellect-eroding effects of sentimental fiction» (Traister, 2005: par. 4), and

«feminist scholars have [long] been protesting the apparently systematic neglect of women's experience in the literary canon» (Robinson, 1983: 116). In short, «the female tradition in literature has been either ignored, derided, or even [...] taken over and replaced» (Russ, 1983: 103). There have been numerous «explanations» to justify the assumption that women's writing was «inferior» to men's. One such reason was related to women's perceived limited experience in life:

> Vast preserves of masculine life – schools, universities, clubs, sports, businesses, government, and the army – were closed to women. Research and industry could not make up for these exclusions, and [...] women writers were at a disadvantage. [...] Since the Victorians had defined women as angelic beings who could not feel passion, anger, ambition, or honor, they did not believe that women could express more than half of life. (Showalter, 2009: 65-66).

5.2. The Effort of Women's Writers

There were moves by some writers to combat this discrimination. Some female writers, such as the Brontës, for instance, «sought ineffectively to veil themselves [and thus their gender] by using the name of a man» (Woolf, 2000: 52), in the hope that their work would gain respect and recognition, or at least be given

a chance, on the basis that it was supposedly written by a man. Ironically, however, this resulted in female writers paying «homage to the convention» (Woolf, 2000: 52) whereby the writers were, in effect, unconsciously encouraging the tradition of male writers being «superior», and female writers soon reverted to letting their identities be known and attempted to be published under their own names. This, however, was just the start of more problems that female writers would experience.

The opening quote by Joanna Russ describes only one such problem: that, historically, «there [were] so very few stories in which women can figure as protagonists» (Russ, 1995: 80) as female characters traditionally existed only in relation to the (male) hero. It was long the situation that female characters in novels had the choice of playing one of only two possible types of role: «the vexed and vexing polarities of angel and monster, sweet dumb Snow White and fierce mad Queen» (Gilbert, 1979: 21), thus providing very limited possibilities for female characters to truly shine. Related

to this, was the apparent lack of female literary predecessors whose lead other female writers could follow. This resulted in women's writing becoming «at least bitextual; [...] it is a double-voiced discourse influenced by both the dominant masculine literary tradition and the muted feminine one» (Showalter, 2009: xv). After all, as Joanna Russ points out, the «insistence that authors make up their own plots is a recent development in literature [...] It's a commonplace that bad writers imitate and great writers steal» (Russ, 1995: 85-86). This, then, posed a problem for upcoming female writers, whose predecessors were predominantly male and who, naturally, would have different experiences to write about. The alternative for women, then, was «to take as one's model (and structural principle) not male myth but the structure of one's own experience» (Russ, 1995: 88). After all, women would logically experience somewhat «different» lives from men, whether concerning ambitions and problems, the body and work, or societal expectations and restrictions. Therefore, it seems only natural that these issues would

begin to appear in writing by the women who are likely to have witnessed or experienced them:

> The differences between traditional female preoccupations and roles and male ones make a difference in female writing. Many other critics are beginning to agree that when we look at women writers collectively we can see an imaginative continuum, the recurrence of certain patterns, themes, problems, and images from generation to generation. (Showalter, 2009: 9)

Thus, a new «female» literary tradition has been carved out, in which predominantly female thoughts, feelings, and experiences are portrayed.

5.3. The Difference between Women's and Men's Writing

This, of course, gave rise to its own problem, mainly that women's fiction was set apart from men's, which was still viewed by many as «Real Writing». This was seen by many to mean that «men write about what's important; women write about what's important to women» (Mazza, 2006: 28). Naturally, women will tend to write about different interests, experiences, and values than men will, and yet «it is the masculine values that prevail» (Woolf, 2000: 74). Because of this, any piece of writing that prioritizes the experiences of women has

tended to be ridiculed and heavily criticized. As Virginia Woolf explained:

> This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing-room. A scene in a battlefield is more important than a scene in a shop. (Woolf, 2000: 74)

Over fifty years after Woolf wrote this, it seemed little or no progress had been made concerning this disregard for women's experiences, as Russ discussed how critics were still questioning the «validity of writings by women, from the authenticity of their authorship [...] to the validity of what they write about and what they produce» (Warhol, 1997: 74). Russ simplified it further by putting it in the imagined words of the critics discussing the work of women writers: «she wrote it, but look what she wrote about» (Russ, 1983: 97).

