A PHILOSOPHICAL ACCOUNT OF

FEMINIST SOLIDARITY BETWEEN WOMEN

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There can be no mass-based feminist movement to end sexist oppression without a united front—women must take the initiative and demonstrate the power of solidarity. Unless we can show that barriers separating women can be eliminated, that solidarity can exist, we cannot hope to change and transform society as a whole.

-bell hooks

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION[1]

When I came to Mount Holyoke College, I expected to find dedicated, intelligent students who were interested in their studies, who came from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and who were actively engaged in current socio-political debates and movements. Above all, I was looking forward to the feminists. And with Smith College in the near vicinity, I thought there must be feminist events galore.

Some of my expectations were fulfilled. Alas, some of them were not. To my chagrin, the imagined feminist paradise did not exist! Instead, I found posters with parts of women's bodies, students who think it is cool to call each other "bitches" and "whores," and the relationship between two of the "Seven Sisters" as exactly the opposite I had—in my naïveté—thought it to be: that of competition and antagonism. Some of my fellow students have assured me that some or all of these things are merely play, a game between loving people and entities. But how, then, am I to understand the calling of names men have used against women in hateful ways, the rivalry and competition among students, and the self-objectifying behavior of students on posters and at various campus events?

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[1] Quote on page 4 from bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women," *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader,* Diana Tietjens Meyers, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 486.

The term "horizontal hostility" very well describes the process of division that happens within an oppressed group.[2] Working within the framework of racist, capitalist, heterosexist, and patriarchal structures, it is in fact quite easy to understand the hindrances to (political) bonding among women. In her article "Institutionalized Oppression vs. the Female," Florynce Kennedy writes,

> Women are more ready than most for the liberation struggle. We have only to direct our hostility from the vertical *down* (the kids, the merchants, the family, co-workers, and other women), and the horizontal—to the vertical *up*. According to my *modus operandi*, this means systems and institutions less than people.[3]

In other words, if we understand oppression in the structural sense of one group dominating another, then we can talk about *vertical* versus *horizontal* modes of power. *Horizontal hostility*, then, describes oppressive behavior within an already oppressed group. For example, the name-calling described above falls into the category of horizontal hostility.

In light of the expression of horizontal hostility not only on this campus but also among women in broader areas of society, I think it is a worthwhile project to formulate a concept of feminist solidarity among women. If the feminist movement at this point in time wants to regain momentum, and if feminists want to create change in the world, then we need to come up with a notion of solidarity that would speak against this hostility. However, given my historical location as a

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[2] Denise Thompson, "A Discussion of the Problem of Horizontal Hostility," *Denise Thompson, Feminist Theorist, November 2003,* <http://www.spin.net.au/~deniset/alesfem/mhhostility.pdf> (19 March 2007). According to Thompson, Florynce Kennedy coined the phrase "horizontal hostility" in her 1970 article "Institutionalized Oppression vs. the Female." Citation see below.

[3] Florynce Kennedy, "Institutionalized Oppression vs. the Female," *Sisterhood is Powerful: an Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, Robin Morgan, ed., (New York: Random House, 1970), 445.

young white female feminist philosopher theorizing at a women's college in the U.S., it is also necessary to have an account of solidarity that responds to Second Wave feminist approaches to "Sisterhood," a notion of feminist solidarity among women that didn't achieve broad consensus among feminists during that time.

Reactions to the Second Wave

The Second Wave of feminism in the U.S. and some parts of Europe took place from the 1960s to the 1980s. Some parts of this movement advocated a notion of "sisterhood." This was the idea that all women should unite in order to fight sexist oppression. Unfortunately, mostly white, middle-class women endorsed and accepted this universalizing notion of what feminism and what feminist solidarity between women should be. Many other feminist groups that did not belong to the former category found it hard simply to unite with other feminists because they felt their feminist ideas, values, interests, and goals were not represented within the "sisterhood."

In *Feminism Without Borders,* Chandra Talpade Mohanty challenges white Western feminist work that advocates the notion of a global women's movement and assumes universal sisterhood.[4] Mohanty positions herself against the Second Wave idea of "Sisterhood" on the basis that it overlooks differences among women, and she criticizes the idea that women can unite based on women's shared subjection to male domination in a very generalized way. By

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[4] Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: De-Colonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 109.

questioning the term "woman," she argues that the experience of being a woman can create an illusion of unity.[5] According to Mohanty, "sisterhood" neglects to account for historical and geographical specificity and differences among women. She questions the "'universality' of gendered oppression."[6]

Mohanty uses Robin Morgan's anthology of indigenous women's historical struggles to illustrate the positions at which her critiques are aimed. In Mohanty's view, Morgan assumes women to be a "cross-culturally singular, homogenous group with the same interests, perspectives, and goals and similar experiences."[7] The problem with assuming a "universal sisterhood on the basis of shared will," argues Mohanty, is that it erases "the history and effects of contemporary imperialism."[8] According to Mohanty, the argument that women have shared perspectives, goals, and the experience of oppression leads to the "assumption of women as a unified group on the basis of secondary sociological universals," such as history and culture (not biology).[9] By assuming that men and women are fixed groups and advocating women's transcendence of patriarchal barriers of race and class, Morgan situates women outside historical reality.[10] Thus Mohanty declares that the concept of universal sisterhood erases "material and ideological power differences within and among groups of women."[11] She argues that in that case the struggle becomes personal and ahistorical and she

[5] Mohanty, 118.
[6] Mohanty, 107.
[7] Mohanty, 110.
[8] Mohanty, 110/111.
[9] Mohanty, 112.
[10] Mohanty, 114.
[11] Mohanty, 116.

disagrees with Morgan that one's own experience is always fully understood.[12] In other words, women might not always have an in-depth understanding or analysis of their life situations, especially in regards to patriarchal and capitalist structures.

Instead of assuming automatic unity between women, Mohanty describes unity as something that must be struggled for. Rather than "sisterhood," coalition is a concept that more adequately describes what Mohanty understands as solidarity, which is why I will call Mohanty's account of solidarity *coalitional solidarity*. What Mohanty argues for is solidarity based on common interests that she derives from similar contexts within capitalist structures. She claims that Third World women and immigrant and indigenous women of color in the U.S. and Western Europe have similar interests because their identities are constructed in sufficiently similar ways within global capitalism.[13] This provides a basis for organizing while still recognizing historical and cultural specificities of groups of women.

I derive the first of three desiderata for a concept of feminist solidarity between women from Mohanty's account. The first desideratum is: *feminist solidarity between women includes the belief that collective action is necessary to dismantle the oppressive ideological and institutional structures (of sexism)*. One of the main points Mohanty makes is that organizing together on the basis of similarly constructed contexts is a primary way to challenge dominant and

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[12] Mohanty, 114.
[13] Mohanty, 143/144.

exploitative structures. However, it must be done in a way that recognizes differences among women.

Many women who came together in the Second Wave did not realize their personal biases relating to race, class, and sexuality, which in turn caused tension and trouble within and among various groups of feminist women. As bell hooks succinctly argues in "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women," women have internalized sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic ideologies and stereotypes which in turn disable communication and understanding across difference lines.[14] But even among women of similar socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, woman-hating behavior still prevails because of internalized sexism.

Throughout the article, hooks argues that the notion of sisterhood as defined and encouraged among feminists of the Second Wave is in fact not useful for building solidarity among all feminists and women. She lists several reasons why "sisterhood" did not enable bonding between feminists and why they therefore did not produce the radical social change they had hoped for. Sisterhood was a way for white middle-class women to base solidarity on shared (sexist) oppression and the notion that all women are victims of this oppression. This mystified the differences of women's experience within patriarchal structures, especially when those differences were due to factors of race, class, and

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[14] bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women," *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*, Diana Tietjens Meyers, ed., (New York: Routledge, 1997), 484-500. As this article was first published in 1984, it is a direct response to the notion of "sisterhood" during the Second Wave.

sexuality.[15] hooks does not advocate this kind of shallow bonding based on a "victim identity."[16] The victim identity does not allow for responsibility, self-confrontation, or self-awareness, but rather involves a false notion of unconditional love for other women and generally avoids conflict situations.

hooks argues that we need to address the differences between us. In other words, feminists should address the internal conflict amongst themselves before there can be a broad feminist movement. In addition to this, she claims

> Every woman can stand in political opposition to sexist, racist, heterosexist, and classist oppression. While she may choose to focus her work on a given political issue or a particular cause, if she is firmly opposed to all forms of group oppression, this broad perspective will be manifest in all her work. … Women must learn to accept responsibility for fighting oppressions that may not directly affect us as individuals. Feminist movement, like other radical movements in our society, suffers when individual concerns and priorities are the only reason for participation. When we show our concern for the collective, we strengthen our solidarity.[17]

In other words, feminist women should acknowledge intersecting oppressions and help fight against them; the collective interest of women to do so overrides women's interests as individuals.[18]

I will call hooks' notion of solidarity *sisterhood solidarity* because she does not fully reject the word, but advocates for bonding among women "on the basis of shared strengths and resources."[19] A second desideratum that I derive

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[15] hooks, 485.
[16] hooks, 486.
[17] hooks, 497/498.
[18] The reader will see later on in Parts Two and Four how this concept is related to Rousseau's ideas about the collective interest of a society.
[19] hooks, 487.

from hooks' account is: *feminist solidarity between women necessarily includes the obligation to struggle with other women against racist, class-based, and homophobic structures that dominate them, even if one oneself is not the direct target of these structures*. This second desideratum for feminist solidarity between women is inclusive because it addresses women's internalized biases and the needs of women from diverse backgrounds. In order to fulfill this desideratum, feminist women must grapple with internalized stereotypes and recognize an obligation to struggle against oppressive structures which they might not themselves face.

Like hooks and Mohanty, Sandra Bartky writes in reaction to the Second Wave notion of "sisterhood" in a chapter that bears the same name as her book, *Sympathy and Solidarity*.[20] More specifically, she is concerned with the concessions of the Second Wave feminist movement to its racist, classist, and heterosexist nature.[21] However, unlike hooks and Mohanty, Bartky describes the emotional component she thinks theorists have neglected in their efforts to overcome certain biases.[22] Various approaches so far have been mostly belief-based efforts such as hooks' and Mohanty's accounts—which Bartky argues are necessary, but not enough to transform feminist selves fully.[23]

Bartky lists different forms of sympathy, one of which in particular is helpful to the project of solidarity. "Genuine fellow-feeling" is a type of feeling-

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[20] Sandra Bartky, "Sympathy and Solidarity," *"Sympathy and Solidarity" and Other Essays,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). 69-89.
[21] Bartky, 69.
[22] Bartky, 72.
[23] Bartky, 71.

with that maintains the boundaries between the one person and the other person, and does not merge or project one's feelings onto the other's situation. In Bartky's view, emotive sympathy can become a motivation to organize and sustain feminist ties, even though one might not be affected by a certain oppression one is fighting against. For example, as a white woman with anti-racist feminist politics, I want to show solidarity with a group of Latina women. If we are all part of a feminist group, it might be necessary at a certain point in time to organize with this group of women against racism, which is a kind of oppression of which I am not the direct target. In fact, I am part of the oppressive group; yet, as part of feminist solidarity (like the kind hooks describes, sisterhood solidarity), I recognize the need to fight with these women both as a cognitive realization of my obligations as a feminist and also due to emotional feelings of sympathy—for example, I can feel-with their anger about the racist and sexist stereotype of Latina women as "hot-blooded" or "erotic."

Similarly to hooks, Bartky has a notion of educating oneself about the others' situation in order to understand her position, but Bartky argues specifically for an emotive aspect of sympathy that can play a role in efforts to achieve solidarity between women. Thus transforming a feminist self includes both a cognitive and an emotional aspect. This notion involves a certain reciprocal connection or feeling of obligation towards other women that can motivate actions of solidarity. I derive the third and last desideratum from Bartky's account: *feminist solidarity between women includes the importance of both*

intellectual and emotional transformation of political selves that would make solidarity a realizable possibility. It is imperative to educate ourselves about women's various racial, sexual, and socio-economical backgrounds in order to try to feel-with women coming from very different historical and geographical locations (this is true especially for white, Western, middle and upper class women) if we as women want to achieve feminist goals.

The Importance of *Feminist* Solidarity between Women and the Category of "Woman"

Why *feminist* solidarity, and not simply *solidarity*? Critics will say that identity categories such as race, class, and sexuality are as fundamental as sex/gender in terms of belonging to an oppressed group. One can't address gender without addressing class, and one can't talk about class without talking about race, and so on. The oppressions are inextricably linked to one another. Why privilege one over the other? Feminism as a theory and a practice aims to end sexist oppression. I think feminist thought and activism has, in comparison to and more so than other social justice movements, dealt deeply with these problems of difference, which are still a major source of contention. Although it has made mistakes (see the above discussion on assumed unity), feminism since the Second Wave has become more and more attuned to differences among women.

Aside from the concept of "sisterhood," my project also touches on another major debate within feminism, namely that of the category of "woman."

What is "woman?" Is "woman" biologically defined? Who gets to define the concept of "woman," and who is included and excluded from being "woman"? All these are questions that feminist theorists have tried to answer—without attaining an answer that would be acceptable to all. It is difficult to find an answer to the question of "woman" because whatever conditions one chooses—biological, cultural, self-identified, societal recognition—there will always be exclusions (and exceptions). It is important to remember that at certain points in the feminist movement (in history?), groups of women have been excluded from the concept of woman. Butch lesbians, women of color, transgendered women, and other women who do not neatly fit into the often presumed white, feminine, heterosexual, middle-class idea of "woman" have often been considered less than woman or not woman at all. If one was not able to meet such norms (as described above), then one was not a "real woman." In other words, it would behoove us as feminists to get away from a narrow and strict normative concept of woman.

I would like to advocate for the understanding of the category of "woman" as a *cluster concept*.[24] Woman can be understood as a broad cluster concept where an object belongs to the category/concept if and only if it has some but not necessarily all features attributed to that concept. For example, a "family" doesn't necessarily consist of people who are biologically related to each other. A family can include people who have married, biological relatives, adoptive parents and

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[24] Many thanks to Ann Ferguson for this suggestion. This idea of a cluster concept is derived from Wittgenstein's discussions of the concept of "games" in his *Philosophical Investigations*. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations (Philosophische Untersuchungen)*, G.E.M. Anscombe, translator (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 31-38 (§ 65-79).

children, as well as close friends (and even pets). In other words, those people one considers to be part of a family might not be able to fit into one specific feature— such as biological and/or legal relation. In a similar way, we can understand "woman" as such a cluster concept: a woman can be bio-sexually defined, socially constructed as such (gendered as woman), surgically constructed, recognized by society as woman, self-identified as woman, or a mix of some of the above. This means that to consider oneself a woman (or to be considered as woman by society), one must not necessarily fulfill a fixed set of sufficient and/or necessary conditions.[25]

Patriarchal structures affect different groups of women in different ways. An Asian-American woman's experience of patriarchal structures is quite different from, say, a white woman's experience. Nevertheless, women as a group do have common sources of oppression that they might try to fight against

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[25] Similarly in "Can Third Wave Feminism Be Inclusive? Intersectionality, Its Problems and New Directions," Naomi Zack gives a cluster definition of "woman." She sees Third Wave Feminism as having given up on the idea of a commonality among women. Zack writes, "What all women have in common is a relation to the category of human beings who are: designated female from birth, or biological mothers, or primary sexual choices of (heterosexual) men" (Zack, 204/205). And further, "Call this the FMP (females, mothers, primary sexual choices) category. …It is not necessary that any or all women be any or all of the disjuncts of the FMP category. Even if they are any or all of the disjuncts of FMP, it is not that identity that makes them women from a feminist perspective, but the fact that they have a relation to the FMP category as a whole. …regardless of the contingencies of multiple oppressions and their diverse social consequences, there is a rich and troubled history that all women can in fact relate to, even after their differences have been emphasized. The possibility of such a commonality is important in social and institutional contexts where disadvantaged women need the assistance of those less or differently oppressed" (Zack, 204/205). Zack thus claims that women in fact do exist as a group in some sense, and that there may not be a concrete definition of "woman." What is more important is that they can relate to each other through this notion that they belong to a group (even though there are differences) and struggle together in social and institutional contexts. Naomi Zack, "Can Third Wave Feminism Be Inclusive? Intersectionality, Its Problems and New Directions," *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, Linda Martin Alcoff and Eva Feder Kittay, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 204/205.

collectively in order to achieve more significant change. For example, the threat of rape is an effect of patriarchal structures that affects women especially. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), nine in ten victims of rape are female.[26] However, women of mixed race and black women are more likely to experience rape or attempted rape in their lifetime than white women (for example).[27] This example shows that while women as a group face the general threat of rape, women of different races are subject to rape and attempted rape at different rates. Similarly, we can think of other examples of how women are affected by patriarchal structures in different ways.

