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Who's the Fairest of Them All?

BY LISA MARCUS

The cult of the mother-goddess got stuck and suppressed and then re-appeared later in the cult of the Virgin Mary, but with great mental reservations and precautions for disinfection of her dark aspect. She was once more admitted, but only in so far as man approved, and if she behaved. The dark aspect of the antique mother-goddess has not yet re-appeared in our civilization . . . .

Marie-Louse von Franz

Born theoretically white, we are permitted to pass our childhood as imaginary Indians, our adolescence as imaginary Negroes, and only then are expected to settle down to being what we really are: white once more. – Leslie Fiedler, Waiting for the End[1]

Edith Lewis, Willa Cather's longtime companion, tells a striking story of Cather's childhood that illustrates the consolidation of white identity through momentary identifications with racialized Others. A community patriarch was visiting the Cather's Virginia family home and made the mistake of patronizing the young Cather with southern parlor platitudes. Five-year-old Willa, voicing her rebellion against the visitor's condescending attentions, willfully exclaimed "I'se a dang'ous nigger, I is!" This fleeting imaginary identification with the racial Other enabled the young girl to perform race instead of surrendering to a customarily gendered curtsey of politeness. As Edith Lewis tells it,

> Even as a little girl she felt something smothering in the polite, rigid social conventions of that Southern society — something factitious and unreal. If one fell in with those sentimental attitudes, those euphuisms that went with good manners, one lost all touch with reality, with truth of experience. If one resisted them, one became a social rebel.[2]

The young Cather's startling ventriloquized performance of blackness reveals an urgent desire to disrupt the veneer of southern social customs and marks her entrance into racial Othering, a process that Toni Morrison, in her compelling recent study, Playing in the Dark, has called "American Africanism."[3] "The fabrication of an Africanist persona," Morrison illustrates, "is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious" (17). As Morrison explains, the Africanized Other figures symbolically for white Americans in order to both talk about and police "matters of class, sexual license, and repression, formations and exercises of power, and meditations on ethics and accountability" (7). For Willa Cather, performing the "dangerous nigger" in the drawing room deflects the performance of gender (and of sexuality) called upon by the social visit. That race can stand in for gender transgression here offers a telling introduction to the Willa Cather whose textual sexual performances were frequently racially enacted.

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During slavery, there was perhaps a white male who created his own version of Soul on Ice, one who confessed how good it felt to assert racial dominance over black people, and particularly black men, by raping black women with impunity, or how sexually stimulating it was to use the sexual exploitation of black women to humiliate and degrade white women, to assert phallocentric domination in one's household. Sexism has always been a political stance mediating racial domination, enabling white men and black men to share a common sensibility about sex roles and the importance of male domination.

bell hooks

Willa Cather once said that what compelled her to write was the "bliss of entering into the very skin of another human being."[4] Cather's early performative self enabled her to ventriloquize "Indians, negroes and boys," by dressing up and thus imaginatively entering into "the very skin" of these others; in so doing, the young Cather used race to playfully transgress the constraints of her gender. By contrast, the mature Cather turned back to those very constraints in Sapphira and the Slave Girl (1940), which explores what Toni Morrison calls "the sycophancy of white identity." In this final novel, Cather confronts white Southern womanhood's implication in a system of violent domination. By undertaking the difficult act of identifying with her protagonist, Sapphira Colbert, Cather returns to her native South in the borrowed and unflattering white skin of a woman whose crippled body is a grotesque icon of the South itself. Rather than confirm the romanticized image of the mistress as tender benefactress and nursemaid to her slaves, Cather topples this myth of benignity and exposes the domination and terror that Southern mistresses could and often did wield over their slaves.

Michel Foucault has shown us that "nothing is more material, physical, corporal, than the existence of power"; power is corporeal both in its effects on subjected bodies and in the way it implicates and distorts those who wield power.[5] In Sapphira and the Slave Girl, power is embodied, paradoxically, in the wheel-chair-bound, dropsical Sapphira Colbert, who oversees the operations of the entire plantation from her chair. Sapphira is simultaneously powerful and paralyzed: she administers a network of discipline, subjection, and surveillance that renders her slaves into what Foucault calls "docile bodies";[6] however, the very productivity of these slaves, both economic and sexual, threatens the conspicuously unproductive and asexual Sapphira. Sapphira's bloated and pale body imprisons a seemingly mute sexuality, but her passions erupt suddenly over a nubile female slave who is simultaneously an object of her mistress' jealous rage and an object of her jealous desire. Even though disciplinary power is frequently invisible, as Foucault reminds us, it simultaneously "imposes on those whom it subjects a compulsory visibility" (187). Whereas the crippled body of the Southern mistress seems an unlikely repository of disciplinary power or sexual desire, in contrast, the sexuality of Sapphira's pubescent slave Nancy is all too visible and readily available for consumption.

An aristocratic planter's daughter, Sapphira Colbert nominates herself the "master" of the plantation, sitting "in her crude invalid's chair as if it were a seat of privilege,"[7] while her husband is merely "the miller." Engaging in numerous acts of surveillance that allow her invisibly to mastermind the plantation slaveocracy, she ensures that those who serve her remain visible under her ever-watchful gaze. The initial drama of the novel unfolds because Sapphira, through her expert surveillance, has witnessed her cook "Fat Lizzie" teasing Nancy about her custom of arranging fresh-picked flowers in Henry Colbert's mill room. However, Nancy, as Morrison puts it, is "pure to the point of [illegible]" although the "miller" lives down at the Mill and only occasionally visits his wife's bedroom. To forestall any sexual liaison between her husband and slave, Sapphira commands Nancy to move her sleeping pallet from her parent's hut to the hallway just outside of her mistress' room.

The fear that her husband is sexually involved with her slave provokes Sapphira to suggest selling Nancy. The miller (who doesn't believe in selling human bodies though he does oversee his wife's slave property) stubbornly refuses, because he sees Nancy as a guileless ingenue. Of course, this defense provides additional fodder for Sapphira's idle mind. As the narrator snidely comments, "such speculations were mildly amusing for a woman who did not read a great deal, and who had to sit in a chair all day" (54). Eventually, Sapphira's speculations become so pronounced that one night she fantasizes that Nancy and the miller are indeed sexually involved, and this produces "strange alarms and suspicions" in her mind. Sapphira can survey the miller's cabin from her bedroom window, and seeing his light on she thinks: "the thought of being befooled, hoodwinked in any way was unendurable to her." In order to confirm her power — that it is Nancy and not she who is sexually vulnerable — Sapphira feigns illness and calls Nancy from her damp pallet just outside of the bedroom. When Nancy, abruptly stolen from her sleep, rushes into the bed-chamber, Sapphira sighs in relief: "Her shattered, treacherous house" — and by association, her very body — "stood safe about her again" (106-7).

Nancy has reached a crisis in her "coming of age," a crisis that nineteenth-century slave narrator Harriet Jacobs aptly termed a "perilous passage in the slave girl's life."[8] Indeed, Harriet Jacobs' slave narrative, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, published in 1861, teaches modern readers how best to read the mistress/slave relationship in Sapphira and the Slave Girl. Though Cather's Nancy cannot understand why the mistress has turned on her, Nancy's increasingly sexual black body has become intolerable to the mistress who is imprisoned within her own white flesh. As a system, slavery rendered Southern white women's bodies sanctified icons of chastity while ideologically constructing the black woman's body a prostituted vessel for reproducing both labor and desire.[9] Indeed, the mistress's very chastity depended upon her slave's sexual availability. Cather exaggerates this dynamic by making Sapphira a cripple to iconic chastity, while Nancy displays a stereotypical blooming, fresh sexuality.

The slave girl's "perilous passage" into sexual maturity, and the rage it provokes in the white mistress, is charted brilliantly in Jacobs' narrative. When Linda Brent (Jacobs' pseudonym) turns fifteen, she enters "a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl"; haunted by her lascivious master, Linda asks,

> where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress, [i]n either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to

References

1. Leslie Fiedler, Waiting for the End (New York: Stein and Day, 1972 [1966]) 134.

2. Edith Lewis. Willa Cather Living: A Personal Record (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953) 13.

3. Toni Morrison, Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). All further references will be cited parenthetically in the body of the text.

4. Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, Willa Cather: A Memoir (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1953), 111.

5. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 25-26.

6. Foucault suggests that, "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved." Discipline and Punish, 136.

7. Willa Cather, Sapphira and the Slave Girl (New York: Vintage Books, 1975 [1940]), 15. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the body of the text.

8. Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl [1861] in The Classic Slave Narratives. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 1987) 333-513. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the body of the text.

protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings toward her than jealousy and rage (361).

The mistress in Jacobs' narrative proves to be an "incarnate fiend" (349) whose slaves "were the objects of her constant suspicion and malevolence" (364). Like Cather's Sapphira, Mrs. Flint "watched her husband with unceasing vigilance" (364). Upon discovering her husband's designs on Linda Brent, Mrs. Flint, much like Sapphira, moves Linda to sleep within her purview. Now it is the mistress who haunts the slave girl with nightly visits:

> Sometimes I woke up, and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it was her husband who was speaking to me, and listened to hear what I would answer. If she startled me, on such occasions she would glide stealthily away; and the next morning she would tell me I had been talking in my sleep, and ask who I was talking to. At last, I began to be fearful for my life (366).

These night visits take on the drama of seductive pursuit: Mrs. Flint ventriloquizes the voice of the desiring master, as she astonishingly tries to provoke Linda to respond sexually and thus expose her guilt. Instead, the ghostly visits provoke fear and dis-ease: "you can imagine, better than I can describe, what an unpleasant sensation it must produce to wake up in the dead of night and find a jealous woman bending over you" (367). As this moment in Jacobs' narrative makes clear, the mistress's jealous rage is expressed in a sexually provocative manner — sleeping in the mistress's anteroom, the slave girl is safe from the master, yet is she safe from his wife?

Southern diarist Mary Chesnut was quick to defend her Confederate countrywomen, portraying them as "the purest women God ever made," who were trapped in a "monstrous system" of sexual concubinage perpetrated by their husbands.[10] However, Chesnut ignored not only how this white aristocratic female purity depended on the economic and sexual productivity of slave women, but also the certainty that many white mistresses participated directly in the systems of domination that threatened slave women. Accounts abound of mistresses who beat and tortured their slaves; in one grisly incident, a mistress decapitated a slave woman's baby after discovering the baby was the master's progeny.[11] As Jacobs notes above, mistresses, rather than sympathizing with the victimized slave women, were frequently violent and cruel, especially when they saw their slaves as potential sexual rivals. In Sapphira and the Slave Girl, Cather's callous mistress reacts to her slave's threatening sexuality on at least two levels: Sapphira is visibly disturbed at the possibility of a sexual liaison between her husband and her slave; yet, Sapphira herself harbors the desire for Nancy that she projects upon her husband, making her reaction to Nancy's sexual body a complex mixture of jealousy and desire.

Sapphira's tangle of resentment and yearning for Nancy is evidenced in a mirror scene that takes place early in the novel. Nancy arranges Sapphira's hair, coiling it into a complicated braid with "wavy wings" that frame her forehead like a crown, while Sapphira "sit[s] at a dressing table before a gilt mirror, a white combing cloth about her shoulders" (13). As Sapphira gazes into the mirror, she sees, not her withered white flesh, but the lovely slave girl who is creating her "toilet." Glancing into the mirror and seeing Nancy instead of herself, Sapphira enviously projects herself into the sexually vital body of her slave. When this fantasy is disrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps, Sapphira beats Nancy with the hairbrush. Able to articulate her desire only within the master-slave paradigm, Sapphira reconfirms her power over Nancy's docile body by punishing her slave for representing a sexual vitality that has abandoned Sapphira's own body. Like the evil queen in "Snow White," Sapphira must constantly reaffirm that she is "the fairest of them all." In fact, the ethnic connotations of snow-whiteness in Grimm's fairy tale become magnified when transposed to an Antebellum American setting. When Sapphira looks into the mirror to confirm her "fairness," what she discovers is that Nancy, her beguiling black slave, is "fairer" than her white mistress — which results in a crisis of subjectivity for the white woman. The mirror is symbolically cracked in this momentary identification, disrupting rather than consolidating the mistress's identity. Much like the evil stepmother, Sapphira can only regain her access to whiteness and femininity — combined in the notion of "fairness" — through punishing the one whose body challenges her dominion.

This scene, it seems to me, demystifies the cult of true (white) womanhood:[12] of course, Sapphira's asexuality depends upon Nancy's sexual availability — and Sapphira resents this. Nevertheless, Cather complicates this familiar relationship: not only is Sapphira envious of Nancy — desiring to be as sexually captivating as Nancy is, but she also desires Nancy in a more sexually provocative manner, as suggested by the seductive overtones of Sapphira's nightly surveillance and her desiring gaze. The imaginative possession of Nancy's body that Sapphira achieves, if only for a moment, in the mirror scene, is actualized in the climactic scene of the novel, when Sapphira projects her desire through a surrogate seducer.[13]

I want to return to "the bliss" Cather felt in "entering into the very skin of another human being," and stress that Cather's strange expression is a metaphor for writing. If, for Cather, writing entailed a kind of violent inhabitation (or colonization) of another's body, then her task in this novel parallels the minstrel performances of her childhood. The novel, it would seem, is an especially powerful vehicle for analyzing racialized subjectivity, because the imaginative projections central to the novelist's art are analogous to the fantastic projections that constitute subjectivity. When Sapphira develops an obsession with her slave, the black girl becomes the repository for all of the novel's excesses — including sexuality. A similar dynamic occurs in My Antonia as well, when Cather describes the blues singer Blind D'Arnault as a "glistening African god of pleasure, full of strong savage blood."[14] Cather, like other white American writers, embodied her Africanist characters with a vital sexuality and utilized them to dramatize carnal pleasure and transgression. There

9. For an extended discussion of this, see Deborah Grey White's, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (New York: Norton, 1985); Catharine Clinton's The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); and Clinton's "Southern Dishonor: Flesh, Blood, Race, and Bondage" in In Joy and Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South. Ed. Carol Bleser (New York: Oxford UP, 1991) 52-68.

10. The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries Ed. C. Vann Woodward and Elisabeth Muhlenfeld (New York: Oxford University Press,1984), 42.

11. For information on general violence toward slaves, including mistresses' abuse, see The Suppressed Book About Slavery (New York: Arno Press, 1968 (1864), 187-232. For the account of the mistress who decapitates her slave's baby, see Catherine Clinton, "Southern Dishonor: Flesh, Blood, Race, and Bondage," 64. Her source is George P. Rawick, ed. The American Slave, vol. 13 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972) 4.

12. Barbara Welter coined this famous term in "The Cult of True Womanhood" (American Quarterly 18, 1966), 151-74.

13. In this scene, which I discuss in depth in a longer version of this piece, Sapphira oversees her slave's seduction in a drama thick with homoerotic overtones. Filled with jealousy, Sapphira invites her nephew Martin to the plantation with the explicit hope that he will compromise Nancy's innocence. This he endeavors to do when he chases Nancy up a cherry tree and buries his face in her crotch. Sapphira, it seems, has masterminded the whole event.

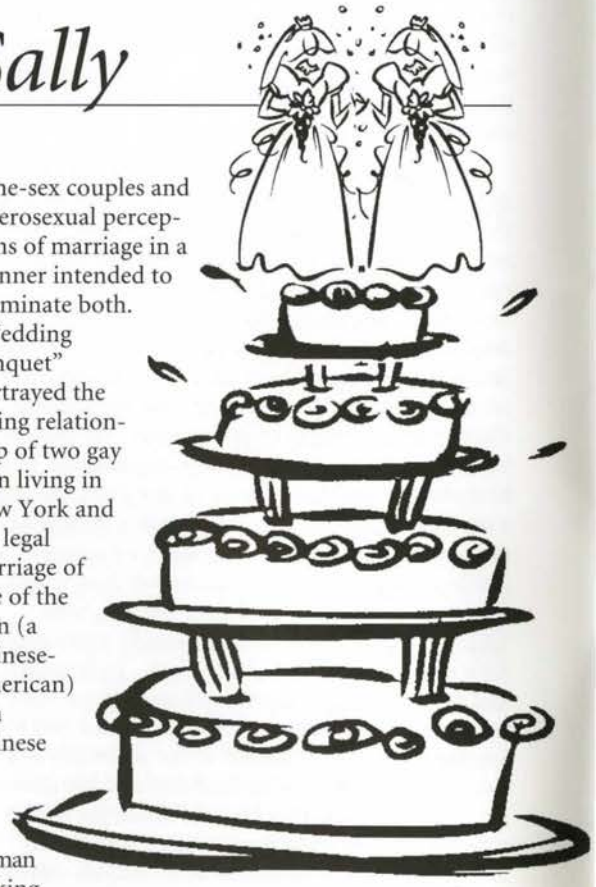
14. Willa Cather, My Antonia (Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1918), 123.

was not only bliss but violence, then, in entering into the skin of another — by writing blackness, a white writer could vicariously enjoy a stereotyped sexual excess that their own racial identification disapproved; however, the price of this transgressive pleasure is the violence of racist stereotypes.