This attack on women writers' work is not merely a battle of the sexes. In 1856, George Eliot launched an attack on her fellow women writers, entitled Silly Novels by Lady Novelists. While Eliot concedes that, due to its lack of restrictions and scope for originality, «fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, fully equal men» (Eliot, 1856: 1469), she also feels that «it is precisely this absence of rigid

requirement which constitutes the fatal seduction of novel writing to incompetent women» (Eliot, 1856: 1469). The novels written by these «incompetent» writers, as Eliot views it, are filled with a «particular quality of silliness [...] the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic» (Eliot, 1856: 1461).

As a female writer herself, however, Eliot allows that there are female authors whose work is criticized merely because of the gender of the author. As she states: «no sooner does a woman show that she has genius or effective talent, than she receives that tribute of being moderately praised and severely criticized» (Eliot, 1856: 1468). In this sense, it is not that Eliot believes that women cannot or should not write novels, but more an anxiety «that men – and women interpret sentimental or romance fiction as definitive statements on women's prose craftsmanship» (Harzewski, 2006: 29).

Female writers have always been fully aware that their work was viewed as sub-standard and unimportant, but, instead of deterring them from writing, it seems to have made them all the more determined to succeed and make their voices heard (Ryan, 2010). Jane Austen herself believed that women's novels, «for all their incidental silliness, are important enough in women's negotiation with the world to be worth defending against detractors» (Blair, 2000: 21-22).

Austen uses novels such as Northanger Abbey to plead for women writers not to turn against one another, but instead to unite against their critics. As she puts it, «if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? [...] Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body» (Austen, 1993: 19).

5.4. Exercises

1. Mention two or more situation that show how the society respond to women's fiction at first appeared.
2. Mention two or more the women who struggle to show their writing to public.
3. Elaborate how the women who struggle to show their writing to public and their writing.
4. What are the differences between women's and men's writing?
5. What should the women's writer do towards another one? Who is the women's writer do suggest it?

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CHAPTER VI

ALICE MUNRO & HER SHORT STORY

The specific instructional objectives of the course are the students will be able to comprehend the short story by the woman author and elaborate the gender issues embedded in the story based on the feminist concepts.

a. The chapter will discuss the woman author and her short story
b. Having learned the material in this chapter the students will be able to:
    1. describe how class matters in the short story.
    2. elaborate how difference among characters become problem in the story.
    3. depict how race develop the plot of the story.
    4. elaborate the reason why oppression experience by the characters in the story.

6.1. Alice Munro

Alice Munro grew up in Wingham, Ontario, and attended the University of Western Ontario. She has published twelve collections of stories and two volumes of selected stories, as well as a novel. During her distinguished career she has been the recipient of many awards and prizes, including three of Canada's Governor General's Literary Award and two of its Giller Prizes, the Rea Award for the Short Story, the Lannan Literary Award, England's W. H. Smith Book Award, the United States' National Book Critics Circle Award, the Edward MacDowell Medal in literature, and the Man Booker International Prize. Her stories have appeared in The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly, The Paris Review, and other publications, and her collections have been translated into thirteen languages. Alice Munro lives in Clinton, Ontario, near Lake Huron.

6.2. Dance of the Happy Shades by Alice Munro

Miss Marsalles is having another party. (Out of musical integrity, or her heart's bold yearning for festivity, she never calls it a recital.) My motheris not an inventive or convincing liar, and the excuses which occur to her are obviously second-rate. The painters are coming. Friends from Ottawa. Poor Carrie is having her tonsils out. In the end all she can say is: Oh, but won't all that be too much trouble, *now*?

Now being weighted with several troublesome meanings; you may take your choice. Now that Miss Marsalles has moved from the brick and frame bungalow on Bank Street, where the last three parties have been rather squashed, to an even smaller place—if she has described it correctly—on Bala Street. (Bala Street, where is that?) Or: now that Miss Marsalles' older sister isin bed, following a stroke; now that Miss Marsalles herself—as my mother says, we must face these things—is simply getting *too old*.