What about men?[28] For my purposes here in this project, I would like to focus primarily on women in order to promote and achieve feminist solidarity between them. In that sense, I am not necessarily concerned with male or self-identified male members of society. In the same vein, I am not primarily concerned about how patriarchal structures affect men as a group. However, feminist men may want to show solidarity with women as allies in fighting against sexist oppression. Perhaps this could be formulated as a sort of *ally*

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[26] *RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network)*, 2006, <http://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-of-sexual-assault.html> (11 March 2007). These statistics are valid in the United States.

[27] According to RAINN, the lifetime rate of rape and attempted rape for white women is 17.7%, whereas it is 18.8% for black women, and 24.4% for women of mixed race. *RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network)*, 2006, <http://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-of-sexual-assault.html> (11 March 2007).

[28] "Men" can be understood in the same way as "women" as a category as discussed above.

solidarity: thus, depending on how one identifies, one could either be "sister" or "ally" in a project of feminist solidarity.[29]

Overview of Parts

In Part Two, I analyze three modern philosophers, two of whom theorize about society, and one of whom writes about the psychological motivations of people within society. Topics include questions of why people enter into or create societies, how they behave in societies, and what kinds of obligations people should have towards one another (for example, in terms of laws) once they enter into society.

Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau both offer models of power in which power is *held:* either the Sovereign (for Hobbes) or the legislator (for Rousseau) hold the power and make the laws in society. However, the Sovereign appears to be much more of a dictator than the legislator, who serves as a moderator for the general will Rousseau describes. Both Hobbes and Rousseau describe motivations for people to enter into society, namely mostly because of safety. Another motivation for Hobbes is fear; this fear is part of self-interest for security, but also the interest to gain more and more power. Hobbes is thus related to Chandra Mohanty in the way of interest: it is out of self-interest that people enter into society, or for Mohanty, coalitions. This society or coalition then becomes merely the expansion of everyone's self-interest.

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[29] For writings by male feminist theorists, see the works of John Stoltenberg, R.W. Connell, Michael Kimmel, Michael Kaufmann, Tom Digby, Larry May, and Henry Brod.

Hobbes and Mohanty thus stand in contrast to Rousseau and hooks, who both argue that a kind of moral transformation takes place once people enter into society, or, for hooks, bond together in groups. Rousseau believes that the entrance into society actually makes people human (moral obligations get created at this time), and that they start behaving in moral ways towards each other (in contrast to their behavior in the state of nature where there is no morality). Similarly for hooks, in order for women to bond, a transformation of the self must take place if solidarity is to be achieved. This transformation of the self comes about through active education and confrontation of one another and evolves into the recognition that one has moral obligations to others in this society/group. This is not to say that in Rousseau's and hooks' accounts, people don't enter into societies/groups out of self-interest. The broader point they make is that a new kind of moral obligation is created once it happens.

Adam Smith is the third philosopher I analyze in Part Two. He writes about people's behavior in society, and argues that sympathy is a natural human attribute that plays an important role in the ways people interact with each other. Sympathy is a way in which one can feel-with another person, and a way of bonding with others. Thus we can understand how an emotion such as sympathy can motivate us to bond with and act upon feeling-with another person. It causes us to understand others in emotional ways. Again, this philosopher relates directly to a contemporary feminist theorist in Part Four, namely Sandra Bartky. She, too, argues that sympathy can provide an emotive aspect to solidarity that motivates

people to create and maintain relationships within and among political groups. These two theorists offer more convincing moral psychological explanations than Hobbes, Rousseau, Mohanty, and hooks in terms of people's behavior within groups and societies. The added emotive aspect, especially in Bartky's case, provides a more complete understanding of why and how solidarity can be formed and maintained.

In Part Three, I focus on post-structuralist accounts of power, specifically within the theories of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. Whereas Hobbes and Rousseau offer a relatively naïve model of power that simply works top-down, Foucault in many ways rejects this model in order to describe the ways subjects construct the power held by institutions by means of their own actions. Butler, too, describes ways in which power functions at individual levels. She focuses on the production and resistance to gender norms; in her view, gender norms are both created and perpetuated in the daily actions of individuals (gender performance). Butler (and, to some extent, Foucault) offers a way of understanding resistance to such norms, for example the perversion of gender performances (like in drag performances). However, by discussing the workings of power at individual levels, both Foucault and Butler provide a way of understanding the internalization of sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic norms. This helps in understanding hindrances to engaging in inclusive solidarity.

Unfortunately, because there is so much focus on power relations between individuals, Foucault and Butler don't seem to have a sense of collectivity or

collective resistance to dominant power structures. This is why in Part Four, I turn to three feminist theories of solidarity. I return to structuralist models because they offer a concept of collectivity, which can lead to the resistance to sources of oppression such as institutions (which I see as one of the primary targets for feminist action).

Chandra Mohanty advocates for *coalitional solidarity* based upon structural similarities women share due to patriarchal capitalism. As described above, once women recognize that it is in their self-interest to resist such structures, they will be able to form coalitions based on similar goals and interests.

However, in this kind of coalition, women remain individuals who come together primarily out of self-interest. bell hooks' *sisterhood solidarity* advocates for the interests of *all* women (not just those in similar structural positions) and entails the recognition of reciprocal obligations. hooks wants women to form solidarities by overcoming their own biases, including internalized sexism, (internalized) racism, classism, and homophobia in order to transform their feminist selves. If women want to fight sexist oppression, they need to address the overlapping oppressions of *all* women, even if this is not in their individual self-interest.

Whereas both Mohanty and hooks address intellectual aspects of solidarity, for example by analyzing one's own situation within a patriarchal capitalism or educating oneself about another women's situation (if it is different

from one's own), Sandra Bartky argues that there is another aspect that needs to be addressed when we talk about solidarity: the emotive aspect. Bartky argues that sympathy can be a motivation for women to join political groups that fight sexist oppression. Thus we need to think about both the intellectual and emotive aspects of forming groups and bonding politically, as well as the obligations that come with forming such coalitions. While it is important to recognize the broader structures of dominance and subordination, it is also imperative to acknowledge the ways power works on individual levels within and among groups.

In Part Five, I return to my location at a women's college and the questions asked at the beginning of this part in an attempt to offer concluding points.

PART TWO

In this part, the primary goal of my analysis is to investigate modern philosophers' theories on the forming of and bonding among humans within societies. It is particularly important to provide answers to the questions of what motivates people to join into society, what societal contracts look like, the evaluative moral and political perspectives within society, and how people within a society are psychologically motivated to behave towards one another. Key concerns also include questions about power: what form(s) does it take and how is it used by different members of society?

I will start off with an analysis of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Hobbes presents a structural model of power in which members of society would give all their power to a single entity (the sovereign) in order for this entity to provide laws and security to the citizens. While Hobbes argues for a top-down (command-obedience) model, Jean-Jacques Rousseau has a different idea about how he thinks society should work. In the *Social Contract*, he offers the concept of the general will, a society based on a social contract in which members agree to abide by general laws. Thus Rousseau argues for a less self-interested characterization of human nature: here, humans are interested in a common good and come to understand that being in society entails political and moral obligations to one's fellow citizens.

From here, I go on to discuss Adam Smith's notion of sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Like Rousseau, Smith argues that humans are not necessarily self-interested or out for material gain (as they are in Hobbes' view). What Smith offers is a view of human nature that places emotive aspects at the forefront. Sympathy for others is a natural human response. Smith's analysis thus stands in contrast to both Hobbes' and Rousseau's more intellectually based accounts of society. By bringing in the emotional side of humans, we can perhaps envision a society in which both cognitive goals (for example the common good in Rousseau) and emotional motivations (for example sympathy and respect in Smith) play important roles in sustaining just societies.

Hobbes' Leviathan

In Part I of *Leviathan*, Hobbes is most interested in what he calls the state of war and men's transition into the state of society and the power that reigns there.[30] The state of war (a state of war of individual against individual) is the state of nature men are in before they enter into society.[31] When there is no regulating power (i.e. a society), Hobbes argues, "the life of man [is] solitary, poore [sic], nasty, brutish, and short."[32] The state of war is the opposite of the state of society: there is no morality, justice (or injustice), property, power, or law.

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[30] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651, (London, New York: Penguin Classics, 1985). In the context of my discussion of Hobbes, I will use the words "man" and "men" in the ways Hobbes himself uses them. We can only speculate on whether Hobbes and other writers of this time who use masculinist language mean "man" to connote all humans or merely "men." For my own analysis and critiques I will use "human(s)."
[31] Hobbes, 185.
[32] Hobbes, 186.

Hobbes notes that in nature, every man has the right to do whatever he wants, "every man has a Right to everything; even to one another[']s body."[33]

The state of war is a natural state in which there are no rules and regulations, and all people have to watch out for themselves. It is war-like because of men's natural characteristic of wanting more and more power. According to Hobbes, there is "a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall [sic] and restless desire of Power after Power."[34] He writes further, "The Power of a Man, (to take it Universally,) is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good."[35] In other words, Hobbes focuses on men as individuals and their competition for more and more power. He states that men "cannot assure the power and means to live well, which [they have] present, without the acquisition of more."[36] Not only, then, are men not satisfied with the power they have, but they must obtain more of it, even through killing, subduing, supplanting, and repelling others.[37]

Hobbes writes that it is in the nature of men to compete (to invade for gains), to be diffident (for safety), and to want glory ("for trifles").[38] Thus, it is natural for men to want power, both in order to be safe from others and to gain possessions. If two men desire the same thing, then they become enemies because

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[33] Hobbes, 190.
[34] Hobbes, 161.
[35] Hobbes, 150.
[36] Hobbes, 161.
[37] Hobbes, 161.
[38] Hobbes, 185.

only one can have it.[39] Man wants "to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see[s] no other power great enough to endanger him."[40] It is justified to take power by force, even in excess of the amount one needs, in order to conserve oneself.[41]

These actions of taking power, then, are motivated mostly by fear, namely the fear of other men; they, like oneself, want to have power over others.[42] "Feare [sic] of oppression," Hobbes argues, "disposeth a man to anticipate or to seek ayd [sic] by society: for there is no other way by which a man can secure his life and liberty."[43] Hobbes makes the point that men only live in society because they have to, "Men have no pleasure… in keeping company."[44] It is out of fear of death that men choose to live in society. Fear and interest in power, then, are the two psychological motivations (in Hobbes' view) to enter into society.

The main purpose of society is for personal safety: we need to be protected from others. Hobbes views society as a place in which one can be safe from others' taking one's power and possessions.[45] The entrance into society constitutes a passage from the state of war (lack of security) into a state of peace; however, people give up the right to freedom (the freedom in the state of nature) in order to have this peace and security.[46] Whereas the state of Liberty is the

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[39] Hobbes, 184.
[40] Hobbes, 184.
[41] Hobbes, 185.
[42] Hobbes, 164.
[43] Hobbes, 163.
[44] Hobbes, 185.
[45] Hobbes, 163.
[46] Hobbes, 190.

absence of "externall [sic] Impediments," in society, as Hobbes argues, law binds liberty.[47] In other words, men enter into society in a contract-like way: they give up all their rights to freedom (freedom in the sense that there are no rules) in exchange for the security society guarantees.

Society, according to Hobbes, is the united powers of most men.[48] He insists that men stay in society not only because of the terror of some power, but also because there is a need for common agreement, "For being distracted in opinions concerning the best use and application of their strength, they do not help, but hinder one another; and reduce their strength by mutuall [sic] opposition to nothing."[49] Internal division lessens the combined strength of the contract and makes it easier for the enemy to take over.

Thus the bond men form is a contract. It is in the individuals' interest to abide by the laws. One exchanges one's rights for benefits (for example security), and one is then bound by the contract (one has duties).[50] One is expected to perform one's part, and at the same time one benefits from what the others give: it is a sort of mutual transferring of rights.[51] Hobbes insists that these bonds derive their strength from "Feare [sic] of some evil consequence upon the rupture."[52] When one forms the pact, one must have trust that the other will perform; one

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[47] Hobbes, 189.
[48] Hobbes, 150.
[49] Hobbes, 224/225.
[50] Hobbes, 191/195.
[51] Hobbes, 192.
[52] Hobbes, 192.

needs faith and promise.[53] He also argues, "covenants [contracts] extorted by feare [sic] are valid."[54] This means humans not only *enter into contracts* because of fear (either because they fear others or are forced into it), but also that humans *stay in the contract* because of fear (if they break it something bad will happen).

The coercive power that is supposed to keep members of society from leaving the contract is the Leviathan or Sovereign, the man or the assembly of men that governs the common-wealth. Hobbes argues, "and therefore it is no wonder if there be somewhat else required (besides covenant) to make their Agreement constant and lasting; which is a Common Power, to keep them in awe and to direct their actions to the Common Benefit."[55] Since the covenant is not a natural contract (but an artificial one) and there are differences between interests in the common and the private good, Hobbes thinks members of the contract should "conferne [sic] all their power and strength open one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare [sic] their Person."[56] In other words, all men give up their rights to the Man/Assembly (or Leviathan/Commonwealth): he who has all the Authority for the sake of security. For the contract is more than consent or concord, it is the

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[53] Hobbes, 193.
[54] Hobbes, 198.
[55] Hobbes, 227. In the second part on Rousseau, we will see how Hobbes' unified will and concept of the common benefit (of the state of society) is distinguished from Rousseau's idea of the general will. An important distinction is that whereas Rousseau posits a new moral good (the common good that trumps individual interests) that is created by the entrance of people into society, Hobbes' view of human nature is that it remains the same: people are still mainly self-interested. It seems that Hobbes' idea of unified wills or the common benefit is anything that would enable peace and safety to be kept within a society (for that is why people enter into it).
[56] Hobbes, 227.

unity of all.[57] However, it is important to understand that Hobbes' idea of unified wills is merely a summation of individual wills.