By providing a striking example of this recurrent pattern in American fiction, Sapphira and the Slave Girl teaches us a larger point about the supplementarity (and fragility) of whiteness. Whiteness — as African American writers from Ralph Ellison to Toni Morrison have insisted — is literally constituted in relation to blackness. That is, in order to understand whiteness, one must see that whiteness includes, even as it excludes, a racialized Other. The degraded Otherness embedded in racist stereotypes of blackness is a fantastic projection of the white subject who needs that degraded Other to consolidate his or her own white subjectivity. Not only does Cather's fictional re-writing of the mistress-slave relationship explore these complex dynamics of race, but, as I discuss in a longer version of this piece, Cather literally writes herself into the end of her novel, making Sapphira and the Slave Girl a genealogy of her own American subjectivity. The novel's final section, which takes place long after Sapphira's death, centers on a young white girl who is a familial descendant of Sapphira, the ostensible narrator of the novel, and thus an autobiographical surrogate for Cather — a connection Cather later endorsed. By offering Sapphira and the Slave Girl as a fictional version of her own family history, Cather suggests that the mistress-slave relationship is a paradigmatic case of white American subject formation: that twentieth-century white American subjectivities find their origins in the drama of American slavery.

When Mary Met Sally

BY BETH CRAIG



In recent years, the issue of same-sex marriage has moved closer to center stage in the United States and other industrialized democracies. The proposal that "marriage" suits same-sex couples as readily as it does opposite-sex couples prompts warm support from some observers, confusion from many, and vicious condemnation from others. Underlying and shaping the responses, but often in an unarticulated fashion, is a complex and difficult question: what is marriage, especially in the United States, in the late twentieth century?

The following reflections speak to that question (and thus, to marriage for same-sex couples) primarily through an evaluation of two recent popular films. A comprehensive portrait of marriage can only be derived from a wide variety of sources, but given their central position in mass culture, cinematic definitions are an important place to begin. Surely more people saw "Four Weddings and a Funeral" or "The Wedding Banquet" than will ever read academic philosopher Richard Mohr's A More Perfect Union, in which he defines marriage and its relationship to gay couples. Perhaps more significantly, films can be seen as mirrors of existing beliefs and ideas in a society, partly because the financially successful film usually must "speak" in a language of values that the audience can understand with minimal translation.

Both "The Wedding Banquet" (1993) and "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (1994) juxtaposed same-sex couples and heterosexual perceptions of marriage in a manner intended to illuminate both. "Wedding Banquet" portrayed the loving relationship of two gay men living in New York and the legal marriage of one of the men (a Chinese-American) to a Chinese woman seeking permanent residency and citizenship in the United States. That marriage of convenience also served to quell the anxieties of the "husband's" parents, who arrive from Taiwan to celebrate their son's supposed love for a woman but return home knowing (each parent without the other's knowledge) about their

son's actual love for a man. "Four Weddings and a Funeral" offers a seriocomic commentary on the challenging, risky search for physical and emotional intimacy that drives many people toward some kind of "marriage." At the film's center is the fatal heart attack of one partner in a gay male relationship, an event that propels the movie's heterosexual protagonists toward their deepest analyses of love's measures.

Starting from these two cinematic narratives, one can identify many of the contemporary definitions of marriage and some of the key debates about their adequacy. For example, both films imply that love, of a profoundly romantic and patient nature, is most essential in the formation of a good marriage—that marriage is (or should be) an exemplar of such love. Such a model or definition suggests that love precedes any public or legal recognition of a relationship and can sustain a "marriage" quite successfully even in the absence of such recognition. In fact, "Four Weddings and a Funeral" sharpens the significance of this point by having two of its heterosexual protagonists decide against pursuing legal and ceremonial acknowledgement of their partnership (this element of the plot rather confusingly suggests that love can overcome all barriers, yet a wedding can somehow jinx a loving partnership).

But is love enough? Or, to put the question more as the two films do, and to pose it in two related but distinctive components, do we say "marriage" when we see a loving partnership and do we insist upon seeing love before we say that a partnership is a "marriage?" Affirmative answers to both components would be needed to argue, in formulaic terms, that love=marriage.

In reference to the first component, both films suggest that few people consider all loving partnerships to be marriages. In "Four Weddings . . ." only after one-half of the gay male couple is dead does the audience hear the suggestion that because their partnership was so loving, it was indeed a marriage. Previously, when both partners lived and loved in the midst of a close circle of friends, no one considered them to be "married." The filmmakers thus suggest that love was not enough, that a loving relationship existed but was not recognized (or defined) as a marriage until AFTER its dissolution.

However, the film leaves the audience with the definite impression that love SHOULD be enough in the case of the two heterosexual protagonists who enter into a loving life-partnership but choose not to "wed" legally and ceremonially. Are two points being made (one, the love of a gay couple is inadequate to create marriage; and two, the love of a heterosexual couple is adequate) or is a single point—love creates marriage—being developed through a sequential series of lessons (failure to recognize the "marriage" of the gay couple leads to the revelation that love truly is enough, and thus the audience sees that a "marriage" exists with the heterosexual couple)?

Some of the film's imprecision in establishing its stance on whether all loving partnerships are marriages clearly stems from the filmmakers' unwillingness to deal directly with the largely heterosexist perspectives of their audience. This is most evident in the gay characters' complete lack of anger and protest against the ways in which heterosexism defines and limits their lives. Instead of being outraged by social standards and laws that deny recognition to their partnership, the two gay men appear completely unconcerned by their marginalization. In fact, they never label or identify their partnership, either as a marriage or as a committed relationship, to their friends. The only break in their silence comes when one of the partners (without sarcasm or irritation) says that he is not likely to marry, a statement that the audience can interpret as an indicator of his absolute comfort with a heterosexually-defined world and corresponding inability to imagine any other.

Such silence (or deference) on the part of the couple adds to the ambiguity of the film's statements about love and marriage, and lets the audience off the hook when it comes to questioning heterosexism. After all, if the gay men didn't ask to be recognized as a married couple and even seemed to disclaim such status, why should the audience be expected to acknowledge them as such? The silence also lets the filmmakers avoid any presentation of a rationale for the couple's apparent comfort with being "unmarried"–do they disagree with some elements of marriage as a legal phenomenon, see it as definitionally heterosexual, or fear the consequences of equating their same-sex partnership with opposite-sex ones (which might range from vitriolic anti-gay wrath to the retreat of heterosexual friends made uneasy by such an equation)? The audience does not know. Instead, the filmmakers finally use the post-funeral musings of a heterosexual protagonist to voice the suggestion that the gay partnership was a marriage, which allows the audience much comfort in considering the premise that one might say "marriage" whenever one sees love. It is apparently the prerogative of heterosexual people to label all relationships; gay people seem not to challenge that "right." The filmmakers demonstrate that no one in the film is too unsettled by the fact that for some reason, at present, few people say "marriage" when they see same-sex love, and thus imply that no one in the audience should be upset, either.

"The Wedding Banquet" is even less explicit in its treatment of the question but similarly implies that while individuals may choose to see a loving same-sex partnership as a "marriage," few feel any compulsion or obligation to do so. When the father of the Chinese-American bridegroom acknowledges his son's male partner by giving him a traditional Chinese "wedding gift" of cash, the gesture is fiercely secretive. Such silences and secrecies in both films work against the message that "love is enough" and leave unexplored what appears to be a central obstacle to that premise, an existing convention that marriage involves only opposite-sex partnerships.

The films also address the second component of the love=marriage formula (whether love must be present if "marriage" exists) and respond generally in the negative. "Four Weddings . . ." depicts the lavish wedding of a heterosexual couple and simultaneously allows the audience to see that the

For you there shall be no longing, for you

shall be fulfillment to each other;

For you there shall be no harm, for you

shall be a shield for each other;

For you there shall be no falling, for you

shall be support to each other;

For you there shall be no sorrow, for you

shall be comfort to each other;

For you there shall be no loneliness, for you

shall be company to each other;

For you there shall be no discord, for you

shall be peace to each other;

For you there shall be no searching,

for you shall be an end to each other.

Kawaida Marriage Commitment

bride is ambivalent about the intensity of her love; clearly a marriage exists, even if love may be scant, or absent. That the couple later divorces does imply that lack of love may hinder the long-term success of a marriage, but that implication is not tantamount to saying that the marriage never existed because of love's absence. And "Wedding Banquet" actually makes quite explicit the point that powerfully good reasons may propel a loveless marriage into existence.

Indeed, "Wedding Banquet" provides a definition of marriage that diverges dramatically from the argument that love is sufficient and necessary for all marriages. The film presents marriage as a contract upheld by the authorities of law and social convention, designed to give each partner a distinctive status that could not be obtained without a marriage license. In this formula for marriage (marriage=contract), love is not requisite. Love might emerge prior to the sealing of a marriage contract, might develop after the pact is made, or might never exist at all.

What are the attractions of this model, in the film and in society? The loveless marriage in"Wedding Banquet" provides each member of the couple with legal and social benefits; to each the marriage is desirable because it is a "deal" with premiums that could not otherwise be gained. By entering into the contract, the gay Chinese-American groom earns the praise of his parents, who have long been working to broker a marriage for their son. The heterosexual Chinese bride earns legal residency in the United States and the strong likelihood of citizenship if she stays in the marriage, opportunities that she has been unable to obtain through other channels. Both expect that the groom's partnership with his male American lover will continue, and that lack of love between the bride and groom will not diminish the social and legal benefits that the marriage will bring.

It is important to see the loveless marriage=contract formula of "Wedding Banquet" in both historical and cultural contexts, for if presence over time and across cultural borders is considered when one defines "marriage," this model has the cards stacked in its favor. The film suggests that cultural context is the primary influence at work in shaping the gay groom's entrance into the marriage, since his Chinese parents see love as an optional side-effect but consider conformity to social conventions to be absolutely vital. Filial piety also pervades the cultural milieu: despite his own distaste for the arranged marriage, the son cannot easily resist his parents' will. But American audiences should not dismiss these factors as irrelevant in their own communities. Firstly, while the macroculture of the United States in the 1990s may not include notions of arranged marriages and complete deference of adult child to parents, numerous microcultures in the U.S. (especially those formed by various recent immigrants) clearly have not dismissed such ideas. Secondly, the macroculture of the U.S. has only recently spurned such concepts; many earlier waves of immigrants embraced them and the "romantic" marriage—chosen voluntarily by both partners—became commonplace only in the nineteenth century.

If the model of marriage=contract has such deep and widespread roots, has the exact nature of the contract also persisted over time and across cultural boundaries? No doubt because the legal minutiae of marital contracts make for poor drama, neither film speaks much to this question. It is clear that the marriage license issued in "Wedding Banquet" gives to the bride both U.S. residency and potential for U.S. citizenship, but the legal discussion ceases beyond that point.

Turning briefly to sources beyond the films, and examining just the past several centuries of U.S. history, it is easy to see that the details of marital contracts have in fact been far less stable than the overarching definition of marriage=contract. The shifting parameters of the contracts tend to reflect shifting visions of sex and gender. For example, while women generally gave up all title to property and all rights to their own incomes upon entering marriages in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the evolution of the women's rights movement in the nineteenth century came state-by-state changes in coverture laws that had legally placed all of a couple's property and income in the husband's name. Women's legal standing in a marriage did not progress without setbacks, however. In the early twentieth century a federal law stripped brides born in the U.S. of their citizenship if they married "alien" husbands; this stemmed from the same premise that had undergirded the old concept of coverture, the argument that the wife's status should be "contained within" the husband's. Although the law was repealed after about a decade, thousands of U.S.-born women who married immigrants during its existence had to undergo naturalization processes if they wished to regain their citizenship.

With the arrival of more complicated federal tax laws and social protection programs in the twentieth century, the marriage=contract components became increasingly detailed. Laws defined the ways in which the incomes and property of married and unmarried people could be taxed, and created the concept of a "couple's income" that meant an unemployed spouse co-owned the earnings of the employed spouse. Without such laws in effect, in effect the unemployed spouse could be viewed as receiving income or gifts from the employed spouse, and could thus be taxed on such "earnings." Similarly, Social Security regulations created a "couple's pension" that could be linked primarily to the earnings of an employed spouse but dispensed nevertheless to that spouse's survivor even if the survivor had never been employed. The "couple's income" and "couple's pension" are still among the intricacies of legal marriage in the 1990s, even as they reflect a male breadwinner/female homemaker structure of daily life that is increasingly scarce. Fraught as they are with sexist assumptions, they nevertheless convey a central message that can be meaningful in a non-sexist (and in a same-sex)

partnership: these two people should be viewed as a team, who by their mutual consent shall be linked together in every respect.

Another way to see the powerful connections offered only through legal marriage is to envision the legal weakness of an unmarried couple. For members of the cinema audience familiar with the roughly two dozen significant legal rights and responsibilities that are attached to (and only available through) legal marriage today, chilling undercurrents of tension riddled the plot of "Wedding Banquet." What if the groom died before divorce could bring an end to his marriage of convenience? Inheritance and tax laws would then slice away much of what he and his male partner had cooperatively earned and built in their years together. Their house might become the bride's, leaving the bereaved partner without his beloved or his home. The bride would even be granted the right to dispose of the body of the deceased, and if his death had been preceded by hospitalization, she could have denied him any last visits with his male partner.

And imagine a slightly different initial plot for the entire film . . . suppose that the Chinese-American man had fallen in love with a Chinese "alien" who lacked permanent residency status in the U.S. and that "alien" was also a man. In this scenario, tensions would arise because the lovers—unable to marry and give legal residency to the Chinese partner—would face separation forced by deportation. Deprived of the choice of marriage=contract, the partners would experience the bleak inadequacies of love=marriage in a nation that ties so many privileges to that other model.

In summary, then, what visions of marriage do the two movies provide? Both prefer to linger tenderly with the ever-popular image of romance sitting at the hub of marriage, and even as they avoid the provocative declaration that same-sex love is enough to constitute a marriage (and thus never challenge the heterosexism in the audience), both offer to the audience an opportunity to infer that conclusion. Over time, such cinematic narratives could nudge heterosexual audiences toward a customary acceptance of same-sex partnerships as examples of deep, abiding love. But neither film wishes to spend much time with the knottier phenomenon of marriage as contract. And this inattention surely will reinforce public maintenance of the ongoing discriminations inherent in the denial of legal marriage to same-sex couples.

In ignoring the contractual nature of marriage, the films permit the audience to overlook the vulnerability of same-sex couples in a civil state that honors law over love. Same-sex couples often assume that anti-gay hostility drives heterosexual resistance to making marriage more inclusive, but it is possible that a combination of apathy and ignorance is equally (or more) to blame. The popularity of "love conquers all" as a filmmaker's truism has perhaps misled many fair-minded people into imagining that gay couples only want—and need—friendly recognition of their loving partnerships. If informed primarily by the popular media, even gay-friendly Americans may continually misunderstand demands for same-sex marriage and thus fail to press for the legal changes necessary to fulfill such demands.

Film and marriage buffs should take heart, however. A working script that stars a same-sex couple and unifies the love=marriage and marriage=contract motifs is developing in Hawaii. In 1993 the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in Baehr v. Lewin that the State needed to show compelling reasons for denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples or begin to issue licenses in such cases. In its decision the Hawaii court used arguments driven by the State's constitutional ban on discrimination based on sex (which occurs, for example, when the State stops a woman from marrying another woman, although it would allow her to marry a man) and the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court decision that ended state bans on interracial marriage. If the Court refuses to accept as "compelling" any reasons that the State provides for maintaining its ban on same-sex marriage, Mary and Sally might be marrying in Honolulu by the end of 1996.