Now? asks Miss Marsalles, stung, pretending mystification, or perhapsfor that matter really feeling it. And she asks how her June party couldever be too much trouble, at any time, in any place? It is the only entertainment she ever gives any more (so far as my mother knows it isthe only entertainment she ever has given, but Miss Marsalles' light old voice, undismayed, indefatigably social, supplies the ghosts of tea parties, private dances, At Homes, mammoth Family Dinners). She would suffer, she says, as much disappointment as the children, if shewere to give it up. Considerably more, says my mother to herself, but of course she cannot say it aloud; she turns her face from the telephone with that look of irritation—as if she had seen something messy whichshe was unable to clean up—which is her private expression of pity. Andshe promises to come; weak schemes for getting

out of it will occur to her during the next two weeks, but she knows she will be there.

She phones up Marg French who like herself is an old pupil of Miss Marsalles and who has been having lessons for her twins, and they commiserate for a while and promise to go together and buck each otherup. They remember the year before last when it rained and the little hallwas full of raincoats piled on top of each other because there was no place to hang them up, and the umbrellas dripped puddles on the dark floor. The little girls' dresses were crushed because of the way they all had to squeeze together, and the living room windows would not open. Last year a child had a nosebleed.

"Of course that was not Miss Marsalles' fault."

They giggle despairingly. "No. But things like that did not use tohappen."

And that is true; that is the whole thing. There is a feeling that canhardly be put into words about Miss Marsalles' parties; things are getting out of hand, anything may happen. There is even a moment, driving into such a party, when the question occurs: will anybody else be there? For one of the most disconcerting things about the last two or three parties has been the widening gap in the ranks of the regulars, the oldpupils whose children seem to be the only new pupils Miss Marsalles ever has. Every

June reveals some new and surely significant dropping-out. Mary Lambert's girl no longer takes; neither does Joan Crimble's.What does this mean? think my mother and Marg French, women who have moved to the suburbs and are plagued sometimes by a feeling thatthey have fallen behind, that their instincts for doing the right thing have become confused. Piano lessons are not so important now as they once were; everybody knows that. Dancing is believed to be more favourable to the development of the whole child—and the children, at least the girls, don't seem to mind it as much. But how are you toexplain that to Miss Marsalles, who says, "All children need music. All children love music in their hearts"? It is one of Miss Marsalles' indestructible beliefs that she can see into children's hearts, and she finds there a treasury of good intentions and a natural love of all good things. The deceits which her spinster's sentimentality has practised on her original good judgment are legendary and colossal; she has this way of speaking of children's hearts as if they were something holy; it is hardfor a parent to know what to say.

In the old days, when my sister Winifred took lessons, the address wasin Rosedale; that was where it had always been. A narrow house, built of soot-and-raspberry-coloured brick, grim little ornamental

balconies curving out from the second-floor windows, no towers anywhere but somehow a turreted effect; dark, pretentious, poetically ugly—the family home. And in Rosedale the annual party did not go off too badly. There was always an awkward little space before the sandwiches, because the woman they had in the kitchen was not used to parties and rather slow,but the sandwiches when they did appear were always very good: chicken, asparagus rolls, wholesome, familiar things—dressed-up nursery food. The performances on the piano were, as usual, nervous and choppy or sullen and spiritless, with the occasional surprise and interest of a lively disaster. It will be understood that Miss Marsalles' idealistic view of children, her tender-or simple-mindedness in that regard, made her almost useless as a teacher; she was unable to criticize except in the most delicate and apologetic way and her praises were unforgivably dishonest; it took an unusually conscientious pupil to come through with anything like a creditable performance.

But on the whole the affair in those days had solidity, it had tradition, in its own serenely out-of-date way it had style. Everything was always as expected; Miss Marsalles herself, waiting in the entrance hall with thetiled floor and the dark, church-vestry smell, wearing rouge, an antique hairdo

adopted only on this occasion, and a floor-length dress of plum and pinkish splotches that might have been made out of old upholstery material, startled no one but the youngest children. Even the shadow behind her of another Miss Marsalles, slightly, older, larger, grimmer, whose existence was always forgotten from one June to the next, was not discomfiting—though it was surely an arresting fact that there should be not one but two faces like that in the world, both long, gravel- coloured, kindly and grotesque, with enormous noses and tiny, red,sweet-tempered and shortsighted eyes. It must finally have come to seemlike a piece of luck to them to be so ugly, a protection against life to be marked in so many ways, *impossible*, for they were gay as invulnerable and childish people are; they appeared sexless, wild and gentle creatures, bizarre yet domestic, living in their house in Rosedale outsidethe complications of time.