Hobbes defines the Commonwealth as "One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall [sic] covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all as he shall think expedient; for their Peace and Common Defence [sic]."[58] The Sovereign gets his power by natural force (submission), by war (forceful takeover), or by voluntary submission of the subjects.[59] Either way, the Sovereign's rights and purpose are the same.[60]

The Sovereign has almost absolute power to reign over the people: he makes the rules, censures doctrines against peace and concord, judges, is chief of war (and decides about war and peace for the public good), chooses ministers (and other political office holders), rewards and punishes, and decides about the "laws of honour" (i.e. etiquette).[61] According to Hobbes, the power of the Sovereign shouldn't be divided into legislative, judicative, and executive because then the Common-Wealth would fall (because its strength would be divided).[62]

Once people have given their consent to the Institution of Common-Wealth, it is considered wrong to be disobedient to the authority.[63] All who complain about their situation and blame the government because they are not

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[57] Hobbes, 227.
[58] Hobbes, 228.
[59] Hobbes, 228.
[60] Hobbes, 252.
[61] Hobbes, 232-236.
[62] Hobbes, 237.
[63] Hobbes, 230.

well off are in fact to blame themselves, and should be more submissive to the authority of the Sovereign.[64] Since the Sovereign has been voted as the representative by the majority of people, one cannot dissent even if one wasn't part of the original majority voting.[65] It follows (in Hobbes' view) that the Sovereign, as a representative of the interests of the people, cannot do injury *because* he was voted for by the people.[66] In other words, all the power individuals once had is transferred to the Sovereign, who then holds all the power. Hobbes assumes that the Sovereign will act in the common benefit of all in order to preserve the state of security (which might include keeping the peace at any cost). Protest on the part of "a particular man" is allowed (and even expedient) toward a representative assembly (a group subordinate to the Sovereign) in order to defend oneself against false allegations and debts (for instance).[67] However, individual and collective resistance to the Sovereign's law themselves—not just against false accusations of individual law violations—is illegitimate since all power has been transferred to the Sovereign.

To sum up, Hobbes describes fear and interest in gaining power as the primary motivations in both the state of nature and the state of society. This interest can be described as self-interest in the sense that one enters into society because it is in one's own personal interest to be in a safer space. Once one enters into society, this self-interest doesn't change or expand into a sort of general

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[64] Hobbes, 238/239.
[65] Hobbes, 232.
[66] Hobbes, 232.
[67] Hobbes, 273.

interest (i.e. the interest of society as a whole—as it does in Rousseau's account); society is merely a summation of individual wills.

In the state of nature, although people have the same basic faculties of body and mind by birth (though they may become stronger or more cunning than others by experience), they are in a constant struggle over limited resources and desire for more and more power.[68] Every other person in this state is a threat to one's personal safety and possessions. By entering into a societal contract, people exchange their freedom (the restriction-free state of nature) for the security of laws. These laws are enforced by the coercive powers of the Sovereign. The Sovereign holds the aggregate power of all the individuals in the society, and rules in a command-obedience model of power.

There are some problematic aspects to Hobbes' account of society. First, the Sovereign has all the power. This is troubling because one person or group of people can never make adequate decisions for all the people in a society. Second, one can't even claim that this is unjust because Hobbes' idea of justice is that once the Sovereign takes power, justice is served. This is particularly problematic in Hobbes' account of power because once the Sovereign has been voted for (or it has claimed power by coercion), the contract becomes fixed. The people have no more say in the matters of society because of the totalitarian rule of the Sovereign, and the Sovereign does not necessarily have to listen or pay attention to the needs and desires of all. Even if they wanted to, the subjects would not be able to use

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[68] Hobbes, 183.

collective action as tool to change inequities in their society because they have given up all their power to the Sovereign. Third, although the Sovereign is charged to rule in the common interest of "Peace and Defence [sic]," it is up to the Sovereign to make all the rules (and these are necessarily just in Hobbes' view).[69] Keeping the peace and defending the society are part of the "common benefit" Hobbes describes, but this common benefit might not be a compelling notion of justice for all.

The two most problematic parts of Hobbes' account are that coercion is legitimate and that he seems to have a strange psychological view of human motivation. The self-interest and individualism Hobbes' subjects portray make sense when regarded in the whole of the argument. Since everyone wants to gain more power, it is only logical that one would want to get it by any means necessary, even by coercive force. Thus everyone is in constant fear of attack. Fear (of death or injury) becomes a primary motivation for all actions, including entering into the contract. Although Hobbes briefly mentions trust and promising as part of the contract, it quickly becomes clear that since everyone is self-interested, no one can be trusted (and so arises the need for the Sovereign).

Whatever state Hobbes' subjects are in, they are always working against each other. The entrance into society does not transform them in any way except that they give up their rights to freedom.[70] Even in the state of society, they

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[69] Hobbes, 232.
[70] We will see in the next part how personal transformation becomes an important part of entering into society for Rousseau.

remain merely a summation of individuals. Thus Hobbes offers no notion of collectivity or community involving mutual moral or political obligations.

Rousseau's Social Contract

In "On the Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right," Rousseau deals with similar questions of why people enter into society, and what this society would and should be like.[71] Similarly to Hobbes, Rousseau posits a state of nature in which people have freedom (i.e. there are no external governmental or moral limitations or rules), but in which "families" struggle against other families and the strongest hold the power and force.[72] Rousseau argues that this original model of family (with the father as the head, and the children having a natural bond to him) existed in this first society, or state of nature.[73] This family becomes a model for how civil society is formed: "the leader is the image of the father, the populace is the image of the children."[74]

Rousseau writes, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains."[75] Once men enter into civil society, they give up a kind of natural freedom and submit themselves to the laws of society. "The strongest is never strong enough to be master all the time, unless he transforms force into right and obedience into

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[71] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "On the Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right," (1762,) *Basic Political Writings*, Donald A. Cress, translator and editor (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 139-227.

[72] Rousseau, 143.

[73] Rousseau, 142. The feminist reader will note the heterosexist, patriarchal nature of what Rousseau considers a family to be.

[74] Rousseau, 142.

[75] Rousseau, 141. See footnote at Hobbes for my uses of "men" and "man."

duty."[76] In civil society, force and obedience are regulated by laws and civil duties.[77]

Why are men motivated to enter into society if doing so means accepting restrictions on their natural freedoms? Like Hobbes, one of the primary motivations for Rousseau is the security civil society can provide.[78] In the original state of nature, Rousseau argues, men can't fight all the forces alone, so they "unite and direct existing ones" which are led "by means of a single moving power and [people] made to act in concert."[79] As abuses of power in the state of nature are inevitable, Rousseau declares humans need to "[f]ind a form of association which defends and protects with all common forces the person and goods of each associate and by means of which each one, while uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before."[80] In other words, by acting in concert and working together, there are better chances of survival and maintenance of material goods. Like in Hobbes' account, Rousseau posits civic obligations: keeping the contract by obeying the laws.

Entering into civil society instigates a kind of personal transformation in which one becomes a moral human being and recognizes obligations to others. Rousseau argues, "[The] passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces quite a remarkable change in man, for it substitutes justice for instinct in

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[76] Rousseau, 143.
[77] Rousseau, 143.
[78] Rousseau, 145.
[79] Rousseau, 147.
[80] Rousseau, 148/171.

his behavior and gives his actions a moral quality they previously lacked."[81] In other words, in Rousseau's view, civil society changes one "from a stupid, limited animal into an intelligent being and a man."[82] We realize our humanity by creating societies in which we can act morally and justly; this is necessary for the fulfillment of civic duties.[83] This account of man's social motivation and psychology is fundamentally different from Hobbes' view of human nature. Hobbes described fear and the interest in power as motivations for entering into society. Once people entered, these interests didn't change. In Rousseau's view of human nature, one becomes human by entering into society. Thus, a psychological and moral transformation takes place that does not take place in Hobbes' account.

The "act of association includes a *reciprocal commitment* between the public and private individuals," writes Rousseau.[84] He, in contrast to Hobbes, thus argues that there is a moral or political obligation to others once one is in society. "As soon as this multitude is thus united in a body," Rousseau states, "one cannot harm one of the members without attacking the whole body."[85] In this way, he implies that if one part of the body is hurt, the whole body hurts. Also, reciprocal commitment demands that each member of society take on responsibility: one cannot shut one's eyes to another's misery as it affects one's own well-being as

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[81] Rousseau, 150.
[82] Rousseau, 151.
[83] Rousseau, 144/145.
[84] Rousseau, 149. My emphasis.
[85] Rousseau, 150.

part of the social body.[86] This kind of a commitment or mutual obligation to the well-being of all individuals in society does not exist for Hobbes.

Rousseau introduces the concept of the "general will." "What makes the will general is not so much the number of votes as the *common interest* that unites them," writes Rousseau.[87] The general will is contrasted to the private wills members have as individual citizens, and it is *not* to be understood as a summation or collection of private interests.[88] Rousseau explains, "remove from these same [private] wills the pluses and minuses that cancel each other, and what remains as the sum of the differences is the general will."[89] The general will is not the same as the majority, but is to be understood as a common good: it reflects an ideal majority or ideal consensus of the society as a whole.

"Each of us places his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will," Rousseau declares, "and as one we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole."[90] The creation of the state is the union of the general will.[91] Rousseau warns, "Whoever refuses to obey the general will will be forced to do so by the entire body."[92] In other words, man will be forced to be free, to submit to the common interest.

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[86] This concept relates nicely to hooks' notion of obligations sisterhood solidarity entails. See also the discussion of hooks in Part Four.
[87] Rousseau, 158. My emphasis.
[88] Rousseau, 150, 156.
[89] Rousseau, 155/156.
[90] Rousseau, 148.
[91] Rousseau, 147/148.
[92] Rousseau, 150.

The concept of the general will is quite distinct from Hobbes' idea of a unified will or the common benefit. The common benefit is anything the Sovereign deems necessary to ensure the peace and defense of society; thus the Sovereign alone decides which laws to enact without considering the opinions or interests of the people. In contrast, Rousseau's ideas of a common interest are about liberty and equality that should accrue to everyone's benefit, so that society as a whole is well-off. Having the general will negotiate what it thinks best for society seems less rigid and arbitrary than a single entity (the Sovereign) that makes all the decisions.

Rousseau implies that the objective common interests of all are *liberty* and *equality*. Liberty and equality are important because, in contrast to the state of nature, they can be regulated in civil society. Rousseau writes first about liberty, "[W]hat man loses through the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything that tempts him and that he can acquire. What he gains is civil liberty and the propriety ownership of all he possesses."[93] Civil liberty is governed by the general will, just as the natural state is governed by the individual will.[94] This means that even though one might be limited in some ways upon entering into the social contract, it is in the common interest of all to do so anyway.

Equality is the second common interest from the perspective of the general will. In the social contract, in contrast to the state of nature, equality can be

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[93] Rousseau, 151.
[94] Rousseau, 151.

regulated and everyone has the same conditions and the same rights.[95] Rousseau

writes,

> Instead of destroying natural equality the fundamental contract, on
> the contrary, substitutes a moral and legitimate equality to
> whatever physical inequality nature may have been able to impose
> upon men, and that, however, unequal in force or intelligence they
> may be, men all become equal by convention and by right.[96]

In Rousseau's view, the state's goal as the embodiment of the general will is the

common good because this is what we strive for in the social contract.[97] The

general will directs the forces of the state, and the general will tends toward

equality.[98]

In other words, the civil state ensures that everyone is equal despite the

natural inequalities that exist. Even if people come from different starting points

in terms of biology (including skills and intelligence, which may or may not be

biologically based), the social contract will even out these natural injustices.

Rousseau adds, "Under bad governments this equality is only apparent and

illusory. It serves merely to maintain the poor man in his misery and the rich man

in his usurpation."[99] Therefore, under bad governments, the laws are most

advantageous for those who have possessions.

Law, in Rousseau's view, is "when the entire populace enacts a statue

concerning the entire populace."[100] In general, the law is both a record and an act

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[95] Rousseau, 153/170.
[96] Rousseau, 153.
[97] Rousseau, 153.
[98] Rousseau, 153/154.
[99] Rousseau, 153.
[100] Rousseau, 161.

of the general will, and the condition of civil associations. He writes further, "The consent of the people ought to be presumed on the basis of universal silence."[101] Here Rousseau reserves the right to protest for the people. If the state is doing a good job and the people are content and do not protest, then it will be assumed that they are consenting to the laws, the state (government, etc.). However, this also means that they can and should protest if they disagree with the actions of the state.[102] Rousseau writes, "one is obliged to obey only legitimate powers," and "no man has a natural authority over his fellow man."[103] Therefore, people have the right to critique and call into question those who do have power, and no one is innately inferior or superior to anyone else.[104] Supposedly, then, power would be shared among free and equal people.

Rousseau fears that too much deliberation on part of the population will develop into partiality or different political groups which will then only put forth their own interests (sums of private interests).[105] Rousseau would like to give the populace more power in general, but he distrusts associations of people which would put forth selfish interests in disregard to the general will. There is thus the necessity of having an impartial legislator (a sovereign/governor), for the populace needs to be moderated.[106] Although it is the legislator who holds the power, the legislator's laws are derived from the general will. Thus the legislator

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[101] Rousseau, 154.
[102] This is another contrast to Hobbes' account.
[103] Rousseau, 144.
[104] Rousseau also uses this argument in opposition to justifications of slavery.
[105] Rousseau, 156.
[106] Rousseau, 162.

is different from Hobbes' Sovereign because the Sovereign aims for the "common benefit" whereas Rousseau's legislator is more of a moderator.

In sum, Rousseau argues for a society in which the common interests of the people are more important than people's individual interests. The idea of the general will combines common interests such as liberty and equality into one force. This is an advantage over the state of nature because civil society ensures security under law and realizes people's full moral and political potential as humans and citizens. This stands in stark contrast to Hobbes' account, in which individuals are always motivated by their own selfish interests rather than by the common good.

What I find most appealing about Rousseau's theory of the social contract is the transformation people undergo when they enter into society. This transformation introduces new commitments and reciprocity to their fellow citizens; and, it is this reciprocity that sustains and maintains society.

Smith's Notion of Sympathy

In Part I of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith offers an account of people's psychological motivations (especially emotions) for justice in society.[107] He describes how sympathy and the ability to sympathize can promote mutual respect among the citizens of a given society. This is important for an account of solidarity (or maintaining a society) because sympathy serves as a

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[107] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1759, D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

morally significant form of psychological motivation to join and maintain relations of solidarity and community with others.

Smith writes about sympathy and the emotions in others that awaken our sympathy with them. He describes sympathy as a "fellow-feeling" for the emotions of others, not just for their pain and sorrow.[108] We put ourselves in "the like situation," Smith argues, "enter as it were into [the other's] body, and become in measure the same person."[109] In sympathy, our feelings correspond with the feelings of the person whom we are feeling-with.[110] In this way, sympathy arises out of a situation that is happening to someone else.[111]

Smith argues that sympathy and antipathy do not occur out of self-interest as they are instantaneous.[112] This would mean that we have an automatic reaction to someone else's situation and feelings. Nevertheless, we don't sympathize with the pain and suffering of our enemy at war, yet when we hear a voice of misery in the distance, Smith believes it "forces us almost involuntarily to fly to his assistance."[113] Hatred and resentment invoke fear and aversion, and disturb our ability to sympathize with someone.[114] Smith writes, "We have always, therefore, the strongest disposition to sympathize with benevolent affections."[115]

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[108] Smith, 10.
[109] Smith, 9.
[110] Smith, 10.
[111] Smith, 12.
[112] Smith, 14.
[113] Smith, 36. Again, I will be using masculinist language as Smith does for the exposition on Smith. Alternately, I also use "we" and "our" when I paraphrase or critique Smith's account.
[114] Smith, 36/37.
[115] Smith, 39.