The outcome of this "working script" will be controversial regardless of its content, but if the climax does allow same-sex couples to line up at the marriage bureau, critics of such an outcome might take solace in one small factor. Given the Hawaiian backdrop for the "film" there will be some lovely settings for a skillful cinematographer to exploit—the movie will be a beautiful one to watch.

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A Woman of Means

BY JUDY DOENGES

My mother was born poor, raised poor, and she married up. She learned at an early age that people didn't want to hear about poverty and hardship, that it was unseemly to complain—and what good did it do anyway? Most importantly, my mother learned that once people found out she had been poor, they would never again be able to see her as the nice, clean, middle-class lady she hoped she had become. As a child of poverty, my mother was instantly suspect. What did she want? What unpleasant past had she perhaps unsuccessfully left behind? Who did she think she was, anyway? So she kept quiet, even with me. "What did you get for Christmas when you were little?" I would ask her when I was a child. "Ohhhh," my mother would say, looking away, "there were so many of us, you know, and it was the Depression."

Too many. There were fourteen—two died in infancy—born to my mother's immigrant parents. I'd seen the pictures of my broad-shouldered grandmother who never smiled and my equally grim, tall and lanky grandfather, and the blurred faces of an ever-changing group of children. The older boys were usually too busy working the tenant fields, the older girls too busy in the house to pose, but the youngest kids might be caught running through the frame on their way to the pastures or the barnyard, enjoying the freedom they still had. As soon as they could think straight, my mother said about her and her sisters, they got busy. To me, the chores were exotic. My mother and my aunts would sift through huge sacks of rice and flour looking for bugs, rub clothes on a washboard at the pump, slop pigs, clean the outhouse, stack wood for the cooking stove, churn butter. And children, always children. "As soon as you were five—if you were a girl," one of my aunts told me, "you were in charge of the next ones under you." That meant keeping constant track of scurrying infants and toddlers. When the girls got older, they took on more jobs, nursing wounds, braiding hair, bathing, washing out diapers, sewing clothes, mixing up baby food. "We were mothers all our lives," my aunt said. "Wives and mothers," she added.

It's easy to take my aunts' and my mother's stories, all the details of their daily lives, and fashion some kind of noble prairie saga, a quaint tale of determined, first-generation Americans and their children shaping a piece of the American dream out of the fruits of honest toil. But the fact is, they were poor. The family never went hungry because they grew most of their own food, but the best of what they raised got sold, and one bad season meant less money for other things. Everything was dirty, broken, old, or out of date. Only a few times in my mother's childhood were my grandparents able to rent a farm with electricity and they never had indoor plumbing until my grandfather got too old to work and moved into town. No, when I work and rework my mother's grudging stories, I strain out all the TV-movie cliches. Hard work and more hard work, and the future as empty as one of the family's fallow fields.

"What did you get for Christmas when you were little?" I asked my mother year after year. "Oranges," she finally told me to shut me up. "What else?" I asked. "Oranges," my mother said. "We loved oranges."

Of my grandparents' twelve surviving children, only half went to high school; my mother was the first girl. Going to high school meant moving off the farm and into town each year to board with a middle-class family. It meant working at some job no other fourteen-year-old would do, like taking care of an ancient, sick man with disgusting habits and a nasty disposition, the job my mother had for four years until she graduated. She went to school, studied, did the odd baby-sitting job for extra money, emptied the old man's commode, cooked meals, cleaned house, and slept in her own tiny room. She got near-fatal pneumonia during the first winter. My grandmother had to come in from the farm and care for her for a whole week during the worst part of her illness, and for this my mother was most concerned; my grandmother's absence meant more work for the other girls. During that bad week, when my mother was feverish and hallucinating, one of her baby-sitting families sent her flowers. "At first I thought I was dying," my mother told me, laughing. "So I cried about that. Then I realized they sent the flowers just because they were thinking of me, that they saw I had worked hard, and I cried even more."

My mother recovered, continued caring for the old man, and finished out her high school years, graduating with twenty-nine other kids, most of them townies. My grandmother sold some chickens to pay for a photograph of my mother

wearing her sister's altered confirmation dress. Now what? my mother thought.

She could have married Norman Thorsen after high school. Or Alf Nielsen, or Abner Oydna, or Henry Vegge, or any number of Norwegian boys who were from farm families and who would most likely stay farmers, but to do that she'd have to settle in her Minnesota hometown and be trapped and poor, always the poor girl from the big, embarrassing family. "Only poor people had so many kids," she told me once, angry. "Only poor people thought they needed so many kids. What for? It wasn't until us girls were older that we realized that they had all those kids because Ma never said no. She should have." This realization, which came late in my mother's life, particularly disgusted her. It was as if she had remade my ultra-pious grandmother into some free love advocate. According to my mother, it was up to Grandma to put the brakes on Grandpa. Actually, it was neither lust nor romance, but rather spiritual fervor that inspired my grandmother. "If Jesus gives me children," she once told me, "I say yes."

My mother said no. She stayed single and moved to Chicago to live with her oldest sister, a widow with a small boy, and another sister who had been abandoned by a no-account husband and left with her own son. Almost immediately, my mother enrolled in secretarial school. She got a job at Montgomery Ward's and made her own money, money she didn't have to give to her parents for the other kids, money she could spend on getting rid of the bumpkin in her. She bought tailor-made clothes, perfume, cigarettes for her new habit, alcohol, even lunch in a drugstore now and then. This new life was just brittle cover, though. My mother's biggest fear was that someone would see traces of dirt under her fingernails, or the obvious neglect of her teeth every time she smiled, or, worst of all, someone in a restaurant might see her cut her meat the wrong way or wear her hat at the wrong angle and know immediately that she was a class impostor and order her back to the farm. It has always been important to me to understand the depth of these fears because the very first thing my mother did when she got to Chicago—before the school, the job, or the clothes—was to put down ten dollars as an installment on a cemetery plot. "I wasn't going to have my parents bury me if anything happened," she said.

I have a picture of my mother at this time. She's beautiful: petite, her large blue eyes clear, shining brown hair in an artful stack on her head; she's wearing a tight wool suit and holding a Frisbee-shaped hat and a cigarette. She had never been as free and independent as she was then, and she had never looked so nervously happy nor so full of bravado. Here was a woman who could pay her own way coming and going, in life and in death.

My mother finally said yes, at age thirty, to my father, a nice, gentle guy from a middle-class family in Oak Park, Illinois. He had a good job, he was quiet and polite. "What's the first thing you liked about him?" I asked my mother. "He was so clean," she said, "clean" being my mother's most powerful metaphor. "I knew I wouldn't have to be picking up after him like I always did for my brothers," she added.

"Always take care of your brothers," my grandmother told her seven daughters. She did not extend the same advice to her sons. Alvin and Philip, the oldest and youngest children in the family, became successful businessmen out in California; the other three boys were hopeless alcoholics who were always getting picked up by the cops, having the DT's, or going to the dryout up in Wilmar, Minnesota. Larry, when he wasn't at his favorite tavern in Chicago, stayed with his sister Ruth and her husband, or some other sister, and worked odd carpentry jobs or got on welfare. He was a huge man who came to our house each Christmas with a fifth of Wild Turkey and left before dinner, stumbling, red and sweaty, past the twinkling tree and out the door into the snow. Oscar was the only relative I saw but once during my childhood, though he lived twenty miles away in Chicago. "Poor and mean," was all my mother would say when I asked about him, as if he was part of some other family, as if most of the brothers weren't candidates for that definition. Oscar blackened his wife's eyes; he hit his kids and the bottle with equal frequency. Then there was Uncle Lloyd, the worst case because he never even left my grandmother's house except to go to war. He cut meat for a living, hiding pill bottles of booze in his apron pockets, and it was a miracle he never sliced off a finger or a hand. His brain was mush, my mother told me when Lloyd died at forty-two. "They got a room named after him up at Wilmar," my Uncle Larry joked. "I been there."

Family was the women's domain, the kingdom ruled by my mother and her sisters, though in my eyes they were weak monarchs. Observe and lament, but otherwise keep out of it, was the guiding policy. As women, my mother and her sisters could reel out family scandals as if they were the synopses of soap operas, but they could do nothing to change the characters—mostly men—who were involved. There were the fights among the siblings who hated each other, and then the new generation—the cousin in prison, the cousins in juvenile detention, the cousins who were emerging drinkers, the junkie cousin who stole from the family to pay for his habit. All these infractions were met with cliches: "Boys will be boys"; "You do the best you can with them, but that's the way the men are"; "He ran with a bad crowd." There was always some injustice against which the males in the family were helpless, or bad behavior was explained as coming from some genetic condition, like gender. My mother could only cluck and sigh and make sure there was plenty of food in the house in case a wayward brother or male cousin came by because what else could you do for them? The offending relative filled his face, complained and cried, kissed my mother, and then set off to a new world of trouble.

"Remember," my mother was fond of saying, "when you think you have nothing, you always have family."

The brother, however, is in the eyes of the sister a being whose nature is unpreturbed by desire and is ethically like her own; her recognition in him is pure and unmixed with any sexual relation. The indifference characteristic of particular existence, and the ethical contingency thence arising, are, therefore not present in this relationship; instead, the moment of individual selfhood, recognising and being recognised, can here assert its right, because it is bound up with the balance and equilibrium resulting from their being of the same blood, and from their being related in a way that involves no mutual desire. The loss of a brother is thus irreparable to the sister, and her duty towards him is the highest.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Comparing oppressions is a peculiarly American pastime. However, it's a practice I can't engage in when I'm trying to understand my mother. Her particular blend of private diligence and public obsequiousness seems to come from equal measures of both her gender and her class background. In my mother's opinion, my father and the rise in status her marriage gave her were gifts from the middle class. Not only did she court luck and find such an agreeable mate, but she landed a husband who, she believed, would not have given her a second look if she hadn't worked so hard to erase all traces of poverty and to acquire the trappings of a wealthier woman. Her great escape had worked. While she fooled my father—at least at first—into thinking she was a tony young woman, on her marriage she also instantly acquired the privileges she'd worked towards. Now she could muck around in her family's messes from a protected position; marriage had made her "clean." But my mother's new class status has always been an uncomfortable fit, and I've never been able to decide where my mother's fear of being found out as poor separates from her discontent and feelings of inadequacy as a woman. In the daily arguments that I know my mother has with herself, the ones in which she says, "I can't do that," or "Someone else could do better," her imagined superior is a man, and rich. There's a magic to being male, in my mother's mind, just as there's a mystique to being wealthy, and both conditions have together or separately been the cause of much of my mother's anxiety about her worth as a woman. The secrets of being competent, assured, and successful are held by rich men, my mother believes, and the fact that my mother has had to guess at this knowledge and manipulate the weaknesses of sex and class to even get near to understanding this exclusive brotherhood has emotionally and physically worn her down.

My mother still has a persistent faith in the rewards of hard, honest work, but it is shattered the next minute by her distrust of politicians, doctors, lawyers, store managers—anyone with authority, anyone, really, she sees as male. I'm troubled by this fatalism about powerful institutions and people in charge because it forces my mother to fall back on a stereotype of a poor woman's ambition that I find insidious. Struggle, luck, my mother says, they may work, but don't count on it. You are what you're born to be, but if you're a woman, there's one option left for you, one way around the rich men blocking your path: grab one for yourself. The message my mother has given me is that a woman's success, acceptance, and respect lie solely in marriage to a man with a good income. The consequent loss of freedom is well worth the rewards of class.

If I made myself American-pretty so that the five or six Chinese boys in the class fell in love with me, everyone else—the Caucasian, Negro, and Japanese boys—would too. Sisterliness, dignified and honorable, made much more sense.

Maxine Hong Kingston

This year, my mother and my partner and I went to Norway for my mother's birthday. We had gone to meet the rest of the family, the sister my grandmother had left behind and that sister's children, and those children's children, dozens of them, appearing in the doorways of prosperous homes carrying plates of food and wearing huge smiles for my mother. "Do you think they'll have indoor plumbing?" my mother had asked me on the plane ride to Oslo. I watched her for a few seconds as she expertly adjusted the contrast on the little video screen that came with her business class seat. "Sure they will, Mama," I said. "They've come up since Grandma's time. Just like you."

I watched my mother again a few days later at her birthday party. She cringed when her cousin Hjodis brought out the special ice cream cake covered in candles and tiny American flags. Then she smiled, pressing her palms to her chest in disbelief. My mother's hands were covered with jewels: two heavy diamond rings, a garnet ring, one of pearls and diamonds. She wore a string of pearls around her neck and gold buttons on her ears the size of dimes. I knew that my mother's ease with finery, her wobbly dignity with these foreign relatives of a higher class, and her showy assertiveness were carefully crafted. All you had to do was look at her tired eyes, her poor skin, her bad teeth, her thinning hair, her twisted hands and bent back, to know that this was a brave show. All these miles traveled, years lived through, marriage survived, and money spent had changed little of my mother's perception of herself. She was still working overtime to make a respectable woman out of a very poor girl.

"Oh," my mother said as her cousin set the birthday cake before her and everyone began to sing, "I don't deserve this. I really don't deserve this."

Gendered Tongues

BY TAMARA WILLIAMS

Issues of Gender in the Foreign Language Classroom
collaborative essay by
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Introduction

Like other disciplines such as English and Sociology, Foreign Languages also have a history in the United States which is linked to the changing values of society as a whole. The discipline of foreign language teaching has evolved over the last one hundred years, and the policies and practices of professional organizations, such as the Modern Language Association, reveal the ways in which the image of the profession has been manipulated to fit other ideological agendas. Such issues have also affected the relative prestige of individual languages (the popularity of Russian in the space-age "Sputnik" era, for example, or the current popularity of Spanish linked to shifts in the U.S. demographic trends) as well as the rising and falling popularity of various methodologies. The contemporary agenda in foreign language teaching has been shaped significantly by historical phenomena such as World War II, shifting business practices and other economic factors, and the political need for intelligence and military data collection. In its broadest form, sexism is inseparable from these historical developments; in practice the issue also manifests itself in explicit and systematic ways.

Professional Issues

Professional issues regarding the status and function of foreign language teaching, both within educational institutions and society as a whole, play a major role in perpetuating sexism in the foreign language classroom. Perhaps the most striking problem is the division of labor in language teaching. On the high school and, quite often, undergraduate college levels, that division is often determined by gender, where women are more likely to teach foreign languages—particularly the "soft" ones such as Spanish and French—while men gravitate to the "hard" languages (German, Russian) and other academic subjects such as science and math. In the larger university setting, most foreign language departments have traditionally been split between (mostly male) tenured and tenure-track faculty members engaged in original research in literature or literary theory, and (mostly female) non-tenured lecturers and teaching assistants responsible for the acquisition of basic proficiency in the foreign language. As a result, innovation in foreign language pedagogy is not rewarded with promotion and tenure; in fact, teaching itself is deemed less important than non-pedagogically oriented research.[1] A final consequence of the hierarchical division of labor in foreign language teaching is the preponderance of large multi-section courses, where syllabi and examinations are often course-wide, and where individual instructors (usually female graduate students) have little opportunity to pursue sex-equitable pedagogical approaches.

Beyond the problem of the division of labor in foreign language instruction, there exists the related but broader issue of female authority and professional prestige. First, because foreign language instruction is dominated by women at the high school, college and university levels (see above), foreign language pedagogy is disproportionately affected by cultural norms that ascribe negative characteristics to women in positions of authority. Even more problematic is the issue of the prestige of the foreign language teaching profession as a whole. As historical analysis shows, the feminization of an occupational field invariably corresponds to a decreasing level of prestige associated with that profession; this historical trend indeed appears to hold true in the case of foreign language instruction.

Methodology

Specific methodological approaches to foreign language teaching contribute directly to the perpetuation of exclusionary pedagogical practices in foreign language classrooms. In general, the "success" of a certain method is largely determined by that method's hegemonic status within the profession. As a result, institutional adoption of a specific method—regardless of its biases and limitations—tends to perpetuate its "success" and discourage resistance or the adoption of alternative methods. The past two decades have been dominated by two major methodological approaches: 1) the direct or "immersion" method and 2) the proficiency movement.[2] The success of both these approaches to foreign language acquisition has served to mask their limitations and discourage critique.