In the room where the mothers sat, some on hard sofas, some on folding chairs, to hear the children play "The Gypsy Song," "The Harmonious Blacksmith" and the "Turkish March," there was a picture of Mary, Queen of Scots, in velvet, with a silk veil, in front of Holyrood Castle. There were brown misty pictures of historical battles, also the Harvard Classics, iron firedogs and a bronze Pegasus. None of

the mothers smoked, nor were ashtrays provided. It was the same room,

exactly the same room, in which they had performed themselves; a roomwhose dim impersonal style (the flossy bunch of peonies and spirea dropping petals on the piano was Miss Marsalles' own touch and not entirely happy) was at the same time uncomfortable and reassuring. Here they found themselves year after year—a group of busy, youngish women who had eased their cars impatiently through the archaic streetsof Rosedale, who had complained for a week previously about the time lost, the fuss over the children's dresses and, above all, the boredom, butwho were drawn together by a rather implausible allegiance—not so much to Miss Marsalles as to the ceremonies of their childhood, to a more exacting pattern of life which had been breaking apart even then but which survived, and unaccountably still survived, in Miss Marsalles' living room. The little girls in dresses with skirts as stiff as bells moved with a natural awareness of ceremony against the dark walls of books, and their mothers' faces wore the dull, not unpleasant look ofacquiescence, the touch of absurd and slightly artificial nostalgia which would carry them through any lengthy family ritual. They exchanged smiles which showed no lack of good manners, and yet

expressed a familiar, humorous amazement at the sameness of things, even theselections played on the piano and the fillings of the sandwiches; so they acknowledged the incredible, the wholly unrealistic persistence of Miss Marsalles and her sister and their life.

After the piano-playing came a little ceremony which always caused some embarrassment. Before the children were allowed to escape to the garden—very narrow, a town garden, but still a garden, with hedges, shade, a border of yellow lilies—where a long table was covered with crepe paper in infants' colours of pink and blue, and the woman from the kitchen set out plates of sandwiches, ice cream, prettily tinted and tasteless sherbet, they were compelled to accept, one by one, a year's- end gift, all wrapped and tied with ribbon, from Miss Marsalles. EXcept among the most naive new pupils this gift caused no excitement ofanticipation. It was apt to be a book, and the question was, where did she find such books? They were of the vintage found in old Sunday- school libraries, in attics and the basements of second-hand stores, but they were all stiff-backed, unread, brand new. *Northern Lakes and Rivers, Knowing the Birds, More Tales by Grey-Owl, Little Mission Friends*. She also gave pictures: "Cupid Awake and Cupid Asleep," "After the Bath," "The

Little Vigilantes"; most of these seemed to feature that tender childish nudity which our sophisticated prudery found most ridiculous and disgusting. Even the boxed games she gave us proved to be insipid and unplayable—full of complicated rules which allowed everybody to win.

The embarrassment the mothers felt at this time was due not so muchto the presents themselves as to a strong doubt whether Miss Marsalles could afford them; it did not help to remember that her fees had gone uponly once in ten years (and even when that happened, two or three mothers had quit). They always ended up by saying that she must have other resources. It was obvious—otherwise she would not be living in this house. And then her sister taught—or did not teach any more, she was retired but she gave private lessons, it was believed, in French and German. They must have enough, between them. If you are a MissMarsalles your wants are simple and it does not cost a great deal to live.

But after the house in Rosedale was gone, after it had given way to the bungalow on Bank Street, these conversations about Miss Marsalles' means did not take place; this aspect of Miss Marsalles' life had passedinto that region of painful subjects which it is crude and unmannerly to discuss.

"I will die if it rains," my mother says. "I will die of depression at thisaffair if it rains." But the day of the party it does not rain and in fact the weather is very hot. It is a hot gritty summer day as we drive down intothe city and get lost, looking for Bala Street.