No matter how much we try to put ourselves in the situation of others, and no matter how much we imagine ourselves in the same position, we will always fall short of reaching the level of emotion the other is feeling.[116] Smith thinks that humans are naturally sympathetic; however, we always know that we are not really the sufferers.[117] The sufferer tries to get others to sympathize by lightening the emotion he is feeling; in this way, the sympathizers can more easily see through the sufferer's eyes, while at the same time, the sufferer sees the situation through the sympathizers' eyes.[118] We are more open to and expect more sympathy from our friends than we do from strangers or people we only know superficially.[119]

According to Smith, sympathy "enlivens joy and alleviates grief:" we are happy when others sympathize with us, especially when they sympathize with our "disagreeable" passions.[120] Smith uses the word "passions" in the same way we would use the word "emotions." By "disagreeable" he means sorrow, grief, pain, etc. (i.e. emotions we would probably consider for the most part negative). Sharing sorrow alleviates some of the pain of the sufferer, but sharing joy (an "agreeable passion") only spreads the happiness.[121] "The agreeable passions of love and joy," he writes, "can satisfy and support the heart without any auxiliary pleasure. The bitter and painful emotions of grief and resentment more strongly

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[116] Smith, 21.
[117] Smith, 21.
[118] Smith, 22.
[119] Smith, 23.
[120] Smith, 13-15.
[121] Smith, 15.

require the healing consolation of sympathy."[122] We don't simply want our friends to like us, but we also expect them to sympathize when we feel love, and even more so when we feel resentment.[123]

Sympathy with sorrow is larger than sympathy with joy, that is, our sympathy with deep distress is much stronger than it is with enjoyment.[124] Paradoxically, though, our sympathy with pain falls far short of the original suffering, whereas sympathy with joy can approach the original state much better.[125] However, when we are envious of someone's good fortune, we try to feign sympathy and suppress our envy because we are ashamed of it.[126] Interestingly, we hold back sympathetic sorrow so as not to appear effeminate and weak, and we are ashamed to weep, but not to laugh before company.[127] This means that etiquette allows us to express joy more readily than sorrow in public.[128] If it is less possible for us to sympathize with the suffering of others than with their joys, then we must be especially careful to acknowledge their suffering and not let it go unnoticed.

When we sympathize with others, we are at the same time judging their emotions. Smith argues, "When the original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator,

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[122] Smith, 15.
[123] Smith, 15.
[124] Smith, 43.
[125] Smith, 44.
[126] Smith, 44.
[127] Smith, 46/47. Note that "effeminate" is used in a negative context.
[128] Smith, 47.

they necessarily appear to this last just and proper."[129] Different degrees of

passion correspond to different events, and we only sympathize when it is just in

proportion.[130] If, for example, emotions are expressed more strongly then we

think they should be, we are less likely to sympathize. When we approve of the

other's passions, we entirely sympathize with that person; otherwise, we feel

disapproval.[131] We judge the (im)propriety of the other's feelings based on their

correspondence with our own and when they do not match up, we are more likely

to feel antipathy than sympathy.[132]

We also feel sympathy with bodily pain: it does not hurt directly, but one

still cringes when one sees someone being hurt. However, Smith believes that it is

easier for us to sympathize with nonphysical pain ("passions derived from

imagination," as he calls it) because "our imaginations can more readily mould

themselves upon [the sufferer's] imagination, than our bodies can mould

themselves upon [his] body."[133] This is because bodily pain is soon forgotten, and

we can also become desensitized to seeing human pain.[134]

With the "passions derived from imagination," we sympathize not directly

with the love someone feels (for example), but with the distress and anxiety of the

lover.[135] We do not ourselves have the feeling of love, and sometimes we even

think of people in love as ridiculous. However, what is interesting to us are the

[129] Smith, 16.
[130] Smith, 27.
[131] Smith, 16.
[132] Smith, 19/20.
[133] Smith, 29.
[134] Smith, 30.
[135] Smith, 33.

"side-effects," so to speak: we sympathize with the secondary passions of love (i.e. the anxiety, concern, and distress that being in love causes in the lover).[136] In other words, one sympathizes (feels-with) a person in love on the basis of the *secondary emotions* being in love entails, for example anxiety and happiness. The important idea is that we understand how anxiety and happiness feel, but perhaps not the searing love.

We should aim for "respectful affection" because mutual sympathy makes people happy.[137] Smith argues that respect is necessary, not rudeness (or expressing hate).[138] He writes, "If the chief part of human happiness arises from the consciousness of being beloved, as I believe it does, those sudden changes of fortune [sudden increase in wealth] seldom contribute much to happiness."[139] Therefore, human sympathy trumps material gain. What Smith is implying is that sympathy, or mutual sympathy, is an end in itself. Smith believes that the sharing of emotions is necessary in human social contact. Feeling sympathy is very much part of being human for Smith, and he thinks that humanity requires sensibility beyond the "rude vulgar of mankind."[140] We are social creatures who enjoy and need human contact to affirm our realities. Emotional processes (whether good or bad) do not happen as well when we are isolated and individualistic.

Smith's account of sympathy offers a few main points: sympathy is natural and instantaneous to human behavior. If someone calls for help, I am

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[136] Smith, 31-33.
[137] Smith, 39.
[138] Smith, 35.
[139] Smith, 41.
[140] Smith, 25.

compelled out of sympathy to aid her. The sharing of emotions makes us human and is an end in itself. In other words, it is part of our humanity to feel sympathy with others. This sympathy can entail both positive and negative emotions. However, when we feel-with others, we are at the same time judging their emotions. Sympathy is thus felt in a kind of merging way: the others' emotions merge with mine, and if they are in concord, then I feel that the others' emotions are justified. If not, then I might disapprove of the other.

A troubling feature of Smith's account is that it can lead to egocentric and inappropriate judgments. If, for example, emotions are expressed more strongly then we think they should be, we are less likely to sympathize. When we approve of the other's passions, we entirely sympathize with her; otherwise, we feel disapproval. We judge the (im)propriety of the other's feelings based on their correspondence with our own and when they do not match up, we are more likely to feel antipathy than sympathy. This of course is highly problematic. Smith seems to take a very self-centered approach: if the other's emotions are somehow not relatable to mine or my emotional evaluation of the matter, then I can judge the other based entirely on what I deem appropriate. In this instance Smith's idea is incorrect because it is wrong for me (or any person) to be the standard of how other people should feel.

If Smith's aim is to assert that we sympathize with others and therefore share their grief or happiness, then we have to be careful about what this means when people of different ethnicities, classes, etc. share their emotions. It is

probably false to assume that we will all simply sympathize with one another. In fact, it is more likely that we will fall back on stereotypes about people coming from certain groups. For example, I do not share a poor person's reality. If I am to sympathize with a poor person, I must first "get over" my preconceptions of her situation. I might at first think she is to blame for her poverty, or that she is not working hard enough to get out of her situation, etc. The problem with this part of Smith's theory is that he doesn't account for this hurdle to understanding and properly judging the emotions involved in other people's situations.

Smith's account does allow for the possibility that we cannot know what it's really emotionally like to be in someone else's position. His idea of "secondary emotions" is useful here. Secondary emotions were described in the example of the lover, and that we who are not the lover cannot truly feel what the lover is feeling. This is an interesting point: Smith suggests that it is in fact *not* possible for us to feel exactly the way another person feels (which is a contradiction to his point earlier about entering into the other's body). However, it might be possible for me to imagine these secondary emotions. This could be very helpful in bridging over experiences in race, gender, class, and sexuality. While I do not know what it is like for a black man who is followed around in a store (because his skin color somehow makes him suspect), I could relate to feelings of anger, shame, and vulnerability he might feel in this situation. I do not wish to imply that these emotions will be exactly the same, because I don't think they can be. I believe that there is still a difference to experiencing racism, (hetero)sexism,

and classism on a daily basis and the embodiment of traits (and imagined traits) that separate us into these different categories. Rather, what I am suggesting is using these secondary emotions as a starting point to sympathize with the other, and a chance to better understand the other's experience in the world.

Conclusion

Hobbes and Rousseau offer two accounts of why people enter into society, and what this society is like. Civil society basically offers a refuge from what both Hobbes and Rousseau describe as the state of nature: a kind of pre-societal time when there were no governments to impose laws. One of the main motivations for entering into society, then, is for society to provide safety for oneself and one's possessions from nature and from other humans. Although this means that people will have to give up their "natural freedom," it is a good idea because societal rules apply to all. One accepts the limitations on freedom in exchange for the benefits of society.

Both Hobbes and Rousseau argue that power is held: in *Leviathan*, all the power in the state is held by one sovereign, whereas in the *Social Contract*, the people hold the power by the legislator. In both cases, power is used to make laws and regulate society. Both accounts provide an idea of an over-arching structure in which there is a ruler (the Sovereign or the legislator) who governs over a mass of people—although the role of this ruler is quite different in either account.

The starkest contrast between the two philosophers is perhaps their view of human nature. While Hobbes argues that people are naturally self-interested, Rousseau takes an altruistic stance in that the common good should be placed above private interests. The transition from the state of nature into the state of civil society is also different: Rousseau argues that it is precisely this transition that transforms people into humans. They experience a sense of collectivity and recognize their common interests in liberty and equality. Society allows them to behave in moral ways and also elicits responsibility and reciprocity on part of all its members. Hobbes, on the other hand, does not describe any kind of (personal) transformation. There is no notion of community or the common good as there is in Rousseau's descriptions of society. It is because of a notion of the social good that people get what they need in the society Rousseau posits.

Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* describes the ability of humans to sympathize. In society, this allows us to have respectful relationships with one another. The ability to sympathize could be tied to Rousseau's idea of reciprocity. In other words, it could be possible for people to not only cognitively realize that they have obligations to one another, but it might also be necessary and helpful to sympathize to motivate morally and politically good actions.

Hobbes, Rousseau, and Smith combined thus offer insight to how societies might be structured, why people choose to enter into them, and what psychological motivations exist for creating and sustaining such societies. I will critique and build on these issues in Part Three.

PART THREE

In Part Three, we will see how two 20th century theories of power move beyond the more simplistic models of power put forth by Hobbes and Rousseau to describe the ways power works in multidirectional ways (not simply top-down), especially at the local, individual level. One of the questions Michel Foucault asks in *The History of Sexuality* is, "What is this force that so long reduced [sex] to silence and has only recently relaxed its hold somewhat, allowing us to question it perhaps, but always in the context of and through its repression?"[141] Taking a look at sex historically, Foucault ties together sex and desire with power and analyzes power not only as repressive, but also as productive at the same time.

The second theorist in this part, Judith Butler, draws on Foucault to create an analysis of gender in which she posits the performance of gender as the way in which gender is produced and reproduced, especially through the internalization of gender norms. She offers an account in which individuals can use their agency to subvert these norms. Foucault's and Butler's theories give a more complex approach to analyzing relations of power, especially at the level of the subject. And, this analysis will suggest important implications for an account for feminist solidarity between women, as we will see in Part Four.

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[141] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction,* Robert Hurley, trans., (New York: Vintage Books, 1978, March 1990 Edition), 78.

Foucault's Theory of Power

In Part Four of *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault analyses political notions of power as they have occurred in the history of the West. The most significant feature of what Foucault calls "juridico-discursive power" is that it "always had to be exercised in the form of the law."[142] Historically, power was equated with the law: the juridical and governmental aspects of society were melded together. "Power-as-law" is power in its repressive function.[143] "[P]ower resides in the function of the legislator," writes Foucault.[144] In other words, within a system of legislation (a system of rules), power is expressed by prohibition: it says no.[145]

This is a hierarchy of power that opposes the ruler and the ruled. By insisting on the rule, power sets up a binary system and creates uniformity within this system: it operates from top to bottom in all areas. The ruler exerts power and the ruled is obedient to it. Foucault writes, "All the modes of domination, submission, and subjugation are ultimately reduced to an effect of obedience."[146] Thus the subjected are constrained by the rules that power imposes.

How could such a system come about? Foucault argues that institutions (such as rulers or governments) come into existence because they present themselves as introducing order.[147] According to Foucault, they promise to set up

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[142] Foucault, 82/88.
[143] Foucault, 82.
[144] Foucault, 83.
[145] Foucault, 83.
[146] Foucault, 85.
[147] Foucault, 86/87.

rules: "Power as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability."[148] We accept the rules because we believe that a system of law will keep the order in an otherwise chaotic state of nature. This is what Hobbes argues in *Leviathan*: people enter into society—even though it sets limits on their freedom—because society promises rules and therefore security.

This notion of power is related to how we view the relations of power to sex. The representation of sex, as Foucault argues, "never establishes any connection between power and sex that is not negative: rejection, exclusion, refusal, blockage, concealment, or mask."[149] Power constrains sex by prohibition and censorship.[150] Indeed, Foucault claims that in this representation of power relations to sex, power

> operates according to the simple and endlessly reproduced
> mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship: from state to family,
> from prince to father, from the tribunal to the small change of
> everyday punishments, from the agencies of social domination to
> the structures that constitute the subject himself [sic], one finds a
> general form of power, varying in scale alone.[151]

This means that in the history of sexuality, sex has been viewed as repressed and prohibited by power in all areas of society.

It is exactly this notion of power as repressive that Foucault questions: "Why are the deployments of power reduced simply to the procedures of law and interdiction?"[152] He argues that we need to break free of the image of "the

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[148] Foucault, 86.
[149] Foucault, 83.
[150] Foucault, 84.
[151] Foucault, 84/85.
[152] Foucault, 86.

theoretical privilege of law and sovereignty."[153] He writes, "We must at the same time conceive of sex without the law, and power without the king."[154] The notion that power is only exercised by the law is not the only way power functions. Foucault suggests that there is more than just the repressive notion of power at work in power relations,

> And if it is true that the juridical system was useful for representing, albeit in a nonexhaustive way, a power that was centered primarily around deduction (*prélèvement*) and death, it is utterly incongruous with the new methods of power whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go *beyond the state and its apparatus*.[155]

Foucault here insists that power is not merely repressive, but is present in different kinds of force relations, namely economic processes, knowledge relationships, and sexual relations.[156] In other words, power plays a role in relationships between individuals in local areas of society, not just in an overarching way stemming from rules and regulations of the state.

In his analysis, Foucault focuses on just these *local force relations*. "[P]ower must be understood…as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization."[157] For Foucault, "there is no escaping from power…it is always already present."[158] Power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere, meaning it exists at all

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[153] Foucault, 90.
[154] Foucault, 91.
[155] Foucault, 89. My emphasis.
[156] Foucault, 94.
[157] Foucault, 92.
[158] Foucault, 82.

levels of society.[159] Also, Foucault emphasizes that power is not acquired or shared, but exercised from various points—it comes into play when it is produced by force relations.[160] This means that power is not something that is held by people and institutions as Hobbes and Rousseau claim. Rather, it comes into existence in the different kinds of relationships described above (economic, knowledge, sexual).

In an example regarding the history of sexuality, Foucault describes what it means for power to be productive. Beginning in the 18th century, the hysterization of women's bodies became a focus within the medical professions, and by extension, some parts of society.[161] Medical institutions analyzed female bodies and found them to be, in Foucault's description, "thoroughly saturated with sexuality."[162] For example, through Freud and other sexologists, women's mental and physical illnesses became connected to the idea of an abnormal sexuality. As Foucault writes, the medical field produced a pathology of female bodies:

> [The feminine body] was placed in organic communication with the social body (whose regulated fecundity it was supposed to ensure), the family space (of which it had to be a substantial and functional element), and the life of children (which it produced and had to guarantee, by virtue of a biological-moral responsibility lasting through the entire period of the children's education).[163]

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[159] Foucault, 93.
[160] Foucault, 94.
[161] Foucault, 103/104.
[162] Foucault, 104.
[163] Foucault, 104.

Thus the medical field produced a certain kind of knowledge about women's bodies. Women who subsequently failed at their "normal" duties, especially mothers, became "hysterical."