More specifically, the direct method can be faulted for its reliance on mimicry and repetition as the fundamental means of learning. As a result,

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1 See Claire J. Kramsch, "The Missing Link in Vision and Governance: Foreign Language Acquisition Research." Profession 87 (Modern Language Association, 1987): 26-30.

2 See Jeanette D. Bragger, "Teaching for Proficiency: Are We Ready?" Profession 1987: 31-35. See Alice C. Omaggio, "The Proficiency-Oriented Classroom." Teaching for Proficiency: The Organizing Principle. Ed. Theodore V. Higgs Lincolnwood: National Textbook, 1984, 43-84.

Women, who have their heads stuffed with Greek, like Mrs. Dacier, or carry profound disputes about mechanics, like the marchiness of Chastelet, might have a beard to boot; for this would perhaps express more remarkably the air of penetration, to which they aspire.

Immanuel Kant

users of the direct method are discouraged from attaining a critical perspective on the material itself; in fact, analysis (even at the level of basic grammatical paradigms) is regarded as counterproductive to the learning process. The proficiency model, on the other hand, while parading as a "neutral" contextualization of language, can perpetuate a male-biased, heterosexist, often racist and classist view of culture. Concomitantly, the goal of achieving competency often reinforces exclusionary cultural norms. This emphasis on contextualized, conversational usage fails to ask whose conversational agenda is being taught; for example, conversations about sports are more frequently offered as models than conversations about fashion. Finally, the forms of evaluation associated with these methods reflect gender biases; just as studies have revealed possible inequities in standardized tests, such as the SAT's, so there are gender issues regarding both content and grammar to consider in foreign language testing.

Linguistic Issues

In teaching languages, the object of study itself raises many issues of gender. Feminist linguists have been active in researching and detailing these problems, and foreign language teaching entails an application of their discoveries.

The broadest issue is the image of language itself. Although in fact most linguists recognize that language is inherently changing and unstable, the image presented in the classroom is that of a fixed entity. This artificial construct is necessary for pedagogical reasons: sometimes, for purposes of evaluation, an overly simplistic binary distinction between correct and incorrect utterances is maintained where real usage is much more flexible. Increased reliance on computer-assisted instruction is likely to intensify this distinction. Also, language must be codified and reduced to a set of rules if teachers are to have any hope of explaining them to students. This model corresponds somewhat to the Saussurean distinction between *langue and parole.*[3] *Langue* represents the idealized, abstract system that constitutes a given language, whereas *parole* is any one particular speaker's appropriation and implementation of that system. Although this theoretical distinction is questionable, it remains a useful model of what happens in foreign language teaching: the language teacher is in the position of trying to teach langue, when in fact only parole is ever possible.

The image of language presented in the classroom is also that of a neutral, value-free tool of communication. Some linguists would argue, however, that language is always ideologically charged. In its most general expression, this idea builds on the Whorf-Sapir theory, and implies that language learning also entails acquiring a certain view of the world, certain distinctions that may not be part of the student's native language.[4] Examples might be notions of openness or closure conveyed by Russian verb aspects; different divisions of the color spectrum and concepts about categories of things, as in Chinese radicals. Many of these distinctions involve ideas about gender. For example, the radical for "woman" is present in many Chinese characters denoting moral transgressions, such as rape and seduction. At a more speculative level, Jacques Lacan has theorized that when a child learns to speak, as part of that language acquisition he or she learns a set of kinship terms in which gender is an essential structuring element. These kinship terms also implicitly convey information about the incest taboo and about the child's own position in that network, elements which form the basis of personal identity.

Even if the Whorf-Sapir view of language is rejected, there are many specific gender issues that must still be addressed. Feminist linguists have pointed to the widespread existence of gender asymmetry in many languages. These issues may take a number of forms, for example in words used for describing work roles, occupations or professions. Prestigious professions may exist only in the masculine form and may lack entirely a feminine equivalent. In Spanish, for example, the feminine *la presidenta* means "the [male] President's wife"; there is no word in French for "a woman doctor." Indeed, a feminization of *médecin*, "a doctor," to designate women doctors is not even a possibility, since *médecine* is already used to mean "medicine." Even the morphologically predictable and theoretically available form of *docteur, doctoresse*, is not used. On the other hand, low status occupations such as *balayeuse*, "sweeper," do exist, and in some instances exist almost exclusively in forms marked as feminine (*ouvreuse, infirmière*). Similarly, in German a nurse is a *krankenschwester*, and the analogous *krankenbruder*, although morphologically possible, is not used.

Other asymmetries may exist at the semantic level. In French, *un maître* implies skill, whereas the "equivalent" *une maîtresse* carries sexual connotations. *Un homme fort* is a strong man, while une *femme forte* is a heavy woman.

Feminist responses to many of these issues do exist, such as the word *écrivaine* to correspond to the masculine term for "writer" in French, *écrivain.* Such proposals are not without problems, however, because in some instances it is possible for the feminine-marked forms to become devalued and perceived as diminutives (as in the English examples "poetess" and "aviatrix"). Beyond this theoretical consideration, the problem in practice is that it is often very difficult for foreign language teachers to obtain up-to-date information about these proposed alternatives and their level of usage and acceptance precisely because discussion of them is marginalized. There is no newsletter concerning such matters, for example, and many official linguistic agencies, such as the *Académie Française*, actively oppose innovation and therefore inhibit the dissemination of such information. While the importance of up-to-date vocabulary lists for prestigious fields such as computer technology or business is recognized, feminist concerns do not receive such attention.

Even when information is available, linguistic innovation in the classroom poses problems. Conservative linguistic usage is often considered "safer," and since the implicit or explicit goal of most language instruction is to enable the student to

3 See Ferdinand D Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, 1916. London: Peter Owen, 1960.

4 See Edward Sapir, Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech, first published in 1921, Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Ed. J.B. Carroll, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1956.

"pass" as a native speaker, in practice this often means that students are taught standard language and are discouraged from using forms or words that would make them stand out. Conformity is rewarded and encouraged more in foreign language teaching than in other disciplines, where students are taught to think critically.

One of the results of the feminist study of different language usage by men and women has been the proposal that within a given language there are "genderlects": patterns of usage based on gender identity (by analogy with "dialects" and "idiolects"). It has been claimed, for example, that in English women command a wider color vocabulary and use different intonation and interrogative patterns than men. The gender patterns in these as well as other areas have not been sufficiently studied in all languages, but since nearly all foreign language teaching involves intonation patterns and interrogative structures, as well as the acquisition of vocabulary for color terms, the existence of gender-inflected patterns could prove to be a widespread and important concern. It is possible, though this has yet to be thoroughly investigated, that in the guise of teaching neutral language usage, we are in fact teaching a male dialect to both men and women, thereby indirectly reinforcing the male-as-norm biases which have been demonstrated to exist in many languages.

Sexism in Teaching Materials

The problem of sexism in foreign language teaching materials begins with traditional assumptions about gender. Women are not only underrepresented in textbooks, existing images of women are often stereotypical, trivializing women's diversity of interests and roles in society. In the textual presentation of grammar and vocabulary, gender bias is consistently found in the use of masculine forms as the "norms" and the feminine as the "derived" forms (e.g. the masculine-first paradigm in the ordering of personal pronouns; the masculine "generic" pronouns; the masculine adjective form as "root" form). This norm is observed even when it runs counter to sound pedagogical practice. In French, adverbs are formed from the feminine form of the adjective. Thus, learning the feminine form first better prepares students to learn adverb formation.

Texts provide tools with which students learn to produce meanings in the foreign language: the vocabulary, gestures, and situations they learn to manipulate, however, are not objective, value-free tools. The "hidden curriculum" of a foreign language textbook transmits gender, race and class biases—not to mention cultural biases—without acknowledging them. For example, students learn *cheveux longs* (long hair), *cheveux courts* (short hair), and seldom *cheveux crépus* (kinky hair) from French language textbooks. Particularly with the increasing use of video materials, it has become imperative to examine the structures of identification and desire associated with the "male gaze." For example, students using one popular program learn to *draguer une fille* (pick up a girl), and to identify with the voyeuristic protagonist in the film.

Teaching Culture

The recent interest in communicative competence and proficiency-based language programs has added an important area of concern to the process of achieving sex equity in the foreign language classroom. These methods' demand for authentic materials and input from the target culture in drills, practice exercises and dialogues complicate the goals of the non-sexist teacher by adding the cross-cultural component. Within this context, the teacher must achieve a sex-equitable environment for students while at the same time engaging them in "authentic" linguistic practice and behaviors informed by the broader sexist practices of the target culture. To add to this tension, the teacher must approach the culture being taught sensitively in order to discourage ethnocentric value judgments and promote understanding of diverse cultural perspectives. The implications of these tensions are compounded when the linguistic and cultural practices being taught originate in the developing world and/or are perceived as ethnically or racially distinct. In this case, a critical assessment of sexist practices in the target culture, combined with an unexamined student perception of racial or ethnic stereotypes that lead to a view of the foreign culture as "barbaric" and "exotic," can unwittingly sustain an insidious form of cultural imperialism.

Classroom Dynamics

In addition to the customary issues of classroom dynamics in coeducational classes—men tend to dominate, teachers tend to favor men—foreign language classes suffer from gender inequities peculiar to the discipline. It is essential that all students be given an equal opportunity to practice speaking. Because men respond more readily and rarely refuse to give any answer at all, they are considered more reliable respondents and are called on more often. They volunteer more frequently, seeing each question as a healthy and stimulating form of competition with their classmates, whereas some women see the same situation as destructive, unhealthy rivalry. Even women who are confident they know the correct answer are often unwilling to volunteer because they consider an aggressive display of knowledge inappropriate. In an attempt to equalize the situation, the teacher conscientiously calls on students who remain silent, but many of them perceive being called on as punishment. Current pedagogy encourages dividing the class into small groups in which the quieter students feel more comfortable and may participate more freely, but the dynamics are once again significantly altered by the presence or absence of men. Men dominate small groups even more effectively than the class as a whole; small group projects usually reflect male interests, and the women almost always defer to male leadership.

A significant problem in foreign language classes is the issue of authority for women teachers. Nurturing behavior is almost universally expected of female teachers, while male teachers are almost never criticized for not exhibiting such behavior. Students in foreign language classes, forced to regress linguistically to a pre-kindergarten era, may

People can be forgiven for overrating language. Words make noise, or sit on a page, for all to hear and see. Thoughts are trapped inside the head of the thinker. To know what someone else is thinking, or to talk to each other about the nature of thinking, we have to use-what else, words! It is no wonder that many commentators have trouble even conceiving of thought without words or is it that they just don't have the language to talk about it?

Steven Pinker

confuse the female teacher with the mother who taught them their "mother tongue," and their attitudes and responses may be confused by whatever positive or negative feelings they retain from the maternal relationship. Lacking the ability to express even the most basic needs, they become vulnerable and dependent upon the teacher for praise and encouragement. They are likely to interpret correction as rejection. They may be particularly sensitive to evaluation, which becomes a very personal matter. Since our culture accords little authority to women in general and mothers in particular, the identification of teacher with mother makes such authority precarious. The woman teacher is called upon to balance her undisputed superiority in the target language against multiple and unpredictable student expectations based on childhood experiences she can scarcely even imagine.

Applied Feminist Pedagogy

Applying feminist pedagogy to the foreign language classroom means asking how our theory and practice connect. The aims of feminist pedagogy are, first, to empower students to direct their own learning; second, to reduce hierarchical differences in student-teacher interactions; and third, to expose the biases and objectives of educational agendas. In the foreign language classroom, despite the personalization of language study brought about by the emphasis on communication in recent years, a traditional instructional relationship still dominates. In the foreign language classroom, the teacher's language competence, reinforced by the students' relative linguistic incompetence, can lead to the teacher's over-controlling the production of meaning. Teachers must actively resist this tendency. Feminist pedagogy can inform the practice of foreign language teaching by drawing on cooperation rather than competition as a model for learning and by focusing on process as well as on goals.

Solutions

The solutions lie in the kind of training we give our future teachers, the climate we create for those already in the profession, the materials we develop, the direction our research takes, and the dynamics of the classroom itself.

1. We must provide training in gender sensitivity for our teaching assistants and students seeking certification.
2. In a university context, teaching language must be recognized and rewarded as a professional option on the same level as teaching literature.
3. Textbooks must eliminate sexist bias, and new textbooks incorporating the results of non-sexist linguistic and methodological research must be made available.
4. Our research needs to move in the direction of non-infantilizing teaching methods. Research on linguistics in the target language should adopt a feminist dimension.
5. Teachers need access to feminist perspectives on the language problems as they are perceived within the culture being taught. These perspectives should be integrated into the curriculum.
6. We need to develop a model to evaluate and monitor textbooks and other materials analogous to the non-sexist guidelines adopted by publishers.
7. We must include cross-cultural women's perspectives to counteract ethnocentrism and cultural imperialism. This means introducing materials that reflect the diversity of ethnicity, race, class, and sexual orientation in the culture being taught.
8. In the classroom, we can use our current materials as examples to teach our students about sexism. This will encourage students to maintain a critical perspective on classroom materials in other classes as well.
9. We can devise interim strategies until more permanent solutions are found. When non-sexist materials are unavailable, we must adapt existing materials by using critical supplements, role reversal, and our own exercises.
10. A theoretical possibility to explore is the separation of evaluation and teaching, divorcing the students' relationship with the teacher from attempts to measure learning.
11. Another suggestion for alleviating the strain of coeducational classroom dynamics is to return to a system of single-sex education.

Other suggestions for solutions will arise as we continue to experiment, disseminate information on successful models both here and abroad, and build on the results of feminist research yet to be undertaken.

From Comfort Zone to Combat Zone

BY SUSAN BROWN CARLTON

My first encounter with organized feminism occurred almost by accident in 1979, as I was writing grants to establish programs for women in science and engineering at a Midwestern university. This was not a project happily embraced by most of the faculty in the school of engineering in which I taught technical writing. I contacted the women's studies committee in the school of liberal arts, hoping to locate faculty with expertise relevant to my work. I received far more: an invitation to join the committee and a forum in which I was consistently asked for my opinion, listened to with respect, and encouraged to make substantive contributions to the business at hand, be it curriculum development, course revision, or scholarly exchange. The contrast between this reception and my daily experience in the engineering school was profound and life-altering.

For me, then, feminism was a safety zone, a place in which I could think aloud, find support, gain experience, learn from others. I had no background in feminist theory when I began to participate in women's studies. Like most women my age who completed their undergraduate work prior to 1972, I first learned about women's history, literature, philosophy, and lives by hunting down books, articles, and exhibits recommended to me by feminist friends, by asking questions, and by listening to feminist dialogue. This was not some isolated heroic effort. I was surrounded by communities of women who never treated my newcomer status within feminism as a liability.

The feminism I found to be so inclusive proved less so for many who did not identify with the liberal humanist, white European, heterosexual heritage that so many feminists assumed to be the only feminist heritage. Before I left my university position to complete my Ph.D., I had evidence that all of the exclusionary apparatus I associated with the world outside of feminism operated within feminism as well: some feminists were hostile toward women of color, toward lesbians and gay men, and toward any theorizing that threatened Enlightenment categories of thought. Yet I saw all of these issues as addressable within a feminist frame. In particular, I took on the contradictions between liberal humanist feminism and poststructuralism as a heady challenge from which a new feminism would surely emerge. Whatever the content of disagreements, I held on to my first images of feminism: a non-hierarchical comfort zone in which conversations were conducted in a spirit of mutual respect. In graduate school in the late eighties, I kept in touch with feminist controversies by discussing them with friends, but I still saw no threat to my comfort zone image. While feminism threaded through my work and shaped many life decisions, I stayed at a distance from the increasingly intense altercations over methods, terms, and identities.

One such altercation rudely interrupted my naive assumption that feminist conflict was inherently enabling, ultimately transformative.

The clash was enacted in the pages of Philosophy and Rhetoric in a series of three texts published respectively in volume 25, no.2, 1992, in volume 26, no.2, 1993, and in volume 26, no. 3, 1993: 1) an article by Barbara Biesacker consisting of both a critique of liberal humanist assumptions in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's historiographical work on women rhetors and a proposal for a poststructuralist rethinking of rhetoric; 2) Campbell's brief response, in which she construes Biesacker's critique as a professional and personal attack; 3) Biesacker's counter response to Campbell, in which she dismisses Campbell's reading of Biesacker's critique as a misreading.