When we find it, it gives the impression of being better than we expected, but that is mostly because it has a row of trees, and the other streets we have been driving through, along the railway embankment, have been unshaded and slatternly. The houses here are of the sort thatare divided in half, with a sloping wooden partition in the middle of the front porch; they have two wooden steps and a dirt yard. Apparently it isin one of these half-houses that Miss Marsalles lives. They are red brick, with the front door and the window trim and the porches painted cream, grey, oily-green and yellow. They are neat, kept-up. The front part of the house next to the one where Miss Marsalles lives has been turned into a little store; it has a sign that says: GROCERIES AND CONFECTIONERY.

The door is standing open. Miss Marsalles is wedged between the door, the coatrack and the stairs; there is barely room to get past herinto the living room, and it would be impossible, the way things are now, for anyone to get from the living room upstairs. Miss Marsalles is wearing her rouge, her hairdo and her brocaded dress, which it is difficult

not to tramp on. In this full light she looks like a character in a masquerade, like the feverish, fancied-up courtesan of an unpleasant Puritan imagination. But the fever is only her rouge; her eyes, when weget close enough to see them, are the same as ever, red-rimmed and merry and without apprehension. My mother and I are kissed—I am greeted, as always, as if I were around five years old—and we get past. It seemed to me that Miss Marsalles was looking beyond us as she kissedus; she was looking up the street for someone who has not yet arrived.

The house has a living room and a dining room, with the oak doors pushed back between them. They are small rooms. Mary Queen of Scots hangs tremendous on the wall. There is no fireplace so the iron firedogsare not there, but the piano is, and even a bouquet of peonies and spirea from goodness knows what garden. Since it is so small the living room looks crowded, but there are not a dozen people in it, including children.My mother speaks to people and smiles and sits down. She says to me,Marg French is not here yet, could she have got lost too?

The woman sitting beside us is not familiar. She is middle-aged andwears a dress of shot taffeta with rhinestone clips; it smells of the cleaners. She introduces herself as Mrs. Clegg, Miss Marsalles' neighbour in the other half of the house. Miss

Marsalles has asked her if she wouldlike to hear the children play, and she thought it would be a treat; she is fond of music in any form.

My mother, very pleasant but looking a little uncomfortable, asks about Miss Marsalles' sister; is she upstairs?

"Oh, yes, she's upstairs. She's not herself though, poor thing."That is too bad, my mother says.

"Yes it's a shame. I give her something to put her to sleep for the afternoon. She lost her powers of speech, you know. Her powers of control generally, she lost." My mother is warned by a certain luXurious lowering of the voice that more lengthy and intimate details may followand she says quickly again that it is too bad.

"I come in and look after her when the other one goes out on her lessons."

"That's very kind of you. I'm sure she appreciates it."

"Oh well I feel kind of sorry for a couple of old ladies like them.

They're a couple of babies, the pair."

My mother murmurs something in reply but she is not looking at Mrs. Clegg, at her brick-red healthy face or the—to me—amazing gaps in her teeth. She is staring past her into the dining room with fairly well-controlled dismay.

What she sees there is the table spread, all ready for the party feast; nothing is lacking. The plates of sandwiches are set out, as they must have been for several hours now; you can see how the ones on top are beginning to curl very slightly at the edges. Flies buzz over the table, settle on the sandwiches and crawl comfortably across the plates of little iced cakes brought from the bakery. The cut-glass bowl, sitting as usualin the centre of the table, is full of purple punch, without ice apparentlyand going flat.

"I tried to tell her not to put it all out ahead of time," Mrs. Clegg whispers, smiling delightedly, as if she were talking about the whims and errors of some headstrong child. "You know she was up at five o'clock this morning making sandwiches. I don't know what things aregoing to taste like. Afraid she wouldn't be ready I guess. Afraid she'd forget something. They hate to forget."

"Food shouldn't be left out in the hot weather," my mother says.

"Oh, well I guess it won't poison us for once. I was only thinking what a shame to have the sandwiches dry up. And when she put the ginger-ale in the punch at noon I had to laugh. But what a waste."

My mother shifts and rearranges her voile skirt, as if she has suddenly become aware of the impropriety, the hideousness even, of discussing a

hostess's arrangements in this way in her own living room. "Marg Frenchisn't here," she says to me in a hardening voice. "She did say she was coming."