In this example, inequalities in power between the medical field (and its representatives, i.e. doctors) and women as patients (receiving treatment) are a *result* of the knowledge medicine claims to have about female bodies. In other words, in a doctor-patient relationship, power inequities are produced as a result of the assumed knowledge position of the doctor. This could mean that a woman sees herself and acts in certain ways because of how her body is defined by the medical field, and, by extension, the doctor. Women as patients might be expected to behave in certain ways (especially sexually, as their bodies are defined in that way) since the opinion and recommendations of a doctor are to be respected and followed due to the doctor's position of power-knowledge in relation to the patient.

Power is thus the *result, not the cause* of a local force relation (in this case: knowledge). The doctor only "knows" because as an expert, the doctor makes the patient believe that she is hysterical, and hence creates the truth of the claim to know—she *becomes* hysterical almost by the force of suggestion and the doctor then verifies this "truth" as a knower.

The point Foucault makes here is that power comes from below, i.e. in local relations (as shown in the example above). Foucault claims that these power relations are "the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the

social body as a whole."[164] It is the very fact that, for example, a doctor and patient interact in certain ways that a broader domination occurs in society. In other words, relations of domination are perpetuated by the way power plays out at local levels. "Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations," writes Foucault.[165] Thus he shows how norms (such as the idea that women who did not live up a perceived norm were considered hysterical) are sustained and perpetuated through local, individual interactions.

In his analysis, Foucault locates this mode of power during a specific historical time in the West when particular kinds of interactions took place. While we can think of the church or the state as playing an important role in force relations in society, Foucault writes about a new kind of control of the population as scientific institutions come about. As a result, we can understand the medical field during the 19th and 20th centuries as different from the more overarching institutions of church and state in that it (the medical field) is more localized in practices/doctors' offices. Also, doctors are different from clergy, for example, in that they (doctors) become "experts," whereas the people who are not doctors are taught to identify themselves as subjects; that is, a doctor can claim to have more knowledge about a subject than the subject him/herself.

In such scenarios, power relations are played out through constant modifications and continual shifting. Local centers enter into an overall strategy: individual levels of power relations sustain the overall strategy of power (i.e.

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[164] Foucault, 94.
[165] Foucault, 94.

major dominations, such as man-woman, adult-adolescent, parent-child, doctor-patient). In Part Four, we will see how hooks' descriptions of interactions between women of different races and classes comes closest of the three theorists to show how power relations at individual levels maintain the overall domination of a race or class.

Foucault points out that force relations produce domination which is "far-reaching but never completely stable,"—it doesn't necessarily play out the same way all the time.[166] This opens up the possibility of resistance. "Where there is power, there is resistance," Foucault claims, but it is not exterior to the power relation.[167] "Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them," Foucault writes, "so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities."[168] Perhaps analogous to local force relations, this resistance could be called *local resistance relations*.

"[P]ower is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and instable," asserts Foucault.[169] He writes further, "We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a

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[166] Foucault, 94, 102.
[167] Foucault, 95.
[168] Foucault, 96.
[169] Foucault, 93.

point of resistance and starting point for an opposing strategy."[170] In other words, resistance is possible when the discourse is challenged. This means that women (following the example of the hysterization of women and their bodies from above) can resist the ways power-knowledge is produced about their bodies by taking advantage of the instability of force relations. Women can reject the sexualization of their bodies by the medical field by not following doctors' orders or not having children, for instance. Conversely, by not challenging doctors' claims to knowledge positions, women as patients might simply reaffirm broader power relations between doctors and patients.

In the matter of resistance, Foucault seems to imply that it is possible for individuals to resist local force relations. However, in Foucault's view, it would be important to challenge the dominant discourse itself. For example in the case of gay pride, Foucault might criticize the way in which people are proud to be gay rather than reject the category itself. Queer politics, on the other hand, challenges normative categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality, so it would be an example of Foucaultian resistance. Unfortunately, Foucault himself does not offer an account of collective resistance to dominant structures.[171]

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[170] Foucault, 101.

[171] Many thanks to Ann Ferguson for this example. One might want to question queer politics itself for bypassing the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality. It is problematic for a notion of collective resistance because it tends to ignore the problems of power relations between people in the category of "queer" when these pertain to real material and social relations of inequality. For example, queer women are likely to have less material power than queer men and queer people of color likewise less access to material power and resources due to factors of race and sex/gender. So, uniting under "queer" but refusing other categories might make these distinctions invisible.

Butler's Theory of Performativity

One of the important aspects of Foucault's theory, then, is that he describes our complicity in upholding the normative discourses and not challenging them (if and when we do not agree with them). In other words, we participate as subjects in (re-) producing and sustaining norms and the power relations that are their effect. Similarly, in *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler draws on Foucault to argue that power is produced.[172] She writes that power is "more than an exchange between subjects or a relation of constant inversion between a subject and an Other; indeed, power [appears] to operate in the production of that very binary for thinking about gender."[173] Therefore, gender is not natural, but it is produced.

Butler offers a way to understand both gender and sex as constructed, and how to enable a subject to subvert or resist gender/sex norms beyond the binary frame of compulsory heterosexuality. Foucault argues, "judicial systems of power *produce* the subjects they subsequently come to represent."[174] In other words, laws and rules regulate and discipline us and our bodies in certain ways. Butler, in turn, argues that gender is produced in similar ways because it is regulated by a normative discourse that attaches various values to the masculine and the feminine, and hence, to men and women. Subjects are both subjected to these rules, but they also have agency in that they enact and reproduce gender.

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[172] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
[173] Butler, vii/viii.
[174] Butler, 2.

In her *theory of performativity*, then, Butler describes the production of gender through the enactment of gender within heterosexuality:

> Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitutes its reality.[175]

Thus gender is a construction that is *performed* by subjects on a daily basis. In fact, Butler argues that not only gender, but also the foundational categories of sex and desire are "effects of a specific formation of power."[176] Again, following Foucault, Butler claims that a "genealogy investigates the political stakes in designating as an *origin and cause* those identity categories that are in fact the *effects* of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin."[177] In other words, sex, gender, and desire are generally assumed to be origins of identity when in fact they are the effects of reiterated practices.

As part of her theory, Butler criticizes the identity politics that feminism has used in the past. She questions identity as a starting point for feminism because identity is understood to come before politics, i.e. as already constituted. It is assumed to be fixed and whole, and therefore it isn't criticized before becoming a foundation for the departure of feminist politics.[178] Butler argues that the category of "woman" is no longer stable. As gender intersects with race, class,

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[175] Butler, 136.
[176] Butler, viii. A genealogy is the historical investigation of these kinds of power.
[177] Butler, viii/ix.
[178] Butler, ix.

ethnicity, and region, it can't be separated out: it is not consistently or coherently universal.[179] Butler claims that in feminist discourse, "the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation."[180]

In other words, feminists have (re)created the category of woman in certain ways without it being criticized. "The internal paradox of this foundationalism is that it presumes, fixes, and constrains the very 'subjects' that it hopes to represent and liberate," observes Butler.[181] Thus, instead of enabling feminism, the category "woman" has instead restricted it. The assumption of "woman" as a fixed, stable category as well as of a universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy has not produced true liberation for women. Because identity is defined in a certain way, it becomes exclusionary. Butler thus questions the identity politics feminism has put forth as well as the notion that women have an automatic bond because of their shared oppression.[182] This is similar to the critiques Mohanty and hooks make of the Second Wave.

However, Butler doesn't want to abandon representational politics: "Within feminist political practice, a radical rethinking of the ontological constructions of identity appears to be necessary in order to formulate a representational politics that might revive feminism on other grounds."[183] Feminists need to reconsider notions of identity they hold in order to acknowledge

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179 Butler, 1, 3.
180 Butler, 2.
181 Butler, 148.
182 Butler, 4.
183 Butler, 5.

that "woman" is not a consistent or universal category. Butler asks, "Is the

construction of the category of women as a coherent and stable subject an

unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations?"[184] Perhaps by defining

ourselves as women in the first place, we (as feminists) are contributing to notions

we deem essential or, if constructed, at least stable. "The feminist 'we,'" Butler

emphasizes, "is always and only a phantasmatic construction, one that has its

purposes, but which denies the internal complexity and indeterminacy of the term

and constitutes itself only through the exclusion of some part of the constituency

that it simultaneously seeks to represent."[185] Butler here reformulates the problem

of identity politics: she argues that the category "woman" is a construction for

feminist purposes, but that it fails to encapsulate or define what woman is—or

rather, by defining the term "woman," exclusions are inevitable.

The problem, then, is that by defining "woman," individuals or groups will

necessarily be left out of the definition, and therefore left out of feminist politics.

Butler asks,

> What kinds of agency are foreclosed through the positing of an
> epistemological subject precisely because the rules and practices
> that govern the invocation of that subject and regulate its agency in
> advance are ruled out as sites of analysis and critical
> intervention?[186]

By invoking the category "woman" we block ourselves from critically thinking

about the term and what it means. Finally, Butler writes,

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[184] Butler, 5.
[185] Butler, 142.
[186] Butler, 144.

> I have tried to suggest that the identity categories often presumed to be foundational to feminist politics, that is, deemed necessary in order to mobilize feminism as an identity politics, simultaneously work to limit and constrain in advance the very cultural possibilities that feminism is supposed to open up.[187]

Butler thus criticizes identity politics in a way for hindering itself at achieving its own objectives because it is unable to view gender/sex identity as something completely constructed.[188]

Perhaps to avoid these problems, Butler focuses on gender/sex constructions and how the body relates to these constructions: "The sex/gender distinction and the category of sex itself appear to presuppose a generalization of 'the body' that preexists the acquisition of its sexed significance."[189] In other words, the body seems to exist prior to discourse, as a passive surface onto which meaning (in this case sex and gender) is inscribed.[190] Butler then goes on to ask what the boundaries of the body are, and writes that the body is "signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions."[191] This means that there are certain rules about what the body can be, especially in the way that it is sexed to be either female or male. These rules exist within institutional and ideological constructs (and are not necessarily passed down by a legislator), but Butler focuses mostly on how they are reaffirmed and produced by individual actions.

Not only is the body supposed to be sexed, but it has to be sexed in heterosexual ways, meaning male bodies should be masculine and attracted to

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[187] Butler, 147.
[188] See Part One for my arguments on this topic and the definition of "woman" I offer.
[189] Butler, 129.
[190] Butler, 129.
[191] Butler, 131.

female bodies, and female bodies should be feminine and attracted to male bodies.

Butler takes this even further,

> the rites of passage that govern various bodily orifices presuppose
> a heterosexual construction of gendered exchange, positions, and
> erotic possibilities. The deregulation of such exchanges
> accordingly disrupts the very boundaries that determine what it is
> to be a body at all.[192]

In this passage, Butler opens up a possibility for subversion. If bodies didn't

comply by the rules of the exchanges that exist in society, it could mean a

disruption of boundaries.[193]

Following Foucault, Butler questions the language of internalization,

especially the internalization of sex and gender. She writes this about Foucault's

theory of the accommodation of laws:

> The law is not literally internalized, but incorporated, with the
> consequence that bodies are produced which signify that law on
> and through the body; there the law is manifest as the essence of
> their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of
> their desire.[194]

This suggests an inscription of laws or rules onto the body, not an actual

internalization. "[A]cts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core

or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body," states Butler.[195] She

doesn't want to argue for a bodily core from which gender is derived, or out of

which gender is generated. Rather, she claims, "[A]cts, gestures, articulated and

enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an

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[192] Butler, 133.
[193] More on the possibilities of subversion later in this section on Butler.
[194] Butler 134/135.
[195] Butler, 136.

illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality."[196] Thus the gendering of the body follows the rules of heterosexuality through practices which only seem to refer to a fixed gender core.

Butler here argues that no such gendered core exists. Gender is neither fixed nor internalized, but rather inscribed onto the body, incorporated into daily practices. Gender is also produced by practices along the binary lines of heterosexuality. All this makes it appear natural, and therefore there seems to be a core from which gender stems. Butler writes

> That gender reality is created through sustained social
> performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a
> true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as
> part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character
> and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender
> configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist
> domination and compulsory heterosexuality.[197]

In this way, individuals of both genders produce and reproduce gendered power relations in their interactions, which in turn perpetuates norms and the idea that gender is fixed (or biologically stable).[198]

Why then do gender categories appear to be stable in society? Butler argues that gender is a performance "with clearly punitive consequences."[199]

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[196] Butler, 136.

[197] Butler, 141.

[198] Gender is also produced and formed by what it is not allowed to be, i.e. deviant from the heterosexual norm. "We have," writes Butler, "already considered the incest taboo and the prior taboo against homosexuality as the generative moments of gender identity, the prohibitions that produce identity along the culturally intelligible grids of an idealized and compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler 135). Gender identity is formed along the lines of compulsory heterosexuality which includes not engaging in forbidden bodily behaviors. Gender identity (the Self) is formed by rejecting the Other, in this case incest and homosexuality.

Those who do not comply with gender rules, or those who fail to do their gender

"correctly" are regularly punished.[200] Butler emphasizes,

> [T]he tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain
> discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the
> credibility of those productions—and the punishments that attend
> not agreeing to believe in them; the construction 'compels' our
> belief in its necessity and naturalness.[201]

In other words, the repetition of gender performance makes it appear natural.

However, this doesn't mean that gender isn't *real* or doesn't exist; it is *real* in the

sense that we enact it on a daily basis. Gender performance is a public action and

the public aims to maintain gender binaries.[202]

However, once these practices are exposed as performances, we can

imagine ways individuals can *subvert* the rules of gender, for example through

variations of gender expression and transgressing binary boundaries. Certain

performances, such as that of drag, can parody the idea of a gendered or sexed

core of the body. Butler writes, "The notion of an original or primary gender

identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and

the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities."[203] At the same time, this parody

is also subversive to the conventional rules of gender. "The performance of drag,"

Butler argues, "plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer

and the gender that is being performed."[204] In other words, when performance

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[199] Butler, 139.
[200] Butler, 140.
[201] Butler, 140.
[202] Butler, 140.
[203] Butler, 137.
[204] Butler, 137.

purposefully does not adhere to the rules of gender norms, it can be subversive because it questions the validity of such norms.

Thus the dimensions of sex, gender identity, and gender performance are opened up to criticism at the level of an individual's performance. Butler emphasizes, "*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency.*"[205] By playing with the strict rules of gender, one can on the one hand cross boundaries, and on the other hand expose gender performance as what it is: a construction, not a naturalized core. "In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence," Butler writes, "we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity."[206] These parodies do not mean that an original gender exists; they merely parody the notion of an original fixed gender or sex.[207]

But Butler warns that parody is not necessarily subversive simply because it is parody: it must reveal presuppositions about gender in ways that invoke reconsideration; it needs to destabilize the norm in some way.[208] And what constitutes an act of subversion? The parody has to be understood to be exposing the natural appearance of gender/sex and binary gender norms. "The loss of gender norms would have the effect of proliferating gender configurations, destabilizing substantive identity, and depriving the naturalizing narratives of

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[205] Butler, 137.
[206] Butler, 138.
[207] Butler, 138.
[208] Butler, 139.

compulsory heterosexuality of their central protagonists: 'man' and 'woman,'" Butler writes.[209] Without gender norms, gender would be something more fluid, and would certainly not fit into the man/woman binary.

How exactly does subversion work, and how is it related to agency? Butler argues, "In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; 'agency,' then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition."[210] Thus Butler locates the subject's agency in the variation of the repetitive enacting of gender. By virtue of this repetition, there is room for variance, which can include a deviation from the rules of gender. "As a strategy to denaturalize and resignify bodily categories," Butler claims, "I describe and propose a set of parodic practices based in a performative theory of gender acts that disrupt the categories of the body, sex, gender, and sexuality and occasion their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame."[211]

The agency of the subject lies in the subversive performance. An example of this could be drag, as Butler has already suggested. However, other performative acts might simply include doing something that seems to be in opposition to one's gender (for example if a woman recognized by society as feminine were to take up a drill and build a set of stairs, and so on). The idea is to undermine assumptions about what constitutes feminine and masculine acts and behaviors in a way that exposes their construction.