I might have welcomed their exchange as an opportunity to examine the disjunction between post-structuralist assumptions about subject positions and liberal humanist assumptions about the individual consciousness. Instead I found myself confronting a loss I had heretofore managed to conceal from myself: the comfort zone had been transformed into a combat zone, and its rules of engagement bore no resemblance to the dialogic bliss I had always attributed to feminist discourse.

It was the texture as much as the logic of Biesacker's critique that I found so unsettling in "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric." Biesacker begins by acknowledging that Campbell's recent book, Man Cannot Speak For Her, which introduces heretofore ignored women rhetors of the nineteenth century into the history of public address, is one that "we cannot not want to" support (141). But Biesacker also believes that Campbell's project promotes an "affirmative action program" of canon revision because it "conserves the putative authority of the center by granting it license to continue to produce official explanations by the designation of what is and is not worthy of inclusion" (143). Such a program does not pose questions about the criteria being used to include or exclude particular figures or texts from the privilege of being placed within the canon. Biesacker argues against any history that is "[plotted} around the model of the individual

It is not easy to move through the world alone, and it is never easy for a woman. You must keep your wits about you. You mustn't get yourself into dark places you can't get out of. Keep money you can get to, an exit behind you, and some language at your fingertips. You should know how to strike a proud pose, curse like a sailor, kick like a mule, and scream out your brother's name, though he may be three thousand miles away. And you mustn't be a fool.

Mary Morris

speaking subject"(144) because such a history effaces "a vast array of collective rhetorical practices to which there belongs no proper name" (144). In other words, if a feminist (and I would presume anyone) deploys the naming apparatus of Western culture, that individual (or subject-effect) has produced work that is complicitous with "an underhanded perpetuation of 'cultural supremacy'" (143).

In summary, point one of Biesacker's critique is that adding individuals to the canon reinscribes an individualist ideology which maintains patriarchal power.

Point two of Biesacker's critique is that Campbell in an article published in 1973 utilizes the term "consciousness-raising" to describe the rhetorical practices of women participating in the women's liberation movement. Although this earlier essay draws high marks from Biesacker for its challenge to traditional notions of audience, ultimately it too is "[complicitous] with precisely those normative theorizations that it seeks to oppose" (145). Why? Because the metaphor of consciousness-raising reinscribes a surface-depth model of understanding that also rests on the notion of a sovereign individual. According to Biesacker, consciousness-raising is a "self-help" process wherein each individual woman comes to recognize her own oppression and her own self-interest (146). Such a recognition "deflect[s] critical attention away from those structures of oppression larger than individual consciousness and will" (146). The scene of consciousness-raising, according to Biesacker, posits a subject who can only be assigned a positive value to the extent that she can be identified as actively overcoming a prior passivity, and furthermore this scene codes active as positive and male and passive as negative and female. Biesacker presents no evidence that anything in particular in Campbell's article perpetuates the active/passive dichotomy or sustains its connection with the male/female opposition. Simply using the term "consciousness-raising" secures the production of a critically deficient feminism.

Biesacker does suggest an alternative: in place of both proper names and consciousness-raising, she calls for "the post-structuralist interrogation of the subject and its concomitant call for the radical contextualization of all rhetorical acts" and for "a new definition of techne [a key rhetorical term derived from the Greek term for skill or art] that considerably alters our way of reading and writing history by displacing the active/passive opposition altogether" (147).

Point two of Biesacker's critique, then, is that locutions and definitions that assert or even imply the existence of individual consciousness severely limit the worth and usefulness of feminist projects.

Initially, I found myself rendered more or less speechless by Biesacker's argument. At each key juncture, I literally winced, despite the fact that I absolutely concur with her most sweeping claim, that mechanisms of naming and troping perpetuate the "structures of oppression larger than individual consciousness and will" (146). I also found myself taken by surprise, because I see in the rest of Biesacker's work a model for poststructuralist inquiry. She has managed, I suspect against considerable odds, to publish interrogations of the god-terms of rhetorical theory. In the second half of this article, she puts pressure on "techne"; elsewhere, she has re-envisioned "audience" and "style." But I experienced the first half of her article, in which she objects to Campbell's feminist historiography, as an injustice. Or more specifically, I experienced as an injustice the speechlessness to which I felt every revisionist feminist historiographer had been consigned by virtue of the terms Biesacker exacts if one is to avoid complicity with patriarchy.

When I decided to write on this exchange, my initial approach was to focus on formulations of the subject from the perspectives of liberal humanism and poststructuralism and to construct points of contact between these two alternatives. But that approach assumes that what is at stake here is a matter of establishing epistemological congruencies between two dehistoricized, decontextualized stances. Such an approach confines our understanding of the two models to points of opposition (unity/ multiplicity; consciousness/unconsciousness; linearity/discontinuity, etc.) which, though valid in a provisional, cursory sort of way, show us nothing of the lived, historical experience, individual or collective or intersubjective, within which each model has productively framed women's initiatives.

In other words, each model must be historicized, rhetoricized, and contextualized. But I am not making a pluralist argument here. Philosophically and experientially, the poststructuralist position is for me the more cogent one because it provides a frame within which incoherence is not an error to be explained away but a necessary condition for the production of meaning. Still, what I have most valued about poststructuralism is neither its epistemological elegance, nor its explanatory power, but its rhetorical and conceptual agility: it provides terms, definitions, and operations for rethinking our common sense, our inherited values, and our political conditions. Far from restricting agency, poststructuralism vastly extends it by tracking possibilities of the not-quite-said, the not-yet-representable, which thread through our discourse and hover within our images. Biesacker's reflections on techne in the second half of this article and her prior work on audience and style exemplify such an enablement.

But if poststructuralism is so enabling, why do I feel so disabled?

One source of my unease is Biesacker's refusal to historicize. She seems unaware that consciousness-raising, for example, was a response to conditions in the 1960s and 1970s, when the "exorbitant reserve" of possibility could not be tapped until a critical mass of women acquired forums for voicing the effects of exclusion among themselves. As long as women remained outside of the texts and discussions that gave access to all theoretical movements, none of those movements could shape

women's lives. In the 1990s, as Biesacker clearly understands, poststructuralist models place one in a position to operate from the center of disciplinary power. Such was not the case at the beginning of the 1970s, when poststructuralism had not yet become a dominant mode of thought in North American universities.

A second source of my unease is the category in which Biesacker places Campbell when she protests Biesacker's representation of her work. In the third text of this exchange, Biesacker's response to Campbell's self-defense, Biesacker suggests that Campbell and other readers who construe her critique as an attack on Campbell have misread Biesacker's article. As a result they have failed to locate the enabling points of contact between Campbell's liberal humanist approach and Biesacker's poststructuralist one. Having reread her critique numerous times in search precisely of such points of contact, I must confess that, like Campbell, I am a misreader. By displacing onto the reader all responsibility for identifying points of contact, Biesacker sidesteps the question of her own role as author and consigns all of us to the ranks of misreaders who simply lack whatever it takes to understand her position. I find myself rejecting this role, even at the risk of demanding forms of coherence that rest uneasily within a poststructuralist frame of reference. Instead, I believe that Biesacker has misused the rhetorical agility of poststructuralism by effacing the very conditions that gave rise both to consciousness-raising and to affirmative action-oriented models of inclusiveness.

Furthermore, I believe that a defense of Campbell's work can be delineated within the very terms of Biesacker's critique, for I find Campbell's history of women rhetors scrupulous about contextualization and admirably focused on the collectivities that produced and were in turn represented by these women.

Finally, it would be possible to subject Biesacker's essay and response paper to precisely the critique she has mounted against Campbell: both are littered with locutions that construct subjects as individuals and that assign consciousness to individuals. And how could it be otherwise? Language carries within it the memory of tradition as surely as it carries our desires for a radical emancipation from tradition.

But it is precisely the terms of Biesacker's critique that I experience as an injustice. It is precisely these terms that I wish to escape.

Let me then try to dislodge this entire exchange from the frame of its initial context as a Biesacker vs Campbell, Campbell vs Biesacker, Biesacker yet again vs Campbell. I want to reframe the exchange in two directions: discursive and experiential. First, what is going on here discursively is entirely in keeping with one of the most traditional genres of academic journal publication, the "dismissive critique." Let me be clear here. Not all critiques are dismissive. I am not objecting to contestatory discourse that advocates one stance over another. I am not calling for tact at the expense of critical encounter. And I am not arguing for those pluralisms which refuse to pursue the implications of difference. I recognize that a strongly oppositional stance and even a verbal attack is an option all of us at times must exercise. But I also believe that those who hold differing epistemologies, those whose personal/professional histories have provided them with differing modes of reading and writing the social text, must find ways to sustain alliances across those differences. To the extent that a dismissive critique obstructs the possibility for political alliances, it undermines efforts to institute substantive social change. To the extent that a dismissive critique invalidates modes of inquiry other than its own, it limits our resources for reconceptualizing issues and practices.

Some of the reading/writing strategies which are operative in the Biesacker-Campbell exchange are characteristic of the dismissive critique. Typically such a critique dismisses a project on the basis of its epistemological and methodological incommensurability with the reader/writer's own. Then the machinery of norms and standards implicit in one mode of inquiry is applied to an alternative mode, which cannot of course meet norms and standards not even applicable to its own universe of discourse. (Feminist) archival researchers, whose task requires the location, reproduction, and recontextualization of materials not even identified as existent by the field at large, reject theory-centered work for short-circuiting tasks of recovery. (Feminist) theorists reject archival researchers' work as inattentive to philosophical framing. Work that maps a given territory is dismissed as "mere summary"; work that destabilizes and denaturalizes is dismissed for lacking historical depth and an armature of citation.

Experientially, the rhetorical strategy which I find most debilitating in its effects is one I would name "the didactic move." Constructing the relationship between self and other as a pedagogic one, the reader/writer assumes the role of expert in an expert/novice relationship. The space of dialogic response described by Bakhtin as constitutive of all discourse is reduced to an absolute minimum. And conversely, the monologic dimension of discourse is maximized, allowing the reader/writer to occupy the position of the one-who-knows in relation to an other who occupies the space of the child, the student, the one in need of instruction.

At the worksite of publication, as in the classroom, we construct and are constructed by a set of pedagogic relations that can be maximally emancipatory or can foreclose options for creating or sustaining relations. And just as any pedagogic relation is laced through and through with emotion (Worsham), so discourse itself can never be severed from the affective register which intersects and emanates from it. All of the discursive moves I've just described are indivisible from their affective dimension, but affect emerges with greatest force in exchanges that are structured to sustain or counter the didactic move.

If a woman has always functioned within the discourse of man . . . it is time for her to dislocate this "within," to explode it, turn it around and seize it, to make it hers, understanding it, taking it in her mouth, biting its tongue [language] with her own teeth, inventing her own tongue [language] to get inside it . . . . The point being not to take possession in order to internalize, to manipulate, but to flash through, and to "fly" [or to "commit robbery"].

Helen Cixous

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When Campbell responds to Biesacker's charge
ıt her work is complicitous with patriarchy, she
:uses Biesacker of having careerist motives and
entions (a charge which Campbell believes
:sacker had leveled against her, Campbell).
:sacker in turn designates as "unseemly"
mpbell's presumption that she can determine
:sacker's motives and intentions. Perhaps that
nseemliness" is not a mistake to be censured, but
pace in which emotions of fury and rage are given
ıy as they seldom are in academic discourse. It
;nals Campbell's refusal to have her work brack-
:d off from feminism's emancipatory project.

I write then to object to a particular mode of
presentational violence parading under the name
"critique." As an advocate of poststructuralism, I
nsign the operations of this violence not to an
dividual consciousness, but to a discursive field.
ıd I see no incongruence between this transferal
the locus of power from an individual conscious-
:ss to discourse and the assumption of some
sponsibility for what occurs in discourse. While I
;ree with Biesacker's claim that an exorbitant
serve exceeds all of our acts, I see no contradiction
:tween that observation and attentiveness to the
fects of our representational strategies. As a
oman who owes to '70s feminism her first
:perience of coming to voice in an academic
tting, I believe in the necessity of the archival
·oject, which locates and then places women's
ork, thought, and sensibilities as close to the
nter of curricula and scholarship as possible. And
a feminist, I see alliances among women holding
sparate epistemologies as indispensable to future
:tion.

I agree with Biesacker that poststructuralist
ssumptions about subject positions clash with
oeral humanist assumptions about the individual.
rticulating the points of difference is a productive
·oject within feminism. But by deploying the
rategic moves of the dismissive critique, Biesacker
ts up a force-field that forecloses further produc-
ve exchange. Biesacker concludes her counter-
efense with the following:

> When it comes to the moment of political action in the narrow sense, I suspect that Professor Campbell and I will find ourselves walking under the same banner, that our common passion for social change will surely cross the divide between (my) theory and (her) criticism--even as they bring each other into productive crisis." ("Negotiating" 240).

I hope that Biesacker is correct in her suspi-
ons. I fear that political action "in the narrow
nse" is what has been undermined. But if
esacker and Campbell are looking for joint
·ojects, they might begin by questioning the
nder profile of the editorial board of the journal
hilosophy and Rhetoric, in which their exchanges
:curred. As of 1995, that board consists of thirty-
ne men and four women.

DEAN'S COMMENTS

KEITH J. COOPER, DEAN OF HUMANITIES

"What a semester!" "Sure haven't seen you in a while." "Never been busier." Comments such as these were often heard as colleagues in the Humanities passed one another in the hall or paused for a moment's conversation in the classroom doorway. Perhaps only those on sabbatical leave were immune, noticeable by their more relaxed appearance – but even they were just stopping by before resuming professional travels, returning to that journal article nearing completion, or polishing the final chapter of their book as deadlines drew near.

It has been another busy year throughout the university, but nowhere more so than in the Division of Humanities. The center of that activity, of course, is in our classes: the intertwined process of teaching and learning, which both rewards and renews, is seen by most as a vocation and by all as a joy. (Well, most days.) Much of the reason for the reputation of this place lies with the excellent teaching of its faculty, an excellence that can't help but be humbling to one sitting in this office and reviewing the results of student evaluations. Alums may be heartened that their degree increases in value as the level of quality here continues to rise, current students reminded of the caliber of their chosen school, and supporters of the university grateful for the dedication of faculty that has made PLU what it is.

At the same time, Humanities faculty continue to be involved in ongoing professional activities, and to an increasing extent. Articles in top scholarly journals, second and third books, leadership roles in national organizations in one's discipline, invited presentations to community groups, involvement in local service organizations – often topped off by an evening of writing comments on student papers, a review session for those struggling with difficult concepts, or a planning session with students preparing group presentations. These are busy times.

Things aren't likely to slow down soon. Just ask the chairs of Women's Studies, Global Studies, Environmental Studies, Scandinavian Area Studies, and the Integrated Studies Program – all Humanities faculty. Or the chair of the faculty, faculty secretary, director of the Writing Center, coordinator of the Freshman Core, or provost, also faculty in this division. Or the three faculty who led off-campus courses this J-Term. Or the recipients of this year's prestigious Faculty Achievement Awards – both from Humanities. Add four department chairs and one dean, and one may begin to wonder whether sleep deprivation will soon take us all.

It is encouraging, given all of the above, to see the way that the university's leadership is responding to the need for increased support and continued nourishing of the Humanities. Project Focus/Phase II has left us in a position to build to our strengths, including playing a major role in the new Freshman Core. While many regret that this has come at the cost of decreased staff support, the opportunity to work collaboratively with part-time student help brings benefits of its own. Long-range planning efforts crystallized in PLU 2000 are now being implemented, aided by support from the Pew Roundtable. If, indeed, connections between the liberal arts and professional education become a major focus of the university's declared mission, the Humanities will need to continue taking a substantial leadership role in clarifying the nature and value of a liberal arts education, and what it means for every PLU student to be liberally educated.

Busy times, yes; yet exciting and even auspicious times. Just about what we would hope for, and what study in the humanities should promote.

special order, then the most we can say is that homosexuals are losing out on one special good that God made possible—although, again, they might (as celibates purportedly do) realize other special goods as a result. This latter possibility is not one I will explore here.

In order to determine whether homosexual relations go against the special order God created between males and females, we need to know what special goods are made possible by arranging the world such that there are two human sexes, and that procreation is possible only in heterosexual couplings.