"I am the oldest girl here," I say with disgust.

"Shh. That means you can play last. Well. It won't be a very long programme this year, will it?"

Mrs. Clegg leans across us, letting loose a cloud of warm unfresh odour from between her breasts. "I'm going to see if she's got the fridge turned up high enough for the ice cream. She'd feel awful if it was all to melt."

My mother goes across the room and speaks to a woman she knows and I can tell that she is saying, Marg French *said* she was *coming*. The women's faces in the room, made up some time before, have begun to show the effects of heat and a fairly general uneasiness. They ask each other when it will begin. Surely very soon now; nobody has arrived forat least a quarter of an hour. How mean of people not to come, they say. Yet in this heat, and the heat is particularly dreadful down here, it must be the worst place in the city—well you can almost see their point. Ilook around and calculate that there is no one in the room within a year of my age.

The little children begin to play. Miss Marsalles and Mrs. Clegg applaud with enthusiasm; the mothers clap two or three times each, with relief. My mother

seems unable, although she makes a great effort, to take her eyes off the dining-room table and the complacent journeys ofthe marauding flies. Finally she achieves a dreamy, distant look, with her eyes focused somewhere above the punch-bowl, which makes it possible for her to keep her head turned in that direction and yet doesnot in any positive sense give her away. Miss Marsalles as well has trouble keeping her eyes on the performers; she keeps looking towardsthe door. Does she expect that even now some of the unexplained absentees may turn up? There are far more than half a dozen presents inthe inevitable box beside the piano, wrapped in white paper and tied with silver ribbon—not real ribbon, but the cheap kind that splits and shreds.

It is while I am at the piano, playing the minuet from *Berenice*, that the final arrival, unlooked-for by anybody but Miss Marsalles, takes place. It must seem at first that there has been some mistake. Out of the corner ofmy eye I see a whole procession of children, eight or ten in all, with a red-haired woman in something like a uniform, mounting the front step. They look like a group of children from a private school on an excursionof some kind (there is that drabness and sameness about their clothes)but their progress is too scrambling and disorderly for that. Or this is the impression I have; I cannot really look. Is it the

wrong house, are theyreally on their way to the doctor for shots, or to Vacation Bible Classes?No, Miss Marsalles has got up with a happy whisper of apology; she has gone to meet them. Behind my back there is a sound of people squeezing together, of folding chairs being opened, there is an inappropriate, curiously unplaceable giggle.

And above or behind all this cautious flurry of arrival there is a peculiarly concentrated silence. Something has happened, something unforeseen, perhaps something disastrous; you can feel such things behind your back. I go on playing. I fill the first harsh silence with my own particularly dogged and lumpy interpretation of Handel. When I getup off the piano bench I almost fall over some of the new children whoare sitting on the floor.

One of them, a boy nine or ten years old, is going to follow me. Miss Marsalles takes his hand and smiles at him and there is no twitch of his hand, no embarrassed movement of her head to disown this smile. Howpeculiar; and a boy, too. He turns his head towards her as he sits down; she speaks to him encouragingly. But my attention has been caught by his profile as he looks up at her—the heavy, unfinished features, the abnormally small and slanting eyes. I look at the children seated on the floor and I see the same profile repeated two or three times;

I see another boy with a very large head and fair shaved hair, fine as a baby's;there are other children whose features are regular and unexceptional, marked only by an infantile openness and calm. The boys are dressed inwhite shirts and short grey pants and the girls wear dresses of grey-greencotton with red buttons and sashes.

"Sometimes that kind is quite musical," says Mrs. Clegg.

"Who are they?" my mother whispers, surely not aware of how upset she sounds.

"They're from that class she has out at the Greenhill School. They're nice little things and some of them quite musical but of course they're not all there."

My mother nods distractedly; she looks around the room and meetsthe trapped, alerted eyes of the other women, but no decision is reached. There is nothing to be done. These children are going to play. Their playing is no worse—not much worse—than ours, but they seem to go so slowly, and then there is nowhere to look. For it is a matter of politeness surely not to look closely at such children, and yet where else can youlook during a piano performance but at the performer? There is an atmosphere in the room of some freakish inescapable dream. My mother and the others are almost audible saying to themselves: *No, I know*

it isnot right to be repelled by such children and I am not repelled, but nobody told me I was going to come here to listen to a procession of little—little idiots for that's what they are—WHAT KIND OF A PARTY IS THIS? Their applause however has increased, becoming brisk, let-us-at-least-get-this-over-with. But the programme shows no signs of being over.