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[209] Butler, 146.
[210] Butler, 146.
[211] Butler, x.

Butler suggests feminists do the following:

> The critical task for feminism is not to establish a point of view outside of constructed identities; that conceit is the construction of an epistemological model that would disavow its own cultural location and, hence, promote itself as a global subject, a position that employs precisely the imperialist strategies that feminism ought to criticize. The critical task is, rather, to locate strategies of subversive repetition enabled by those constructions, to affirm the local possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of repetition that constitute identity and, therefore, present the immanent possibility of contesting them.[212]

Feminists as individuals should target their own practices of gender identity as a way of resisting compulsory heterosexuality and binary gender norms. We should not abandon identity politics as such, but rather rethink, restrategize, and destabilize what identity means in the first place instead of uncritically using it as a point of departure.[213]

In sum, Butler's theory of performativity offers a view of power not necessarily as domination, but as operating within the subjects' realm of production and action. Butler draws heavily on Foucault for large parts of her theory, including her notion that gender is produced by enacting it. The analysis of the construction of gender of course was developed by feminists (perhaps starting with Simone de Beauvoir), but Butler goes on further to say that not only gender, but also sex, is a constructed category. The body as a surface onto which norms are inscribed allows for the possibility of thinking about sex in this way;

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[212] Butler, 147.

[213] Identity as a construction allows for agency because one can imagine more than just the binary we are compelled to repeat within compulsory heterosexuality: in other words, identity as an effect rather than an origin means it isn't fixed or fully determined (Butler 147). These factors allow us to think of ways to subvert gender norms.

sex is an effect of gender. However, we shouldn't think of the body as a blank slate or coming before sex/gender, but rather that the boundaries of the body are produced by repetitive acts. Sex/gender meanings are practices that are both determined by rules of compulsory heterosexuality, but can also be subversive because they are repeated constantly. Subversion occurs when acts expose the natural appearance of sex and gender.

Critique

There are two main critiques I would like to offer of Butler and Foucault's post-structuralist accounts. First, I would like to talk about how material reality fits (or doesn't fit) into their theories, and second, I would like to question their focus on individual resistance (rather than collective resistance).

Both Foucault and Butler place emphasis on individuals and their interactions at local levels. While Foucault has a more general account of power relations, Butler writes specifically about gender. They both argue mostly on ideological terms, i.e. that norms are internalized and reproduced through various behaviors that subjects enact. However, if power is produced or exercised from force relations, what does the "force" consist of? If not power, then it must be structural inequalities like having an education versus not having one, access to resources, access to money, etc. If it really is the force relations that are the source of inequality, don't these have actual concrete material (not merely ideological) causes in the world? What causes people to internalize norms? How do we

combat economic and social processes (for example) that continually exploit certain groups of people (as groups, not individuals)? For instance, how should women (as a group) resist medically established knowledge of their bodies if they themselves do not have an opportunity to educate themselves?

Specifically Butler's theory is almost exclusively based in and around theory and ideologies. Investigating gender is an important part of feminist work, but we must not forget material and physical restrictions women face on a daily basis. What about the (threat of) violence women experience? What about the sexual division of labor and its material and economic disadvantages to women? One *could* argue that these two examples could be construed as performance. In other words, women are taking on their gendered roles and performing according to the norms in society: that women are passive, docile, and non-violent, that women do certain kinds of work and not others, all in accordance to gender rules.

As one of the leading feminists at this point in time, at least in the U.S., one might be able to criticize Butler for only addressing gender in her work. Perhaps one shouldn't rely on one theorist to do everything, but it seems to me that the physical and economic harm done to women are major issues feminists should be dealing with. Offering an individualist solution of subverting gender norms is a weak feminist solution to the more pressing issues women face, for example physical safety and economic independence.

What solutions do Foucault and Butler offer? They both argue (perhaps Butler more so than Foucault) that since power is produced at local levels,

dominant power relations can also be subverted and resisted at these levels. For Butler, this means that by varying and deviating from gendered norms, we claim our agency as subjects (as producers of power) as well as subvert and resist compulsory heterosexuality. However, the solution she provides (and Foucault seems to have a similar notion of resistance) seems to be an individualist solution to a systemic problem. Although the power of individual resistance shouldn't be devalued or underestimated, there doesn't seem to be room for any sort of collectivity or collective action. Yes, we can all decide to change our gender performance in ways that resist, but we are merely a sum of individuals. But how could working together change resistance to make it more powerful? Because compulsory heterosexuality infiltrates all areas of life, merely changing ourselves doesn't seem to be enough to enable a more dramatic shift on broader institutional and ideological levels.

In Butler's critique of feminist identity politics, it is correct to acknowledge its failures, especially its past exclusions of groups of women and individuals. However, identity politics as a feminist method has also achieved some changes in laws and regulations surrounding women's lives, for example laws on violence against women, women's quotas in the political realm, mothers' rights as workers, etc. For example, feminist theorist and lawyer Catharine MacKinnon has successfully represented women who were raped during the Bosnian conflict (1992-1995) to posit war rape (which affects women in

particular) as a human rights violation. Another example is that 49% of the Rwandan government consists of women due to recent quota changes.[214]

Women have been and still are organizing around the fact that they as women face certain sexist structures. So one can't say that having 'woman' as a point of departure for feminists has not achieved anything. Although, perhaps it is time to reconsider and adjust feminist methods so as not to exclude large groups of women, and to accommodate new theories of sex/gender. However, the structuralist approach (that posits women as an oppressed group) can subvert what it means/meant to be a woman: i.e. a mother but not a worker, or a wife (and an object of physical abuse) but not a politician. Women have subverted these roles not as individuals, but as a collectivity out of the recognition that they are affected by patriarchal structures as a group, i.e. as *women*.

How do race and class fit into this model? While Butler does briefly acknowledge the intersection of gender with race and class, she omits any further analysis of them pertaining to her theory of performativity. Perhaps this is because she isn't a structuralist and therefore doesn't analyze gender, race, class, and sexuality in terms of structuralist models of power. Indeed, her theory is a departure from these models. Is there a way to include ideas about race and class into performativity? One could imagine performing in certain ways based on identities of gender, race, and class. For example, a white, working class woman

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[214] Gumisai Mutume, "Women Break into African Politics," *Africa Recovery,* Vol. 18 #1 (April 2004), page 4, <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol18no1/181women.htm> (26 March 2007).

might perform in certain ways based on her understanding of herself. She might embrace ways of speaking and participating in cultural events because her peers are doing it and because this is how she understands her social position. However, this also assumes she fully understands her "place" in society. If she wanted to resist norms in the way Butler proposes, she would in addition to this knowledge need to be willing to act, to be willing to subvert. Another problem with this analysis of class is also that it masks the fact that class is not just performed—it is imposed by material differences, which again leads back to the criticism that Butler (and Foucault) do not really address material inequalities.

How, as feminists, are we supposed to combat these issues based on the idea of performance? A large, organized force is necessary to fight not only against compulsory heterosexuality (for this is one of the big parts of misogyny and sexism), but also against concrete barriers to the liberation of women. Individual acts of resistance are important, but we need to find a way to organize collectively and without excluding large groups of women whom we are supposedly fighting for. It seems to me that collective action is a way of gaining even more agency, becoming more powerful in resisting patriarchal structures, and looking out for the interests of fellow women. Ultimately, both Foucault and Butler fail to account for a sense of collectivity, and thus also for a concept of solidarity that might emerge from it.

PART FOUR

When we find ourselves in societies that are unjust and oppressive for certain groups of people, how do we negotiate justice? What are the sources of domination and exploitation and how can we fight them collectively? What could an account of feminist solidarity between women be?

After considering why and how people form societies and groups in Part Two, Part Three deals with the possibilities of expanding and reconsidering the power relations assumed in these structuralist accounts. While these accounts are useful for understanding how power works on local, individual levels, there is little or no analysis of how individuals can join *together* to subvert oppressive powers.

Butler gives us an analysis of gender and how performance can subvert gender norms. Her account is adequate in providing ways in which individuals can do this, but there is a much stronger need to go after the *sources* of the problems rather than just the *effects*.[215] Chandra Mohanty, for example, emphasizes the real material conditions Third World women workers face due to the effects of capitalist (and racist and sexist) structures of domination and exploitation. It is more effective on a larger scale, it would seem, to stop the (re)production of oppression by collective action than to change and subvert it at

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[215] This is not to say that effects themselves aren't also sources of oppressive structures, or that they in the very least contribute to them.

local, individual levels as suggested by Butler, especially if this means significant changes in women's material reality (as Mohanty hopes for).

A notion of collectivity is important in order to create a model of subversion and resistance to systematic institutional oppression. Collective action is only possible when people come together as a group with a commitment to one another and to a cause (e.g., fighting sexist oppression). While there are many theories about when and why patriarchal structures came about, at this point in time it is perhaps more helpful for feminists to locate and dismantle the sources of oppression today. What we know about patriarchal norms (including norms surrounding sex and gender) is that they, as well as racist, class-based, and homophobic ideologies, are perpetuated through and in various societal institutions, for example the educational system, economic and governmental institutions, and the media. If we agree that these dominant structures are unjust, then we need to strategize around fighting and resisting these institutions. Chandra Mohanty will give us some insight as to how we can build solidarities around this kind of structural notion of oppression. She emphasizes the need to analyze women workers' contexts in order for them to recognize structural similarities, and through this recognition the need to organize against structures that dominate and exploit them.

This is not to deny Foucault's and Butler's claim that individuals produce power. Indeed, another source of oppression lies within ourselves. It is extremely important to recognize how we ourselves internalize and perpetuate various

oppressive ideologies and stances. Indeed, Mohanty writes specifically about Third World women workers who have various levels of interpretation of their own situations because oppressive structures mask the ways in which they (the structures) construct (hetero)sexist, racist, and class-based identities. bell hooks, too, writes specifically about how women have come to internalize sexism, racism, and classism. More specifically, she is concerned about power relations between individual women and among groups of women, and about finding a way to overcome our own biases in order to stop oppressing each other on individual levels. According to hooks, this needs to be accomplished before women can bond.

While Mohanty and hooks provide us with belief-based (or intellectual) approaches to solidarity and collective action, we cannot expect bonding between women to occur solely on the level of knowledge, analysis, and education. I will present Sandra Bartky's ideas about how an emotive aspect, specifically the emotion of sympathy can be connected to solidarity. She criticizes previous theoretical notions of solidarity that neglect the emotional aspect of solidarity. Bartky, then, will help us understand how our emotions can motivate us to bond with other women and help sustain groups and communities that are committed to fighting oppressive forces.

Institutional and Ideological Sources of Oppression

One major source of oppression is the institutions within society. They produce, reinforce, and perpetuate (hetero)sexist, racist, and class-based stereotypes and norms. Capitalism divides labor into sexist, racist, and class-based sectors that contribute to the advancement of some groups to the detriment of others. There are many lower-paying and care-oriented jobs that employ mostly women, for example child-care workers.[216] Many low-paying service sector jobs often employ primarily people of color. The educational system discriminates against people of color and poor people, and (re-)enforces gender roles. There are many ways in which the judicial system punishes women and people of color in different and more severe ways than white men.[217]

What can be done about the systematic oppression that is shaped by institutions? What reasons are there to bond with others when, for example, the capitalist system encourages competition among workers? In *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes about Third World Women's Work and describes herself as an anti-

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[216] According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "the median hourly earnings of ways and salary child care workers were $8.06 in May 2004." U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Child Care Workers," *Occupational Outlook Handbook,* 4 August 2006, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos170.htm> (17 April 2007).

[217] According to Professor of Law Vernellia R. Randall at the University of Dayton, Ohio, "[b]lack men are eight times more likely to be in prison that white men," which indicates deep discrimination in the justice system. Vernellia R. Randall, "Racial Discrimination Prevails— Minorities Ill Treated," *Race, Racism, and the Law: Speaking Truth to Power!!* <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/06hrights/georegions/northamerica/china05.htm> (17 April 17, 2007).

capitalist feminist.[218] She aims to build a cross-cultural, international politics of solidarity.[219] In her view, capitalism creates the "ideological construction of jobs and tasks in terms of notions of appropriate femininity, domesticity, (hetero)sexuality, and racial and cultural stereotypes."[220]

Mohanty uses Maria Mies' 1982 study of the lacemakers of Narsapur to exemplify her argument.[221] These women's work of lace-making is defined as "leisure activity" that is completed in seclusion because of their higher caste and status as housewives.[222] In the study, men "actually defined themselves as exporters and businessmen who invested in women's labor," thus profiting off of the women's work. In this example, Mohanty shows how the identity of lace-making women is constructed in certain ways by caste and gender ideologies that construct men as the "breadwinners" and women as housewives (of a certain caste) that "defines women in terms of their place within the home, conjugal marriage, and heterosexuality."[223] Thus such constructions render invisible women's material realities of work, and the women themselves have various levels of analysis and insight into their roles as housewives and mothers versus

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[218] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 141. More specifically, I have looked at the Introduction, and Chapters Four and Six.
[219] Mohanty, 140.
[220] Mohanty, 142.
[221] Mohanty, 149-152.
[222] Mohanty 149/150.
[223] Mohanty, 150.

workers.[224] In other words, institutional influence masks itself in other forms of power that people internalize and produce.

This means that women's work is defined in terms of gender, racial, and class parameters, which Mohanty classifies as new modes of colonization.[225] She emphasizes:

> (1) the persistence of patriarchal definitions of womanhood in the arena of wage labor; (2) the versatility and specificity of capitalist exploitative processes providing the basis for thinking about potential common interests and solidarity between Third World women workers; and (3) the challenges for collective organizing in a context where traditional union methods (based on the idea of the class interests of the male worker) are inadequate as strategies for empowerment.[226]

Mohanty does not make an argument for the common experiences of Third World women workers, but wants concrete *common interests* to serve as a basis for cross-national solidarity: a "common context of struggle" against a sexist and racist capitalism.[227] She advocates the view of women as agents rather than victims within subordination and exploitation.[228] In this context, Mohanty defines Third World women as "both women from the geographical Third World and immigrant and indigenous women of color in the United States and Western Europe," and argues that their *context within capitalism* explains "crucial features of the capitalist processes of exploitation and domination."[229] Because of their

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[224] Mohanty, 151.
[225] Mohanty, 142.
[226] Mohanty, 143.
[227] Mohanty, 143.
[228] Mohanty, 143.
[229] Mohanty, 144.

common identity as "workers in a particular division of labor at this historical moment" there is potential for feminist solidarity.[230]

There is a possibility for women to come together and unite for their common interests and goals because of structural similarities. Their gender, race, class, and national identities are situated and produced historically and geographically within a patriarchal, capitalist structure. Mohanty is very careful not to essentialize or base these identities on shared experiences. These women's lives are comparable, but not the same; they exist within similar ideological constructions of "women's work."[231] Political solidarity and common interests are "defined as a community or collectivity among women workers across class, race, and national boundaries that is based on shared material interests and identity and common ways of reading world," writes Mohanty.[232] She argues that there are "interconnections among gender, race, and ethnicity, and the ideologies of work that locate women in particular exploitative contexts."[233] Therefore, women workers can unite across various boundaries because their identities are constructed in similar ways within the capitalist system. Mohanty gives three examples from the U.S., Britain, and India that show how the work of immigrant women workers in the Silicon Valley and Britain, as well as the lacemakers of Narsapur, is defined structurally based on capitalist, sexist, and racist ideologies. "These Third World women," Mohanty declares, "are defined out of the

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[230] Mohanty, 144.
[231] Mohanty, 144.
[232] Mohanty, 145.
[233] Mohanty, 148.

labor/capital process as if work in their case isn't necessary for economic, social, psychic autonomy, independence, and self-determination."[234] Based on these structural impositions, then, women workers can derive common interests. Nevertheless, it is important for Mohanty to keep open subjective "needs, desires, and choices."[235]

I call the type of solidarity Mohanty describes *coalitional solidarity*. Coalitional solidarity is formed when women *choose* to become part of a common struggle due to the recognition that they are located in similarly constructed contexts and have common interests in resisting oppressive powers. Thus there must be an awareness or consciousness of one's own and of others' situations. It is also important to note that coalitional solidarity is not identity-based, but rather focused on the common goal of fighting against dominant structures responsible for their shared oppression(s).