III: Heterosexuality and Character-Building Challenges

Recent evidence from anatomical examination of male and female muscle construction in the genital areas seems to indicate that the vasocongestion process (the engorgement of genital muscle tissue with blood) affects analogous muscles in the penile shaft and in the vaginal-labial system. The physiological processes of vasocongestion and myotonia (muscle spasm) are actually more similar for the two sexes than different . . .The thing is, there is more at stake here than a good orgasm. Men and women alike are caught up in the view that women must remain the standard-bearers for morally correct behaviour in our society, while pornography pushes the opposite view — that women are sexual aggressors and whores.

Mercedes Steedman

The most obvious good associated with heterosexual sex is that it has the possibility of issuing in progeny. However, the possibility of producing offspring cannot be the reason why God created the human species with two sexes, since He could just as easily have created a human species in which same-sex couplings could have resulted in offspring. That offspring can occur only in heterosexual unions is not a necessary truth, but a consequence of God's design. The question is why God designed the world such that there are two sexes AND such that progeny are possible only when couplings occur between heterosexual partners. What goods might He have been making possible by structuring the world in such a way?

Paul Cameron, in "A Case Against Homosexuality," gives an interesting answer to this question.[3] According to Cameron, the gender difference between sexual partners in a heterosexual coupling creates difficulties in producing sexual gratification which can only be overcome through sensitivity, communication, and commitment. Thus, the pursuit of sexual gratification by a heterosexual couple drives the couple towards the development of positive personal characteristics, or virtues. The gender difference by itself creates a kind of sexual incompatibility which needs to be overcome; the process of overcoming that incompatibility encourages personal growth.[4]

With respect to this good, the existence of a significant difference between the sexual partners is necessary in a way that it is not for procreation. According to Cameron, because homosexual intercourse occurs between two people whose bodies respond in roughly the same way, who know from their own responses how to pleasure their partner, and who do not need to accommodate themselves to remarkably different arousal patterns and tempos, there is little need for communication between homosexual partners, and a high probability of gratification. The *hard work* is simply not necessary. Thus, in homosexual intercourse there is no need for a deep, personal investment of one's energies, and the bonding that comes from such an investment of energies may be lost. Thus, there is a lower probability of long-term pairing between homosexual couples. It is easier for homosexuals to be casual about their sexuality, to practice it promiscuously, etc.[5]

Even when there is long-term pairing, Cameron thinks that there are certain goods associated with heterosexual monogomy which are lost in homosexual monogomy. Again, these goods stem precisely from the gender difference itself. Cameron says that

> in heterosexuality, no matter how similar the participants, there is always a considerable gap between them. To stay together takes great effort, and the expenditure of this effort prompts both personal and social commitment to the partner. . .
>
> Because the heterosexual partners are so dissimilar, accommodation and adjustment are their key strategies. Because mutually satisfying heterosexual sexing takes so much effort, both participants have to "hang in there" long after "sane people" would have toddled off in frustration.[6]

Cameron thinks that this feature of heterosexual partnerships has social benefits as well, leading to a more enduring and stable social structure overall:

> We become the way we act. The heterosexual relationship places a premium on "getting on" and thus provides a model to smooth countless other human interaction.[7]

There are a variety of problems with Cameron's account here. The most obvious of these is that he seems to make too much of the role that the sex difference plays in the creation of character-building conflicts and challenges. While the sexual difference can be a source of incompatibility, both sexual and otherwise, it is far from the only one. Individual human beings are different enough that any couple, no matter what their respective sexes, will need to work at overcoming conflicts through sensitivity and communication if their partnership is to succeed and be mutually rewarding. Thus, gender difference is not strictly necessary for the existence of character-building conflicts.

Furthermore, one can doubtless find examples of heterosexual partners who, despite their physiological differences, are quite compatible sexually. Typically, such compatibility is thought of as a benefit rather than a liability in heterosexual relationships, and such compatibility is often one of the criteria according to which long-term partnerships are determined. I find it difficult to believe that these relationships are less likely to succeed simply because the couple doesn't need to work at achieving good sex. One might even argue that freedom from the frustrations of sexual incompatibility will leave the couple with more energy to focus on other ways to enhance bonding. Be that as it may, we can see that gender difference alone is not sufficient for the existence of character-building conflicts.

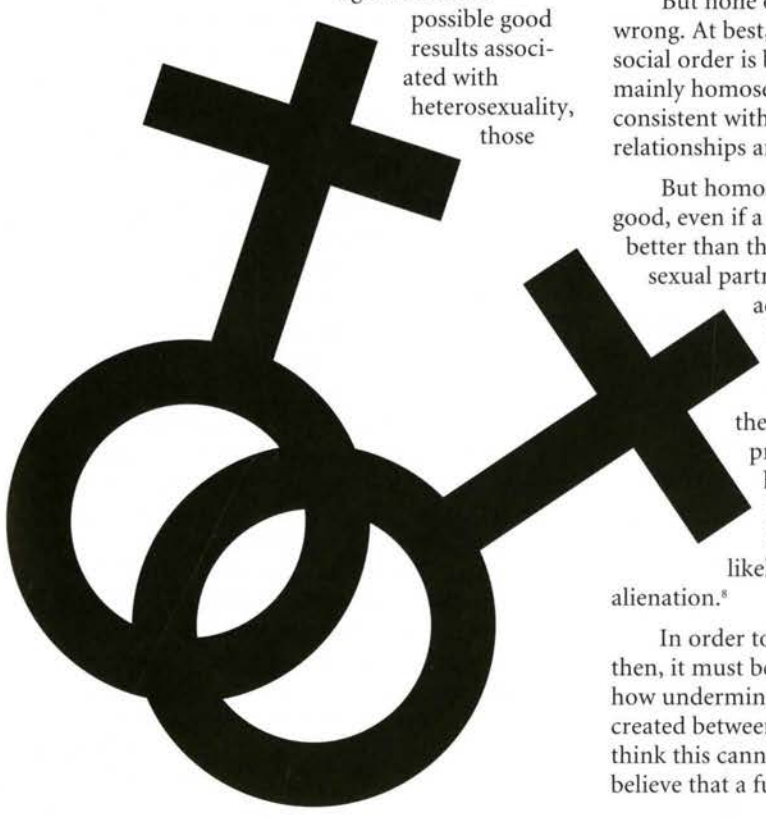
Another (and, I think, more important) problem with Cameron's analysis lies in the fact that the differences in sexual arousal patterns between men and women is such that *mutual* communication and sensitivity is not always, or even typically, what is needed for sexual gratification. Men can often achieve physical gratification during sex

without sensitive communication with their partners. Anorgasmia is a significant problem with women, not with men. What this means is that if a woman is to experience physically gratifying sex, it is usually necessary for her to communicate her sexual needs to her partner. It is also necessary for her partner to listen to her with sensitivity and be responsive to her needs. But the reverse is not as often the case.

What this means is that men who are prepared to be indifferent to the sexual needs of their female partners can typically achieve physical satisfaction in sex *without* sensitive, mutual communication. In fact, many heterosexual relationships, both long- and short-term, display just this sort of disparity in physical gratification.

There are a number of possible consequences of this unequal dynamic. One of the most pernicious is that there is a self-interested motive for men to willfully dismiss the sexual needs of their female partners, a practice that has the possibility of leading to a more far-reaching dismissal of women: if their needs don't matter, then the man does not need to consider them. Of course, men who routinely dismiss the needs of women may find it difficult to find female sexual partners, unless the social structure is arranged so that women are in an inferior position with respect to men, lacking in the power to provide for themselves and depending on the good will of men.

While I do not mean to say that the differences in sexual arousal patterns between men and women are solely responsible for the historic oppression of women, I do think it is important to note that the extant sexual differences between men and women have the potential to exacerbate the injustices that flow from self-centeredness. In same-sex couplings this danger is minimized. Thus, even if Cameron is right about the possible good results associated with heterosexuality, those goods need to be counterbalanced against the possible evil results.



I will return to these issues later. For now, I will acknowledge that, despite the problems with Cameron's account, he does make one insight worth keeping: the physiological differences between men and women provide a *near guarantee* that heterosexual partners will be confronted with significant conflicts and challenges in their relationship, the overcoming of which can help people grow into more virtuous human beings. While I must add that such conflicts and challenges will usually be found in same-sex unions as well, I agree that these conflicts and challenges are less likely to be found in the sexual domain, thus making homosexual intercourse easier to practice in a promiscuous or casual way. But in so agreeing, I must point out that this fact does not rule out the legitimacy of committed, monogamous homosexual unions.

I also acknowledge that the centrality of sex in human life and human relationships means that the absence of conflicts and challenges in the sexual arena can be a liability for the homosexual relationship. For if Cameron is right, homosexual relationships lack character-building challenges in one of the most important spheres of human life, the sexual sphere. In this respect, heterosexual unions have associated with them a unique good which homosexual unions lack (again, however, this fact does not rule out the possibility that homosexual unions have a different set of special goods which heterosexual unions lack). Together, other considerations aside, these facts could serve as a reason why a good God would create the human race with two sexes.

IV: The Place of Homosexuality in God's Plan

But none of this implies that homosexuality is wrong. At best, it shows that a mainly heterosexual social order is better for society as a whole than a mainly homosexual one—a point that may be consistent with saying that individual homosexual relationships are as good as heterosexual ones.

But homosexual partnerships could still be good, even if a predominantly heterosexual order is better than the alternatives. And even if heterosexual partnerships have the potential for achieving goods that are not possible in homosexual partnerships, surely that potential exists only for persons who have some kind of attraction to the opposite sex. For persons of a primarily homosexual disposition, heterosexual partnerships have little possibility of being better than homosexual partnerships, and a real likelihood of ending in bitterness and alienation.[8]

In order to show that homosexuality is wrong, then, it must be shown that homosexuality somehow undermines or violates the natural order God created between men and women. Not only do I think this cannot be done but, on the contrary, I believe that a further examination will show us that

Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life."

Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the domain of Heaven."

Gospel of Thomas 114:1-3

homosexuality can actually further the special good of heterosexuality. Thus, a *forteriori*, homosexuality does not go against the natural order.

Let me approach this point from a somewhat different angle. If we are to trust modern research, sexual orientation has a significant biological basis. One's homosexuality is discovered, rather than chosen.[9] If the traditional Christian stance towards homosexuality is correct, this modern research leaves us with something of a puzzle: if homosexuality goes against the natural order, why would a good God create the natural order in such a way that some people are born with a homosexual disposition (and therefore not only cut off from the special good of heterosexuality but also disposed to act against the natural order)? At least at first glance, it seems that a good God would do no such thing. Indeed, it would seem something of a cruel joke.

Many Christians solve this problem by rejecting the contemporary research, insisting in the face of overwhelming evidence that homosexuality is a purely chosen condition. This alternative has the disadvantage of making Christians appear to be unreasonable and dogmatic in the worst kind of way—a consequence which, as a Christian, I find troubling. This alternative also fails to provide the needed account of why homosexual relations violate the natural order, and therefore begs the question at hand. Another alternative is to say that homosexuality has a place in God's plan, that it somehow fits into the natural order and improves it.

As noted above, the special goods associated with heterosexual unions are only *possible* goods: character-building challenges build character only when there is an effort to overcome the challenges, and only when that effort is directed in the right way. We saw that there is a possibility in heterosexual relationships for one partner (usually the man) to avoid the character-building challenges of heterosexual sex by perpetrating an injustice against the other partner. Perpetrating such injustices is rendered easier when myths or ideologies are developed which mask the injustice or provide a context for its legitimization.

As a matter of fact, women have been historically oppressed, both by their male sexual partners and by social structures and institutions. This oppression has been perpetuated and vindicated by myths about the nature of human sexuality, myths which make sexual intercourse out to be an act that is essentially hierarchical. My claim is that the existence of homosexual partnerships in a largely heterosexual population helps to undermine these myths, thereby exposing the real injustices which have emerged historically in heterosexual partnerships and hence rendering more likely the special goods associated with heterosexuality. This potential benefit of a homosexual population could explain why a good God would create some human beings with a homosexual orientation, despite the unique virtue-building potential of heterosexuality.

It is a sad fact of history that the relationship between the two genders has been one of hierarchy and oppression. Women have been historically denied the kinds of opportunities and powers in society that would enable them to be self-sufficient. And for much of human history this victimization of women has been justified and institutionalized with the help of myths and ideologies which make women out to be inferior to men, created to serve the needs of men.

If God created human beings male and female in order to make possible certain special goods, goods having to do with sensitive, mutual communication, then the human community has failed miserably to realize that purpose.

This is not to say that all men have historically abused their wives. Rather, it is to say that the social structure has made it possible for men to abuse their wives with relative impunity—especially when the abuse takes the form of a neglect or dismissal of the needs and interests of the wife. Women have therefore needed to rely on the good will of their husbands in order to lead fulfilling lives. While men have often exhibited such good will, the fact that women have needed to *rely* on that good will has itself been a sign of their subjugation.

In short, the very biological difference between men and women which, if we are to believe Cameron, can help facilitate the development of virtue, can be and has been used as an excuse to perpetuate vice. And this is precisely what has been done. The monogamous sexual union has been conceived as a hierarchical contract between an inferior and a superior, in which the inferior gives up her individuality in return for the leadership and protection that the superior can provide. This mythic way of conceiving the nature of the heterosexual union finds its ultimate expression in the seal of the contract, the sex act itself—so much so that sex in any other position but the male-superior "missionary" position has been widely viewed as a perversion. In sex, the woman's body is physically taken; her flesh becomes the man's flesh. He "claims" her.

Within the context of this mythology, the existence of two sexes is essential because the sex act is an act of dominance and submission, and therefore requires the subordination of an inferior to a superior. Without two sexes, one inferior to the other, the sex act in its mythic form is rendered impossible.

Homosexuality flies in the face of this mythical symbology. In homosexuality, there is no biological difference between the partners which can serve to justify a hierarchical sexual union. When confronting a gay relationship, one must understand the sexual union in one of two ways: either one man "takes on the woman's role," in which case it is possible for men to be submissive in sex, to be "taken;" or both are equal partners, in which case there is no need for a dominant-submissive sexual relationship. Confronting lesbian relationships, one must either accept that one woman adopts the "man's role," or that there is an equal exchange. No matter which interpretation one accepts, the myth that male dominance and female submission are an essential part of human sexuality explodes.

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1.Craig Koester, "The Bible and Sexual Boundaries," in The Lutheran Quarterly 7 (1993) pp. 375-90.

2. Ibid., pp. 381-3.

3. Paul Cameron, "A Case Against Homosexuality," in Contemporary Moral Problems 4th edition, James E. White, ed. (Minneapolis: West Publishing, 1994) pp. 341-9.

4. Ibid., p. 346.

5. Ibid., p. 347.

6. Ibid., p. 347-8.

7. Ibid., p. 348.

8. Assuming, of course, that sexual orientation is not subject to choice. See note 9.

9. See, for example, Gonsiorek and Weinrich, Homosexuality: Research Implications for Public Policy (London: Sage Publications, 1991) esp. pp. 4-5 and p. 51; see also Alan Bell, Martin Weinberg, and Sue K. Hammersmith, Sexual Preferences: Its Development in Men and Women (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1981) esp. p. 211.

It is worth noting that it is the *existence* of homosexual relationships, and not their specific features, which serve to explode misogynist myths. Thus, the fact of lesbian misogyny (or other forms of oppression within homosexual partnerships) does not undermine the impact to which I am pointing. Even when homosexual partnerships mirror the hierarchy so often observed in heterosexual partnerships, we nevertheless are forced to confront the fact that men are not essentially dominant in sex, and women are not essentially submissive.

If homosexual sex is legitimate, if it is *not* regarded as unnatural in a morally significant way, then the sexual myth that vindicates male oppression of women must be abandoned. The acceptance of homosexuality could therefore serve God's purposes.

This analysis is supported by the commonly observed correlation between sexism and homophobia: those who are most committed to the traditional subordination of women are also most opposed to homosexuality, often responding to it with considerable violence.[10] We can understand this correlation once we see that homosexuality undermines the myths which vindicate sexism. Sexist men are disgusted by homosexuality—especially male homosexuality—because in conceiving of sex as essentially hierarchical they are forced to envision homosexual couplings as couplings in which one man is degraded from the status of a man (superior) to the status of a woman (inferior). The only way to avoid this image is to reconceive their view of human sexuality—something which threatens their mythic vision of male superiority and which, if accepted, would force them to expend the kind of character-building effort and sensitive communication which Cameron takes to be the special good of heterosexuality.