Miss Marsalles says each child's name as if it were a cause for celebration. Now she says, "Dolores Boyle!" A girl as big as I am, a long- legged, rather thin and plaintive-looking girl with blonde, almost white, hair uncoils herself and gets up off the floor. She sits down on the benchand after shifting around a bit and pushing her long hair back behind her ears she begins to play.

We are accustomed to notice performances, at Miss Marsalles' parties, but it cannot be said that anyone has ever expected music. Yet this timethe music establishes itself so effortlessly, with so little demand for attention, that we are hardly even surprised. What she plays is not familiar. It is something fragile, courtly and gay, that carries with it the freedom of a great unemotional happiness. And all that this girl does—but this is something you would not think could ever be done—is to play it so that this can be felt, all this can be felt, even in Miss Marsalles' living-room on Bala Street on a

preposterous afternoon. The children areall quiet, the ones from Greenhill School and the rest. The mothers sit, caught with a look of protest on their faces, a more profound anxiety than before, as if reminded of something that they had forgotten they had forgotten; the white-haired girl sits ungracefully at the piano with her head hanging down, and the music is carried through the open door and the windows to the cindery summer street.

Miss Marsalles sits beside the piano and smiles at everybody in her usual way. Her smile is not triumphant, or modest. She does not look like a magician who is watching people's faces to see the effect of a rather original revelation; nothing like that. You would think, now that at the very end of her life she has found someone whom she can teach— whom she must teach—to play the piano, she would light up with the importance of this discovery. But it seems that the girl's playing like thisis something she always expected, and she finds it natural and satisfying; people who believe in miracles do not make much fuss when they actually encounter one. Nor does it seem that she regards this girl with any more wonder than the other children from Greenhill School, who love her, or the rest of us, who do not. To her no gift is unexpected, no celebration will come as a surprise.

The girl is finished. The music is in the room and then it is gone and naturally enough no one knows what to say. For the moment she is finished it is plain that she is just the same as before, a girl from Greenhill School. Yet the music was not imaginary. The facts are not to be reconciled. And so after a few minutes the performance begins to seem, in spite of its innocence, like a trick—a very successful and diverting one, of course, but perhaps—how can it be said?—perhaps not altogether *in good taste*. For the girl's ability, which is undeniable but after all useless, out-of-place, is not really something that anybody wantsto talk about. To Miss Marsalles such a thing is acceptable, but to other people, people who live in the world, it is not. Never mind, they mustsay something and so they speak gratefully of the music itself, saying how lovely, what a beautiful piece, what is it called?

"The Dance of the Happy Shades," says Miss Marsalles. *Danse des ombres heureuses*, she says, which leaves nobody any the wiser.

But then driving home, driving out of the hot red-brick streets and out ofthe city and leaving Miss Marsalles and her no longer possible parties behind, quite certainly forever, why is it that we are unable to say—aswe must have expected to say—*Poor Miss Marsalles?* It is the Dance of the Happy Shades that

prevents us, it is that one communiqué from the other country where she lives.

6.3. Exercises

1. How does the young girl as the fist person narrator in the short story acquire a gender identity during childhood.
2. How is the possibilities for this narrator to establish her own principles based on women's special qualities and personalities and to build a community for wome.
3. How is the narrating girl who does not understand the exact meaning of her parents' behavior and attitude, but describes all that happens to her and reveals the hidden reality beyond the obvious world characterized?
4. How is the gap between her dissatisfied moment with her mother and her unintentional disclosure of how her gendered identity has permeated her everyday life elaborated in the story?
5. How is the discordant relationship between the mother and the daughter gives rise to the possibility of her considering how to become an adult in future described in the story?
6. How is the possibility in Munro's fiction to develop a new female figure that penetrates both gendered spaces. The most remarkable

characteristics of characters that do so are the attention they pay to their everyday lives and their transformation into political subjects who face reality and have the ability to analyze their situation in their own voice?

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