Mohanty illustrates how solidarity could be formed through the three case studies. She argues, for example, "celebrating each other as daughters, wives, and mothers is one form of generating solidarity on the shop floor, but it is also a powerful refeminization strategy."[236] This leads into a discussion of how hard it is to organize homeworkers (women who work at home, i.e. in a private space)

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[234] Mohanty, 160.

[235] Mohanty, 162. Mohanty here posits objective feminist (and anti-capitalist) interests of women workers whether they realize these or not. However, it is problematic to make these assumptions because of the differences between women, and it also takes away women's own ideas about what their interests are. If there are objective collective interests, then how do we know what they are, and how do we negotiate our own self-interests around them? Are they the same, or do we come to an understanding of ourselves based on our (self-)interests? Are there interests that exist outside of those that the structures impose?

[236] Mohanty, 157

because gender relationships and heterosexual kinship are so deeply ingrained. Mohanty writes, "all these case studies indicate ways in which ideologies of domesticity, femininity, and race form the basis of the construction of the notion of 'women's work' for Third World Women in the contemporary economy."[237] It is difficult to organize because, as Mohanty asserts, there are "different levels of consciousness of their own exploitation, different modes of resistance, and different understandings of the contradictions they face and of their own agency as workers."[238] In other words, women have different levels of understanding of their situations, which might make it hard to form coalitions and raise feminist consciousness.

Mohanty defines solidarity as "mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities."[239] She emphasizes the fact that it is not the commonality of oppression that brings people together; rather, people show solidarity who "have chosen to work and fight together."[240] In an effort to maintain diversity and difference among actors, Mohanty argues for a "praxis-oriented, active political struggle"—not "sisterhood."[241] Thus she stays away from a definition of solidarity that would define the group as homogenous and acting based on shared status as it was done during the Second Wave. Mohanty does not agree that women should show solidarity to one another and act as a group solely on the

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[237] Mohanty, 158.
[238] Mohanty, 161.
[239] Mohanty, 7.
[240] Mohanty, 7.
[241] Mohanty, 7.

basis of their shared oppression.[242] She writes, "historicizing and locating political agency is a necessary alternative to formulations of the 'universality' of gendered oppression and struggles."[243] For Mohanty, the specificity of historical and cultural locations and common contexts of struggle are particularly important, and also that one cannot neglect race and class aspects when theorizing about gender.[244]

In Mohanty's account, women form coalitional solidarity out of the recognition that patriarchal capitalism is exploitative and not in their best (self)interest. This idea is similar to Hobbes' idea that people join society out of the recognition that the state of nature is unsafe. In other words, self-interest motivates people to form societies (coalitions) that would protect them from harm. Both Hobbes and Mohanty describe the notion that entering into a sort of coalition makes self-interest expand to "all-interest." There are assumed objective interests that are applicable to all, which is why they join society or a coalitional solidarity. Yet, this seems to be merely an expansion of one's own self-interest and entails no further transformation or obligations.[245]

A potential point of critique here arises when we think about the underlying assumptions of common interests. For Mohanty, the capitalist structures she describes impose certain objective interests that women realize they

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[242] See also the discussion in Part One in the section titled "Reactions to the Second Wave."
[243] Mohanty, 107.
[244] Mohanty, 107/108.
[245] As the reader will see later, this stands in contrast to Rousseau's and hooks' ideas about the formation of societies/collectivities in which transformations of the self lead to the recognition of certain obligations to fellow members of these societies/collectivities.

have once they recognize the ideological constructions that serve as a basis for their identities. In other words, Mohanty assumes that these women share common, objective, and material interests that exist even before the women themselves come to realize them. This could be problematic because women might not be aware of or agree upon what the common structures are, nor whether they can deduce common interests from those structures. As I will discuss next, individual women are often unaware of and disagree over those common interests and over whether they individually produce power to oppress others.

(Internalized) Oppression at the Social, Individual Level

Coalitional solidarity can be characterized as a belief-based approach. In short, women workers recognize (through analysis of the beliefs about their identities) that they share a similar context of exploitation within a patriarchal, racist capitalism. This recognition motivates them to unite for common goals, for example to strengthen their rights as women workers. Mohanty seems to imply that once women have recognized their situation and want to organize together, coalitions will be readily formed. In other words, the only thing keeping women from uniting in the first place is that there are different levels of consciousness about their situations, and that a lot of women don't analyze their work and contexts in ways that would enable them to criticize capitalist, racist, and patriarchal practices.

This is because oppression takes many forms, especially at social and individual levels. The problem becomes one of helping women recognize their common sources of oppression through the analysis of ideological processes that mask material and institutional power relations. In order to form coalitions, it is necessary to acknowledge power relations between individuals. Mohanty, although she acknowledges that women don't always see past their social biases and constructs, does not explicitly address ways in which women's own biases might be precisely what prevents them from forming coalitions.

In her essay "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women," bell hooks argues that three major barriers exist that prevent women from building solidarity.[246] hooks provides us with an account that incorporates social and individual reasons for why women's difference (including internalized sexism, racism, and classism, as well as homophobia) comes between us.

According to hooks, one of the reasons for the division between women that prevents solidarity is the internalized sexism in women. Women need to end their own learned sexist behaviors. These include sexist attitudes towards each other, including woman-to-woman relationships that are characterized by

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[246] bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women," in *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*, ed. Diana Tietjens Meyer (New York: Routledge, 1997), 485-500. This article was originally published in 1984 at a time when there were intense tensions within the feminist movement. hooks writes in reaction to the notion of "sisterhood" put forth by mostly middle-class, white women who were organizing in the U.S. at that time. See also Part One for hooks' analysis and criticism of this notion of "sisterhood."

"aggression, contempt, and competitiveness."[247] She quotes Toni Morrison on this matter:

> I am alarmed by the violence that women do to each other:
> professional violence, competitive violence, emotional violence. I
> am alarmed by the willingness of women to enslave other women.
> I am alarmed by a growing absence of decency on the killing floor
> of professional women's worlds.[248]

In other words, women have internalized sexist attitudes that lead them to relate to each other in ways that perpetuate misogyny and woman-hating. Women cannot achieve feminist or political goals when this is the case. hooks insists, "[w]e must renew our efforts to help women unlearn sexism if we are to develop affirming personal relationships as well as political unity."[249] If we are to bond on either personal or political levels, we must learn not to hate each other like misogynist structures have taught us, and try to overcome this horizontal hostility.[250]

Another significant barrier to women's bonding is racism. Although feminism has now addressed racism within, it is still not committed to resist racist oppression even though racism is interconnected with sexism.[251] It is understandable that black women, for example, do not want to support white women who as a group or individually exploit them, and there is certainly more need for women to investigate these interconnections.[252] The work that has been accomplished, for example antiracism workshops, has been too focused on

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[247] hooks, 488/489.
[248] hooks quoting Toni Morrision, 489.
[249] hooks, 489.
[250] See the introduction for a discussion of horizontal hostility.
[251] hooks, 491.
[252] hooks, 490/491.

individual change, hooks argues. She believes there is a "need for corresponding change in political commitment and action."[253] What has happened on a personal level for many white feminists in terms of overcoming their own biases should inform theory and activism on a much larger scale. "Until white supremacy is understood and attacked by white women," hooks declares, "there can be no bonding between them and multi-ethnic groups of women."[254] Women need to make a political commitment to end racism in order for there to be a basis for solidarity among white women and women of color.[255]

hooks also emphasizes the elimination of *internalized* racism and the hating of other ethnic groups, for example the tensions between blacks and other racial minority groups.[256] She thinks there should be an effort to learn about other ethnic groups and cultures: "Women must explore various ways to communicate with one another cross-culturally if we are to develop political solidarity."[257] hooks also notes, "[r]especting diversity does not mean uniformity or sameness."[258] Women of minority groups must also overcome racist attitudes they have internalized in order to encourage bonding and solidarity instead of ignorance of the other groups' situations.

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[253] hooks, 492/493.
[254] hooks, 493.
[255] hooks, 493.
[256] hooks, 493.
[257] hooks, 495.
[258] hooks, 494.

Class and the need to recognize class struggles is a third political division between women.[259] hooks writes that socialist feminists (who are mostly white) have not raised enough consciousness about class privilege.[260] Again, it is not enough to recognize class differences, but to commit to overcoming them within a feminist context. "Every woman can stand in political opposition to sexist, racist, heterosexist, and class-based oppression," hooks writes.[261] Even though a woman may not be part of a particular oppressed group, she can commit to fighting against the oppression that group faces. hooks argues, "Women must learn to accept responsibility for fighting oppressions that may not directly affect us as individuals."[262] This is necessary to overcome the major injustices in our society. In a feminist context, this means that women (who have feminist goals) must be willing to fight for causes that may not directly relate to them, because, as hooks argues, racism, classism, and sexism are interrelated.[263]

hooks seems to be concerned with relationships among groups of women, for example, white women and Asian-American women or lower-class and upper-class women. In contrast to Mohanty's vision of solidarity, hooks bases her definition of solidarity on the struggle of women to overcome hurdles in order to bond and fight together. I call hooks' notion of solidarity *sisterhood solidarity*. Sisterhood solidarity can be achieved through women's struggle to overcome their own biases and truly commit to fighting together as feminists, not only against

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[259] hooks, 496.
[260] hooks, 497.
[261] hooks, 497.
[262] hooks, 498.
[263] One could also add homophobia to this list, although this isn't hooks' focus.

sexist oppression, but also against racism, classism, and heterosexism in recognition that these oppressions affect diverse groups of women. Once women come together, there should also be commitment involved: "Solidarity requires sustained, ongoing commitment," writes hooks.[264] In other words, a certain kind of obligation is created.

Unlike Mohanty, hooks does not outright reject a notion of sisterhood, but nevertheless calls for a re-conception:

> When women actively struggle in a truly supportive way to understand our differences, to change misguided, distorted perspectives, we lay the foundation for the experience of political solidarity. Solidarity is not the same as support. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build Sisterhood.[265]

Thus women must acknowledge and commit to fighting against their own sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism if any kind of unity is to be achieved: women must overcome the divisions between them before they are able to bond.

hooks implies that once women recognize their own biases, they will commit to other women's struggles (which may not directly relate to their own). It might be too hopeful of hooks to think that simply by recognizing privilege, women will actually want to commit to fighting against it. It is extremely hard to give up privilege, but even the mere recognition of privilege or injustice might not be enough to convince women to form solidarity with one another. However, I

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[264] hooks, 499.

[265] hooks, 499. Again, as in Mohanty's account, there seems to be a problematic assumption of "women's shared interests." It is not quite clear from hooks' quote whether these shared interests are objective or subjective, and how they come to be. Are they formed through bonding, or do they exist prior to women building solidarity? Are they the result of shared structural oppression, or might they be created and contested in discursive communities?

would like to believe that once injustices are recognized, women will want to fight against them. This means that once consciousness is raised or women come to their own conclusions about sexist oppression, they will want to resist it.

The kind of transformation of beliefs within feminist and political selves hooks describes is related to Rousseau's idea of the transformation of humans when they enter into society, as well as the creation of moral obligations to one another. Both Rousseau and hooks argue that a certain kind of moral transformation takes place in the self once people enter into this new society/group. For Rousseau, people become human when they enter into society, and they also gain a certain moral quality in their insistence on liberty and equality for all citizens. Similarly, hooks posits a moral feminist responsibility for women who bond with each other in the sisterhood solidarity she describes. Once women educate themselves about other women's situations and decide to bond with one another, they have transformed their feminist selves and made a commitment to fight against the overlapping oppressions of all women. Thus, there is an obligation to justice and responsibility that both Rousseau and hooks recognize for people who enter into a bond of some sort.

hooks' account stands in contrast to Mohanty's overall concept of coalitional solidarity. What hooks describes is the obligation to fight women's oppressions even if one oneself does not belong to the oppressed group. In other words, even though a primary motivation for women to enter into feminist struggles together might be self-interest (i.e. to better their own personal

situations) in both Mohanty's and hooks' accounts, for Mohanty, entering into coalitional practices does not entail any further obligations. There is no additional transformation that takes place. One could also say that in hooks' and Rousseau's accounts (in contrast to Mohanty's and Hobbes'), a new kind of value is created in which the perspective of the group as a whole is more important than individual perspectives or goals.[266]

The tension between these two accounts might be due to hooks' and Mohanty's respective understanding of power. While hooks tends to emphasize overarching, group-based oppressions that sort people into general groups based on gender, race, and class (and sexuality), Mohanty is very careful to be as specific as possible to a certain group's historical and geographical location. So although oppressive structures are overlapping for hooks, her analysis fails to

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[266] It might be more helpful to say that entering into feminist solidarity with other women is always out of one's self-interest (for both hooks and Mohanty). This self-interest, at least for hooks, expands into more than a coalition for women whose identities are constructed similarly; it includes the additional obligation to fight against overlapping oppressions women face, especially for those of us who are in advantaged positions towards and over others. Perhaps there is a way to side-step the interest problem by talking about *values*. When entering into a group or transforming one's self, it might be part of forming one's self-interest. In other words, through the intellectual (belief-based) and emotional processes described above, one realizes what one's values are and also that they are in one's self-interest: self-interest and values are in fact not separate. For example, I might come to the conclusion that patriarchal structures are oppressing me and therefore think that they are to be resisted (i.e. are not in my self-interest. At the same time, I am taking a feminist stance (have feminist values or beliefs), and that this is the same as my self-interest. However, having feminist values, I realize that I have an obligation to other women as well. Therefore, I can take these feminist values and apply them to goals and don't have to worry about whether I have shared interests with other feminists. It is enough for us to have shared feminist values. Thus feminists can build solidarities based on shared values instead of having to deal with problems of identity or objective interests.

account for the very specific ways in which identities are constructed (whereas Mohanty does).

Like Mohanty, hooks offers a belief-based approach to solidarity that has to do with struggle. Implicitly, hooks argues that women can overcome their own biases through learning and confronting each other in constructive ways. Sisterhood solidarity can be achieved by overcoming social and economical divisions within our society, namely (internalized) sexism, (internalized) racism, and classism (as well as heterosexism). Her notion of solidarity is the united strength of women fighting against sexist oppression. However, she warns, "[w]oman-to-woman negative, aggressive behavior is not unlearned when all critical judgment is suspended."[267] In other words, we don't come together and simply bond by avoiding all conflict. Instead, hooks suggests, "when women come together, rather than pretend union, we [should] acknowledge that we are divided and must develop strategies to overcome fears, prejudices, resentments, competitiveness, etc."[268] Sisterhood solidarity doesn't simply happen; it must be achieved. "Women," hooks declares, "need to have the experience of working through hostility to arrive at understanding and solidarity if only to free ourselves from the sexist socialization that tells us to avoid confrontation because we will be victimized or destroyed."[269] She writes further, "If women always seek to avoid confrontation, to always be 'safe,' we may never experience any

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[267] hooks, 498.
[268] hooks, 498.
[269] hooks, 499.

revolutionary change, any transformation individually or collectively."[270] This process would enable women to enter into the coalitional account of solidarity Mohanty offers. In other words, women from similar contexts (as Mohanty describes them) might still need to overcome (hetero)sexist, racist, and class-based biases before they can enter into coalitional struggle with one another. Thus hooks can be seen as offering a first step in the process of feminist solidarity among women.