Conversely, we can understand why feminist movements have been typically accepting and supportive of homosexuality. Homosexuality is perhaps the greatest enemy of misogyny, and for this reason has an important role to play in the natural order: it affirms and upholds the proper order between men and women by undermining the myths about human sexuality that perpetuate the oppression of women. Thus, viewed from a holistic perspective, it seems that homosexuality is not wrong after all.

10. See Christine Gudorf, Victimization: Examining Christian Complicity (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992) p. 99.

Solidarity Among the Oppressed

BY BONNIE BERRY

While walking in downtown Boston on a winter day, I saw a woman wearing a fur coat coming toward me. When she drew up next to me, I informed her that fur kills. She walked past, then turned and said "Fuck you!" Her response was not atypical of fur wearers who are intruded upon by those of us gravely concerned about the pain and suffering of animals.

What is interesting to me in light of a discussion on gender and oppression is that here was a situation where two oppressed humans (women) were oppressing each other over the issue of oppressing another category of beings, nonhuman animals.*

Back home, I sponsor a creative expressions program at the Washington Corrections Center for Women, known locally as "Purdy." Women in prison are among the most oppressed humans in the United States. First of all, they are women. To make matters worse, they are prisoners: they are poor, they are disproportionately nonwhite, and many have been sexually and physically abused. I believe, they have been socially and personally oppressed by social control agencies (the welfare department, the criminal justice system, health care, family services) as well as by employers, families, partners, and life in general.

While grief over the condition of women prisoners has its place, my purpose in writing this essay is to describe the strong similarities between oppression as imposed upon nonhuman animals and upon women. The social perceptions and mistreatment of nonhuman animals and certain categories of humans (notably women but also prisoners, racial and ethnic minorities, and children) are remarkably alike. Yet one can not say globally that the oppressed relate to, let alone support, each other. It has been my observation that the women who attend my class at Purdy are unusually sensitive to the treatment of nonhuman animals. Fur-wearing women, however, do not appear to be sympathetic to other oppressed beings, even though they, as women, are oppressed.

The sociological study of oppression rarely ponders the overlap between oppressed minority categories of human animals and nonhuman animals. I suppose that all living beings, flora and fauna, compete for survival and vary in their degrees of success. Nonhuman animals are stratified and compete for power within and across species. Among humans, only some categories of human animals are oppressed; conversely, only some (actually a small portion) are in a position to be oppressors.

A feminist-vegetarian critical theory begins, as we have seen, with the perception that women and animals are similarly positioned in a patriarchal world, as objects rather than subjects. Men are instructed as to how they should behave toward women and animals in the Tenth Commandment. Since the fall of Man is attributed to a woman and an animal, the Brotherhood of Man excludes both women and animals.

Carol Adams

Still, there is basic unanimity among feminist theologians on the values that are essential for non oppressive human relationships, the value of equality, mutuality, and freedom.

Margaret A. Farley

Comparing nonhuman animals to human animals, all nonhuman animals are oppressed or are oppressible by humans. That is, while some humans are exempt from oppression (particularly monied white males in U.S. society), all classifications of animals are susceptible to oppression. Nonhuman animals may be temporarily unoppressed when they are free to roam in the "wild" or when they have equality-minded humans to protect them. But this freedom is precarious and highly conditional. Free-roaming animals may be trapped, hunted, and their food sources diminished if any environmental destabilization occurs (for example, if wildlife refuges and national parks become the property of corporate entities) or if any human encroachment occurs. Some "animal companions" (pets) are relatively unoppressed, depending upon the sensitivity of their humans and so long as their humans are enabled and agree to this protective arrangement. In other words, animals' freedom from oppression depends

on the willingness of those in power (humans) to allow them relative freedom from oppression. One might argue that women's freedom from oppression similarly depends on the willingness of those in power (men) to allow them relative freedom from oppression. Nonhuman animals, female humans, and minority humans are targeted with some of the same prejudices. Among these myths and prejudices are:

1. Nonhuman animals do not feel pain the way that "we" do. It was once thought that African-American slaves did not feel pain and could withstand greater degrees of physical abuse than could (or should) whites.

2. Nonhuman animals are objects for human use, consumption, and entertainment. Women have long been, and continue to be among the unenlightened, viewed as objects.

3. Nonhuman animals have, in general, less value and less worth than humans. Poor people have less "worth" than the nonpoor. African-American slaves were once three-fifths of a person (Jackson 1987).

4. Nonhuman animals have no rights. Human minorities, particularly women and African-Americans in the United States, have been denied voting rights and are still denied many rights, including the right to equal pay.

There are particular connections between the situatedness of women and nonhuman animals:

1. Women are commonly attributed with animal traits, as pets to be pampered and protected or as valueless beings to be used and mistreated.

2. Both can be "trophies." People possess stuffed memories of animals "bagged" in a hunt, live thoroughbreds, and live beautiful women. The trophy concept is closely related to the ownership concept: to own such a trophy presumably reflects well on the owner.

3. Both can be mutilated and killed with greater impunity than would be the case for mutilating and killing a human majority animal.

4. Both can be sex objects, sexually objectified.

5. Both are seductresses who get what they deserve (Friedman 1993). Once upon a time, animals who were raped by humans were executed. The human rapist received a lesser punishment because the nonhuman animal perpetrated the rape by being seductive. Women as rape victims are often blamed for the rape.

6. Women are given animal names such as fox, chick, and bitch.

7. Nonhuman animals can be abused as a substitute for women and as a warning or threat to women. A woman's animal companion may be hurt and murdered by the woman's human partner as a way of controlling her (Adams 1992; Renzetti 1992; Browne 1987).

Given the similarities between the treatment of nonhuman animals, women, and minorities, one might expect them to stick together. It would seem that if oppressed minorities were cohesive, they could thereby gain more power against oppression than they could separately as individual minority categories. Among the controversies over the Million Man March of October 16, 1995, was that, while a show of unity among African-American men is a good idea, the march's exclusion of women, Jews, homosexuals, and others was a lousy idea in terms of equalizing social and economic power for all.

Equality-minded social activists have long known that cohesion among the powerless would reduce power disparity. Those in power know this too. A thin sliver of people, the power elite, are likely behind the conflict among the oppressed. So long as the oppressed are at each others' throats (men against women, African Americans against Jews, poor against poor, etc.), the oppressed will be distracted from the true source of their oppression.

Be that as it may, Carol Adams (1992) offers a very detailed description of the sympathetic relationship between many women and nonhuman animals. She suggests that women are more understanding of and more concerned about nonhuman animals because of their own vulnerabilities. She reminds us that women have been at the forefront of vegetarian movements and are more likely than men to be vegetarians. Finally, she encourages all of us to give up meat-eating as a logical conclusion to being fair-minded and truly feminist.

I wonder if women who are horribly oppressed (beaten, imprisoned, and so on) have greater empathy for nonhuman animals than do other women or other people. My work in prison suggests some sense of connection.

I have marveled at how extremely sensitive these women are to animal rights. The women ask me to bring them animal rights literature. They become very upset about animal abuse stories they hear in the news. Their poetry and short stories reveal that they think more about nonhuman animals than most people seem to. They write about protective animal mothers, caged animals, and free birds who can fly away. Obviously, the women are in a similar situation to some nonhuman animals. They may identify with caged animals because they are caged, they may be experimented on, they have few rights and can make few demands. When people tour the prison, the inmates feel that they are on display, like animals in a zoo.

It may be the case that some women, because they are oppressed or for some other unknown reason, feel a greater affinity toward nonhuman animals than do men. Yet some of the women in prison are unimaginably cruel, to human and nonhuman animals. This is also true for some women who are not in prison. We can all think of examples of women who have been poorly treated (abused, assaulted), more oppressed than women in general, women whom one might think would be especially concerned about other oppressed beings, but who are totally insensitive to the plight of human and nonhuman animals. One might argue in these cases that the brutalization effect has taken hold.+

Let me conclude with an image and a broad statement about the sympathetic relationship between women and nonhuman animals. Picture a woman wrapped in a fur coat. One might interpret this picture as that of someone who does not think about the agony experienced by the dead animals whose skins are surrounding her. If she thinks about it, she may convince herself that the fur-bearing creatures felt no pain. Perhaps she rationalizes that the animals' sacrifice was worth it because she, as a human, is "worthy" of their suffering and their lives. Or maybe the woman does not want to upset the man who bought her the furs, assuming that a man bought them. (This is not an unlikely assumption given that men generally have more money to buy high-ticket items than do women.) In this latter case, she may feel obligated to wear the furs, "bought and paid for," and therefore repressed. How can she wear the furs, though, if she recognizes herself to be a member of the oppressed and that the animals used for her adornment are also victims of oppression? One might reasonably answer: "In the same way that a man (or anyone) can eat a steak."

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* "Nonhuman animals" is the nonspecies-ist language that describes those usually called "animals." The terminology reminds us that humans are animals and that nonhuman animals are merely different, not "lower" animals (Beirne 1995).

+ Brutalization refers to a deadening of feelings, particularly a reduction in sympathy and fear. It is usually discussed as the nondeterrence effects of severe punishment upon criminals and would-be criminals who have already experienced severe punishment.

Building One's Self Up

BY LESLEE A. FISHER

Female bodybuilding provides a unique cultural context from which to examine female identity development. Bodybuilding is a context fraught with contradictions, compromises, and tensions between mainstream and marginalized "femininities"; bodybuilding simultaneously empowers and enslaves women. Bodybuilding's gender norms demand that female bodybuilders display the "right" amount of muscle combined with femininity. This is to dispel the stereotype that "all women who bodybuild want to be men." It is also important for muscular women to be "aesthetically pleasing." This entails competing on stage in a skimpy swim suit hitting suggestive poses with full make-up, fingernails, skin dye, and hair done "just right." As a result, such notions regarding gender-associated behavior are often incorporated into athletes' conceptions of their own personal and social identities (Connell 1987, Klein 1990). Based on a semi-structured interview format, this paper reveals the self-perceptions of ten United States female professional bodybuilders[1] who see themselves as very different from the average woman and are extremely proud of the ways in which they are unique. It will also reveal how the same women have difficulty separating female and bodybuilding self-components.

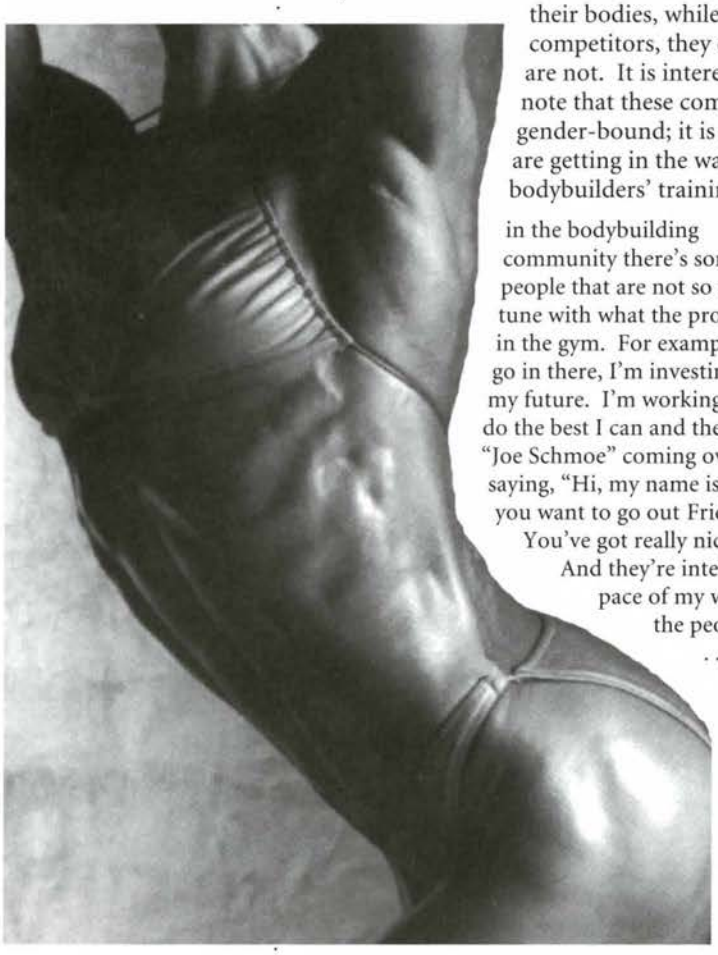
For example, when asked to describe how bodybuilders can be distinguished from non-bodybuilders based on appearance and personality, one women responded:

> From the way they look . . .personality-wise, we are all obsessed with what we do. A lot of us are real experts at nutrition and we try to lower body fat and maximize our muscle potential. So, even without going to the university, a lot of the bodybuilders know a lot about the body . . . most of us are pretty in tune with at least how to make our own bodies lean and big.

Expanding on the topic of appearance and personality, she goes on to comment on behaviors that are commonly associated with professional bodybuilders:

> the degree of intensity, the amount of time that we put into looking the way we do, which means that our lifestyle is more bodybuilding-oriented than a person that comes in [the gym] three times a week to train, like a hobby. That person does not probably weigh and measure everything that they put in their mouth.

The women in this study view non-competitors and gym rats as "getting in the way" of training. In fact, they feel that comparing a bodybuilder's physique to a non-bodybuilder's physique is like comparing apples to oranges. These female bodybuilders view themselves as "in touch" with their bodies, while non-competitors, they contend, are not. It is interesting to note that these comments are gender-bound; it is men who are getting in the way of female bodybuilders' training:



> in the bodybuilding community there's some people that are not so much in tune with what the pros need to do in the gym. For example, when I go in there, I'm investing time in my future. I'm working and I try to do the best I can and then you've got "Joe Schmoe" coming over and saying, "Hi, my name is Joe. Do you want to go out Friday night? You've got really nice hair." And they're interrupting the pace of my work. . . .Or the people that are . . .the "wanna be's" who don't know anything about what they're doing, but take up space and they're in your way when you're trying to prepare for a show. And you have to be polite to everybody and you feel like shit and you just want to say "get the hell off that machine—you're not even doing it right anyway." But you can't because everyone is a paying member . . .you've got some little guy there who's paying $425 plus whatever it costs for his running shoes and thousands of amino acids and he's raring to go, to get on the machine and it's something you may need . . . and you've got somebody there just wasting time, taking up space. But they have every right to be there just as much as me.

In the interview process, participants in this study were asked to describe a "typical" woman. A majority of them had difficulty doing this. Interestingly, the only woman who did not see herself as different from the average woman was the only one who had children. She differentiated herself from non-bodybuilders only in terms of her lifestyle. The others described feeling like they had never "fit into" the "traditional" female gender role and were hard-pressed to perceive themselves as women. One woman flatly states, " . . . your average woman . . . I don't put myself in that category . . . I wouldn't see myself in an average category . . ." Another goes on to say that she does not see herself as a "woman," as separate from being a "person":

> the problem that I have with that concept is to describe myself as a woman or as a person. With my friends, I don't see a difference. I can't describe myself as a woman; I don't know how to do that. Only as a person, I don't believe anything, particularly, being a woman.

When asked if the way she views herself is different from the way society views women, her response was, "Probably, because of that one general idea that I don't view myself as a woman, but as a person. I don't view myself as a man, but I don't view myself as a woman, either."

The fact that others in this study struggle with self-perception is evident in similar responses:

> It's a problem. I would say I've gotten, over the years, way more secure with my femininity than I used to be, even though I've become bigger and more muscular in the years. I don't know, it's almost like it's become a separate thing to me. It's just the way I am and what I do, and maybe it used to be more of a problem than it was. I'm a weightlifter, I'm a bodybuilder, and I'm supposed to be a woman.

> I don't know. I don't key into what sex I am. I mean, I know I'm a woman and I want to keep it that way, but it's not something I really think about . . . . Cause I'm, I'm really kind of overbearing , maybe a little bullheaded, and I am real motivated, real mercenary . . . not traditional. Not typical. I don't really think I ever have been. . . . I like cooking and doing things. I don't like to have to do it. I don't like it to be expected of me. I don't want to be like my mom, from the old school. Yet I want to be a woman. I want to be treated like that, but I don't want to be treated like a pansy either.

While the females in this study express a desire to be "women" and "feminine," they perceive themselves as challenging stereotypic notions of what it means to be a woman. Their self-described female identity is in opposition to traditional and stereotypic notions constructed in relation to the dominant and subordinate notions of femininity; it is also contrary to their interpretation of feminism.

In fact, half of the women were quick to emphasize that they are not feminists, even though the question was never asked of them:

> The women [bodybuilders] that I know seem to be independent types, not really feminist, but a little bit more in tune with that part of themselves than traditional women would be.

> I think women have come a long way, but they may need to go a lot further, but in the proper way . . . not in like a feminist movement kind of way . . . like they have . . . some sort of an agenda . . . and that's to be a man.

> I am not a feminist at all. I have never felt like I haven't gotten something because I'm female. I've never felt like I've needed to let a man—well, until recently, I mean, now I can see it hurts a man's feelings to have you be better than them sometimes.

It is ironic that female bodybuilders—women who have resisted traditional female norms—should hold such stereotypic views of womanhood and feminism. Negative stereotypes of women and of feminism abound in the bodybuilders' interviews, with descriptions of women as non-assertive and of feminists as wanting to be men. While these women supported equal pay for equal work in bodybuilding, equal access to results of drug testing, and equal treatment as athletes, they rejected labeling themselves "feminists."

They also expressed a mixture of disdain for and envy of hegemonic femininity, saying that society considers women second-class citizens, and that women are viewed as the "weaker" sex. One woman expressed a fear of becoming "drowned" in society's view of femininity," but at the same time, she wanted to "fit in." In addition, while they do not consider themselves "feminists," this group of women actively support and practice feminist values. There is no one, all-inclusive definition of feminism, but feminist perspectives have two important themes in common: 1) feminism places a high value on women; and 2) feminism recognizes the need for social change if women are to lead satisfying lives (Unger & Crawford 1992). Likewise, the women in this study place a high value on women as important and worthwhile human beings who want to lead productive and satisfying lives. Their definition of female identity involves both non-stereotypic female physical appearance (such as building muscle, pushing one's body to the limit, and choosing how one looks) and non-stereotypic female behavior (such as working outside the home).

However, these women are well aware that physically they challenge existing notions about "appropriate" female appearance. Their bodies are not in compliance with the social definition of "femininity." As one woman puts it:

> It's confusing to me . . . I've been in the situation where people look at me and go, "Oh, my God-you're a girl!" . . . and I think I'm a very feminine woman. I don't see myself as being masculine at all. I was in a bar one night with this group that I dance with and some guy came up to me and said, "I don't mean to get in your face or anything, but there isn't a girl alive who looks like you—you can't be a woman." . . . I was really hurt by it at first and I really had to think about his lack of understanding about the body.

Despite incidents like these, the female bodybuilders in this study have transcended society's gender stereotyping. As the following responses indicate, they have not let fear deprive them of setting and attaining their goals:

> not being afraid to go for it because you're a woman and considered to be a weaker sex or anything like that . . . especially in something untraditional like bodybuilding that's considered a men's sport, building muscle and all that.

> I used to be so wrapped up in . . . making sure the make-up was on just so-so and that the hairstyle was different every three months and stuff like that.

> [Bodybuilding] taught me a lot about myself and it helped me like myself better. It also makes me proud, most of the time, to remember that I have accomplished something . . . like there was something I was working toward and I was able to do it and have success from it and recognition.

> the opportunities I have had being a professional bodybuilder—traveling, meeting people, the right to teach . . . the opportunities.

Overall, in terms of self-perception, these female bodybuilders have difficulty describing themselves as women. They feel like "outsiders" in Western female society, yet their self-definitions include both traditional and non-traditional components of femininity.

Turning to the topic of sexuality, all ten participants in this study report that they are heterosexual. Many tried to distance themselves from the stereotype of professional female bodybuilders as homosexuals. They rejected society's notion that bodybuilding is a masculine thing to do and that female bodybuilders want to look like and be men, and therefore, want female lovers:

> A lot of people can't understand why a woman wants to have muscle. A lot of people associate muscle with being masculine. And I always say, "Look, muscle is neither masculine or feminine. It's a part of the body that holds your skeletal structure upright and just because I'm making my muscles more apparent than the woman that chooses not to doesn't make me more masculine than her. It just makes me more of a woman, because I'm enhancing what I have. I'm not somehow taking something male—this is me, what I'm born with, and I'm just making it bigger."

For this woman, the stereotype of female bodybuilders wanting to be like men seems absurd. In her mind, bodybuilding does not change a person's sexual identity contrary to society's perception that female competitors are lesbian:

> that our sexual preference is lesbian . . . that we're trying to make ourselves look more masculine. I think that's what they're thinking; that we want to be more "manly," therefore, we want to have a woman as a mate. I've heard that a lot and it's

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[1]Of the 10 professional female bodybuilders participating in this study, only the first six agreed to go through the self-identity portion of the interview due to time constraints and not being paid for the study. Therefore, results for this section are based on responses from Co-Participants #1-6 only.

In the union of the sexes, both pursue one common object, but not in the same manner. From their diversity, in this particular, arises the first determinate difference between the moral relations of each. The one should be active and strong, the other passive and weak: it is necessary the one should have both the power and the will, and that the other should make little resistance....This principle being established, it follows, that woman is expressly formed to please the man. If the obligation be reciprocal also, and the man ought to please in his turn, it is not so immediately necessary: his great merit lies in his power, and he pleases merely because he is strong. This, I must confess, is not one of the refined maxims of love; it is, however, one of the laws of nature, prior to love itself.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

like, "Oh, come on." Just because your muscles get bigger, it doesn't change your sexual orientation. You were like that (gay) before, if you are.

Of the ten participants in this study, six mention that being homosexual is the most frequent stereotype attributed to them, and the one that causes the most emotional pain. A deep sense of frustration is evident in the response of one woman who states:

> I think the public might assume that any woman that wants to do [bodybuilding] has got to be a lesbian. And I don't know what they think of men. They couldn't possibly think a man that [bodybuilds] is gay. I don't know; maybe they do . . . traditionally . . . you think of that as a very masculine thing . . . but I think a lot of people see the women as gay . . . you're trying to be a man . . . I don't know where it all comes from, but this is what I hear. . . . Some of it shocks me, but I don't want to be associated with that. And, I don't feel like that, or that I would personally give anybody reason to think that at all.

For this woman, being lesbian is not something she would be proud of; she makes it clear that not only does she not "want to be associated with that," but that she doesn't feel she personally gives anybody "reason" to think that she is a lesbian. Comments such as these permeate her interview, suggesting homophobia, a fear or lack of tolerance of homosexuality (Griffin and Genasci 1990). Unfortunately, her comments produce a potential negative effect on her profession as a bodybuilder. As Lenskyj (1986) suggests, the fear of being labeled a lesbian serves to reify stereotypes about female athletic participation and causes certain female athletes to drop out of sport.

In addition to issues surrounding self-perception and sexuality, this study addresses obsessive control of the body. Comments made by all participants indicate that acquiring and maintaining a "good body" are extremely important to their sense of self-worth. Their responses strongly suggest that professional bodybuilders share an acute consciousness of how their bodies look, and possess an obsessive desire to control their weight.

Steiner-Adair (1990) suggests that the act of dieting and being conscious of one's weight is a natural part of female gender identity in this country. In other words, in order to be considered a "normal" female, one must be "at war" with her body, constantly dieting to "ward off" unwanted fat. References to control and obsession are evident throughout this study. For these women, as reflected in the following individual responses, bodybuilding serves as a catalyst for change and a context within which they can maintain control over their bodies, and consequently, their lives:

> It's a control thing, of wanting to control your looks. And the great majority of women I know that are involved with it [bodybuilding] are obsessed with their weight . . . just compulsive about it. They've kind of turned from being anorexic into seeing that there's another way to be, besides skin and bones. There's muscle and bones . . . I place a great deal of value on my body.

> I'm a perfectionist as a bodybuilder . . . I am opinionated . . . I don't like people having control over me. And I think with bodybuilding, it's neat because I can control my own environment—even down to the way my body looks. I have control.

The downside to the "perfectionism" seen in these female bodybuilders is that their bodies serve as constant reminders of their "flaws." Much like anorexics, they do not see themselves objectively, and regardless of their physical condition, it is never good enough. Dissatisfaction and perfectionism permeate the following responses:

> Obsessive has to fit in there. Competitive. Very critical about myself. Perfectionist has to be in there. . . . It's never good enough, what I'm doing. "You just have to look better." It's never good enough, how I look . . . to be standing there, the best I've ever looked in my life. I think a lot of bodybuilders are that way, too. For some reason, they don't see how they really look.

> I'm proud of the way I look, the way I deal with it when I get fat and upset about it . . . so I know that my body has a lot to do with my state of mind . . . because this is my job and my livelihood, I obsess with the physical because that opens the door to everything else that I do.

> I'm not satisfied with my body. I look in the mirror everyday and I hate it. And I think that's what drives you to excel and to try to push your body a little further; it's because you're not happy with it. Somebody asked me the other day at a seminar, "At what point are you happy?" and I said, "I could never see myself being happy with the way I look." I am always trying to change something or improve it. It's frustrating, but it keeps you going.

While female bodybuilders in this study find motivation and achievement through manipulation of their bodies, this achievement is sought as a result of an impoverished sense of self, a feeling of personal inadequacy. These women describe a kind of "spirituality of imperfection" (Kurtz and Ketcham 1992) which involves attempting to fill an internal void by manipulating the external through strict dieting, most evident during the pre-competition phase of their training. To lose weight, they measure everything that they eat, and take diuretics and laxatives. The amount and choice of food becomes extremely restricted about twelve weeks prior to a contest, often limited to oatmeal, plain tuna packed in water, fish, and vegetables. About three days prior, some report that vegetables and even water are cut out in an effort to decrease bloating. While keeping calories to a minimum, participants continue to engage in two or three aerobic workouts per day. This dietary technique is called "cutting up," necessary, they say, to remove the top layer of fat and reveal the muscle underneath.

Practices such as these are extremely difficult, ". . . but in a way, it's like a monk fasting." It sets them apart from other women and earns them the right to be called "bodybuilder." Unfortunately, the motivation stems from the false belief that bodybuilding is "the only thing that I was really good

at—the only thing and I would feel lost without it." These women describe an inward sense of self-worth when recognized and rewarded outwardly for having "mastered" their bodies. "I have gotten so much power in my life from the way I look, that really is my source of power and . . . I would say it's a huge factor in my ability."

The women in this study relentlessly strive for the "perfect" body, the "perfect female form." In bodybuilding, as in the culture at large, a "perfect" body becomes a currency system for women, like the gold standard; " . . . in assigning a value to women in a vertical hierarchy according to a culturally imposed physical standard, it is an expression of power relations in which women must unnaturally compete for resources" (Wolf 1991,12). Ironically, the perfect female form in the world of bodybuilding is not accepted in broader culture.

The study concludes with a scrutiny of the "SuperWoman ideal" which pervades the responses of these female bodybuilders. The "SuperWoman" pattern of thinking first attributes the more traditional values of caring and sensitivity to women while partially identifying the new cultural values of autonomy and success with women, then identifies the independent and autonomously successful "SuperWoman" as society's ideal image, and finally identifies the societal image of "SuperWoman" as her own ideal image (171). The following response epitomized the definition of the "SuperWoman" image:

> Fulfilling yourself, but not being selfish to the point where you don't give to your family, husband, children. Being strong, being strong enough to handle family, handle things that come up in life. All the things, yet be able to...maintain a job and have children and raise children properly, keep house, share, still have a life with your spouse and be fulfilled inside at the same time, which means have outside interests.

A high level of achievement and total independence are seen as virtues in the world of bodybuilding. Relationships are described more as accomplishments than interdependence. Visions of adulthood center on being famous and important. These values permeate through two individual responses:

1. I have a very clear idea in my mind of what a "good" bodybuilder is . . . to me, a "good" bodybuilder has to be beautiful. Naturally beautiful . . . it's a sport of how good you look, and everything should look good. Everything. Your bones, your muscles, your skin, your face, naturally good. Not like you had ten thousand nose jobs, and dyed your hair blonde and looked like some sort of a weird freak . . . it's a combination of different things . . . everything. The stage presence, the theatrics, the movement ability, they have to be just all-around, just perfect.

2. Most of the women who have tried [professional bodybuilding] are just very strong-willed and independent and they just know what they want and they're not the kind that waits for the man to tell them what to do. . . .I know that I have been a bodybuilder for five years and I have not had a serious relationship since I've been here. . . . [my old boyfriend] he was taller . . . that's not what led to our break-up. It was more or less the fact that I was so involved in what I am doing that he couldn't hang. He wanted to be more important in my life than my sport and at the time, it was not what I wanted to do.

   [The one] who has really the most aesthetically pleasing body, the one that holds herself with pride and dignity and grace on that stage; the one that is the overall package of the ultimate female, not just her physique—the way she speaks, the way she handles herself, if she exudes that kind of warmth and compassion for other people. To me, a Ms. Olympia is well-rounded. It's someone that, of course, she has flaws, but there's that inner, you know? It's everything. [The current Ms. Olympia] does a wonderful job. She does a wonderful representation of that.

As this woman suggests, Ms. Olympia is a "representation" of the bodybuilding ideal, much like the "feminine" ideal found in the Miss America. Success in either realm depends on having or acquiring the "perfect body." In the world of bodybuilding, women not only strive to "win the crown," but also to gain recognition for independent achievement. However, in an effort to "have it all," they pay a tremendous price in terms of physical and emotional sacrifice.

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We examine a program that successfully cultivates the spirit of nonviolence among prison inmates and others, with an eye towards why it succeeds. We uncover the distinctive features of AVProject workshops, and explore the ethical and metaphysical presuppositions which shape the workshops and contribute to their success.

Robert Stivers and Lora M. Gross, co-editors
"Banjos or Bach!" *Journal for Case Teaching,* No. 6, Fall 1994.

This is a case study of a large congregation struggling with the pressing issue of whether to purchase a new grand piano while the pastors look for ways to transform the situation and reduce the deeper tensions that are the real issue.

Suzanne C. Toczyski
"Chimene, or the Scandal of the Feminine Word" *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature,* Vol. XXII, no. 43, 1995, pp. 505-523.

At the time of the original production, no single aspect of Pierre Corneille's Le Cid *was more controversial than the behavior and attitude of the female protagonist Chimene, who must appeal for the death of the man she loves because he has killed her father. This essay examines Chimene's most important speech act — her call for justice — using linguistic paradigms codified by John Searle. I attempt to account for the centrality and force of feminine language in a play best known for the hero's courageous exploits. I argue that the revised denouement (altered by Corneille after 1648) foregrounds the efficacy of feminine discourse and introduces a certain instability into the male-dominated social order.*

Tamara Williams
Introduction, Glossary and Project Coordinator of *The Doubtful Strait / El estrecho dudoso* by Ernesto Cardenal. Trans. by John Lyons. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

The Doubtful Strait / El estrecho dudoso *is a book-length narrative poem that traces the history of the Central American region from the arrival of the early Spanish explorers to recent historical events. Divided into twenty-five cantos, the text opens with Columbus's fourth voyage and discovery of Terra Firma in 1502 and ends with the destruction of Leon, Nicaragua, by the volcano Momotombo in 1609. The contemporary historical framework is introduced through the use of typology and prefiguration, which bring the tyrrannical regime of the Somoza family and its abusive practices into alignment with the notorious colonial governors of Nicaragua: Pedrarias Davila and Rodrigo de Contreras. The poem's most remarkable feature is that it is constructed almost entirely from unaltered fragments of documents and histories dating from the colonial era. Thus constructed,* The Doubtful Strait / El estrecho dudoso *not only challenges poetic convention, but raises questions about the nature and function of historical authority in general, and about the standard representations of the Spanish conquest of America in particular.*

"Narrative Strategies and Counter-History in *El estrecho dudoso.*" *Inti: Revista de literatura hispanica,* 39 (Spring 1994): 47-57.

Focusing on the ironic, parodic, and satiric recontextualizatin of historical sources in El estrecho dudoso, *this essay explores the uses and implications of double-voiced discourse in Ernesto Cardenal's poetic production.*

Review of *Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism*, by Debora Castillo. *South Central Review.* Vol. 11, No. 4 Winter 1994: 77-79.

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