Similarly to hooks, instead of assuming automatic unity among women, Mohanty describes unity as something that must be struggled for. Mohanty agrees with Bernice Johnson Reagon who is interested in looking at differences within political struggles. Reagon sees coalition as a commonality of struggles and survival.[271] Within this struggle to build coalitions and solidarity, hooks and Mohanty take a belief-based approach, emphasizing structural contexts and the need to educate oneself about diverse groups of women. hooks, especially, argues that this will lead to transformation; this stresses the need to overcome one's own biases before one can build solidarity with other women. This process, then, combined with a feminist analysis of one's own and other women's situations becomes a necessary step when fighting oppression at institutional and ideological levels.

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[270] hooks, 499.
[271] Mohanty, 117.

The Emotional Aspect of Solidarity

Thus beliefs play a large role in gaining and transforming our feminist selves. The recognition of injustice and confrontation and struggle among women to communicate their situations to one another certainly encourage the forming of solidarity. However, Mohanty doesn't address the emotional aspects of such recognition or confrontation. hooks does, but only as a side-effect of the confrontation of women's beliefs and agendas. But rational or intellectual approaches to feminist solidarity-building might not be enough motivation for women to actually join the struggle. The former two approaches (Mohanty's and hooks') might not be psychologically sufficient to initiate and sustain feminist solidarities between women. How could emotions, for example sympathy, serve as a motivation to build feminist solidarity among women?

In the fourth chapter of *"Sympathy and Solidarity" and other Essays*, Sandra Bartky draws on Max Scheler's *Zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühle und von Liebe und Hass (The Nature of Sympathy)* to show what it might mean to have sympathy (a "feeling-with") the Other.[272] She writes about the emotional component she thinks theorists have neglected in their efforts to formulate theories about education and transformation of the self.[273] Various approaches so far have been mostly intellectual efforts, which Bartky argues are

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[272] Sandra Lee Bartky, *"Sympathy and Solidarity" and other Essays* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 73. This chapter is called "Sympathy and Solidarity." It is important to note that Bartky uses either the word "feeling-with" or the German word "Sympathie" instead of the English "sympathy." "Sympathy" has a condescending connotation, whereas the German *Sympathie* (or *Mitgefühl*) is more truly a "fellow-feeling" or "feeling-with."

[273] Bartky, 72.

necessary, but not enough to transform feminist selves.[274] She considers the following questions:

> What is it, exactly, to become more 'sensitive' to the Other, in addition, that is, to my learning more about her circumstances? Does it require that I feel what she feels? Is this possible? Is it desirable? Does it require that I somehow 'share' her emotion *without* feeling precisely what she feels? What is it to share an emotion with someone anyhow? Does an understanding of someone else's feelings require that I 'identify' with her? If yes, what exactly is 'identification'? Does a heightened sensitivity require an imaginative entry into the affective life of the Other?[275]

Bartky advocates not only trying to educate feminists about their own biases, but also demanding "growth and refinement of our [feminists'] affective repertoire."[276] Bartky claims, "few theorists have examined closely enough the emotional dimension that is part of the search for better cognitions or the affective taste of the kinds of intersubjectivity that can build political solidarities."[277] In other words, it is not enough, for example, for a white woman feminist to "work on" her racism and expand her knowledge of the Other *intellectually*, but she must also become more sensitive to the Other *emotionally*.

The first of four kinds of fellow-feeling Bartky describes (drawing on Scheler) is "true" fellow-feeling: "feeling identically and at the same moment what the Other is feeling."[278] It occurs when two (or more) people have the same feeling based on a common source. For example, when two people are watching a movie and they both laugh at a funny scene, this can be called "true" fellow-

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[274] Bartky, 71.
[275] Bartky, 72.
[276] Bartky, 73.
[277] Bartky, 72.
[278] Bartky, 74.

feeling. This is perhaps the kind of feeling Second Wave feminists were expecting when they called for "sisterhood." In other words, they expected all women to feel the same way based on the common experience of sexist oppression. What they didn't realize was that people must be very similar in order for this to happen, for example in terms of racial and socio-economic background. One can't expect everyone to have exactly the same (or even a similar) feeling when exposed to a common thing. It is precisely because people, and in this case women, lived under different circumstances and dominant structures that they in fact *didn't* have the same experience of sexist oppression and thus didn't share common feelings.

The concept of "emotional infection" is the second kind of fellow-feeling Bartky describes.[279] This occurs when a person is "infected" by what others around her are feeling. Even though Scheler thought this form of feeling-with might lead to herd mentality, Bartky argues that it can sustain and be used to build solidarity within groups of people.[280] For example, political demonstrations not only serve to protest and to express an opinion, but also to experience the power of uniting and supporting others in fighting for a cause.[281] Emotional infection can sustain collective action and communities; in other words, it serves as a motivation to stay in the struggle with other women.[282] This is the kind of psychological power hooks and Mohanty fail to account for.

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[279] Bartky, 74.
[280] Bartky, 75.
[281] Bartky, 76.
[282] Bartky, 76.

The last kind of fellow-feeling in Bartky's analysis is "genuine fellow-feeling."[283] Here, the distance to the Other is maintained, so there is one who feels and one who feels-with.[284] In this case, it is not a rehearsal of one's own suffering, but more like a commiserating-with.[285] Bartky writes, "A loving orientation toward the Other is at the basis of my desire to feel-with her."[286] This means one can feel-with the Other in a true, loving way, without taking her suffering for one's own.[287]

"Genuine fellow-feeling" maintains the boundaries to the other person and thus recognizes difference and the fact that one can never fully feel exactly what the other person is feeling. In other words, one can let oneself feel what one imagines the Other might be feeling like without merging one's emotions with hers, and with the understanding that the two are distinct: one does not put oneself in her shoes; it remains *her* feeling. Bartky finds Scheler's insistence on maintaining such ego boundaries useful: "the preservation of the otherness of the Other works against her re-colonization."[288] While it is important to feel close to the Other, for example at political demonstrations, one should not "rob the disadvantaged of her specificity and uniqueness" by emotionally merging with

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[283] Bartky, 77.
[284] Bartky, 77.
[285] Bartky, 78.
[286] Bartky, 78.
[287] The third kind of fellow-feeling not mentioned here is "emotional identification." "I can feel-with the other to such an extent that my self disappears entirely into her self or else I can take her ego wholly into my own" (Bartky, 76). In this case, no individuality remains: one merges into the other. I have purposefully left it out of my discussion because Bartky uses the fourth kind of fellow-feeling to critique this: "genuine fellow-feeling" is the more appropriate kind of sympathy because it maintains and preserves the boundaries and uniqueness of the Other.
[288] Bartky, 80.

her, as Bartky writes.[289] At the same time, Bartky argues, maintaining a certain kind of distance helps political activists who "are fully cognizant of and emotionally attuned to the wretchedness of the wretched of the earth" not to fall into despair and psychological paralysis.[290]

How are we to emotionally understand others' situations when we have never ourselves experienced these situations? For example, how can I understand the trauma of someone who has been raped if I myself have never been raped? In Bartky's view, Scheler seems to imply that this understanding is not "put together out of bits and pieces of [one's] own experience but [arises] from [one's] capacity to intuit the feeling states and experiences of others."[291] A sort of immediate apprehension takes place, which might not always be correct, but that is founded upon cognitive background information of the others' situation.[292] Thus feeling-with is not a merging nor a comparison with the Other; it is an intuition which can transform one's self.[293] Bartky writes,

> I find attractive Scheler's idea that what motivates the effort to establish a positive affective bond with the Other is love. 'Love' is not precisely the term we need: perhaps 'solidarity' or even 'sisterhood' or a strong disposition toward sisterhood or solidarity would serve our purposes better.[294]

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[289] Bartky, 80.
[290] Bartky, 81.
[291] Bartky, 82.
[292] Bartky, 82/83.
[293] Bartky, 83.
[294] Bartky, 79.

A third factor that plays into *Sympathie* with cognition and "love" is imagination.[295] This involves a projection into a certain situation, not just its visualization, but also trying to feel what a person feels.[296]

Smith's and Bartky's projects are related in the obvious way that they both write about sympathy. Their conception of sympathy is similar in the sense that they both argue that it can be used to motivate people's sense of responsibility and caring within a society (or for Bartky, within specific political groupings). However, whereas Smith thinks sympathy is a natural response, Bartky aims at describing sympathy as a feeling-with that one might be able to learn and practice. For her, it is a large part of understanding other people's positions and experiences within society.

Bartky's descriptions of sympathy with an Other are focused mainly on relations between individuals. She directs her attention to advantaged feminists who are doing work on their selves to overcome their own biases. However, it is possible to expand her analysis of fellow-feeling onto groups and relations between groups, which might be important if we want to include sympathy as part of the accounts of solidarity that hooks and Mohanty give. In other words, it is possible for an individual to feel-with not only other individuals (who may or may

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[295] Bartky, 83.

[296] Bartky, 84/85. Here I sense an important connection to what María Lugones argues in her article titled "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception." (in *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*, Diana Tietjens Meyer, ed., New York, Routledge, 1997). Lugones writes, "I think that travelling to someone's 'world' is a way of identifying with them…because by travelling to their 'world' we can understand *what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes.*" (page 158) Lugones thus similarly argues that "travelling" to another's "world" is a way to better understand that person's reality (and feelings).

not be like oneself in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality), but also towards other groups (and their members) in general. With an understanding of how certain groups are situated in society in regards to race, class, sexuality, and gender, one can sympathize with the injustices and oppression these groups face. For example, I can sympathize with the Native American women who were subjected to forced sterilization in the 1970s in the U.S.[297] Due to an effort on my part to educate myself about this part of history and by imagining their situation, I can feel-with these women while still recognizing and respecting their difference and not projecting my own feelings onto their accounts.

What Bartky describes as foundations of solidarity, then, is both the belief-based and the emotional effort to understand and feel-with others' situations. Especially the advantaged must make this effort. These are the steps to building community and sustaining collective action across boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Emotions in Coalitional and Sisterhood Solidarity

How might an emotive aspect expand and enrich Mohanty's concept of coalitional solidarity? The first kind of fellow-feeling, namely true fellow-feeling, might be applicable here. This kind of feeling-with occurs when people feel similar things at the same time as a result of an external cause. Like Mohanty's description of being situated similarly, these women can realize that they also

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[297] Bruce E. Johansen, "Sterilization of Native American Women," *ratville times*, September 1998, <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/sterilize.html> (4 February 2007).

feel-with each other as a result of the similarities in the constructions of their identities and contexts. In other words, there is not only a cognitive understanding of the situation, but also the recognition that other people with structural similarities might also be feeling the same way. This could be another motivation to join together in struggle. For example, if I as a woman worker am barred from doing certain kinds of work that my fellow male workers are allowed to do, and I know that other women workers are having the same trouble, I know (I have the belief) that we are in similar structural situations and that our identities as workers are based on a certain assumption of femininity. The patriarchal capitalist system prevents us as women from doing certain kinds of work because of gender norms (e.g. women can't/shouldn't operate heavy machinery). I can connect with other women workers on the basis of this experience. However, I could also bond with these workers on the basis of feeling-with them. I know they feel similarly rejected and perhaps shamed like I do, so I sympathize with them. This could be another motivation to join forces.

Mohanty might object to this idea because it uses the *shared experiences* of women to build solidarity. In the example above, the shared element of feeling comes into play. However, it could be argued that in Mohanty's analysis, at least on the abstract level, structural similarities imply similar experiences as women workers. Indeed, Mohanty herself argues that one should analyze the "links between the social location and the historical and current experiences of domination of Third World women workers" in order to theorize and enact "the

common social identity of Third World women workers."[298] According to her, it is imperative to "understand the commonalities of experience, histories, and identity as the basis for solidarity" (and organizing).[299] Mohanty also writes that Third and First World women have a history in common, namely "the logic and operation of capital in the contemporary global arena" which is also patriarchal.[300] Thus women can understand their common experiences as results of similar contexts within a patriarchal capitalist structure. This seems to imply in a very generalized way that patriarchal and capitalist structures affect many women in similar ways, though we still need to be careful to recognize differences.

Parts of Bartky's analysis might be helpful in understanding the more emotional aspects of educating and confronting one another as hooks suggests in sisterhood solidarity. In connection with hooks, I find "genuine fellow-feeling" to be the most helpful. As described above, genuine fellow-feeling is a kind of feeling-with that enables one to preserve the distinctness of the other while letting the emotional aspects of her situation affect and impact oneself. The important part of this process is that the other's difference is preserved—one doesn't envision oneself in her place, nor do one's emotions merge with hers. In respect to hooks' arguments about transforming feminist selves, this kind of feeling-with seems most appropriate because it maintains the respect of the other's situation (it

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[298] Mohanty, 163.
[299] Mohanty, 167.
[300] Mohanty, 167.

is still hers) and acknowledges her unique position. When I sympathize with her, it is about *her*, not about me or my feelings.

The Three Desiderata Revisited

Having evaluated and synthesized to some degree these three approaches to solidarity, I can summarize and formulate what feminist solidarity between women might be and how it could encompass different levels of relations. As we remember from previous sections, Mohanty, hooks, and Bartky each give us a part of the three desiderata I posit for feminist solidarity between women.

Mohanty's analysis of Third World women workers brings out the acute necessity of organizing collectively for structural change. This is something Foucault and Butler fail to recognize in their accounts of resistance to dominant structures. *The first desideratum,* then*, is that collective action is necessary to dismantle the oppressive ideological and institutional structures of sexism.*

The *second desideratum* is derived from hooks' analysis of the internalized sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia in the feminist movement: *Feminist solidarity between women necessarily includes the obligation to struggle with other women against racist, class-based, and homophobic structures that dominate them, even if one oneself is not the direct target of these structures.* In other words, true feminist solidarity between women will address and incorporate these various fights.

Bartky gives us the *third and last desideratum: the importance of both intellectual and emotional transformation of political selves that would make solidarity a realizable possibility.* Especially in regards to horizontal hostility, it seems imperative that women use not only their intellectual capacities, but also their emotional capacity to feel sympathy as a motivation to join and maintain feminist struggles. In this way, Bartky reminds us of the importance of emotions in relations with individuals and groups, and in the transformation of political selves.

Throughout Part Four, I have introduced two main concepts of solidarity. One is Mohanty's account of coalitional solidarity, and the other is hooks' account of sisterhood solidarity. How well do these accounts of solidarity fulfill these desiderata?

It is fair to say that sisterhood solidarity fulfills the first two desiderata. It is clear from hooks' account that women should bond as feminists in order to fight sexist oppression, and that sisterhood solidarity includes the obligation to fight not only sexist structures, but also take into account racist, class-based, and homophobic subordinations.

The third desideratum does not automatically apply to sisterhood solidarity: it is intellectual and not emotional transformation that hooks writes about. However, it is possible to add the emotional process into hooks' account since she already has the idea of transformation. One could easily imagine how women, when confronting each other about the power relations between them,

can also go through an emotional process whereby sympathy, for example, will play a role in understanding and feeling-with one another (not merely intellectually).

As for coalitional solidarity, Mohanty definitely views solidarity as a key to achieving change at ideological and institutional levels. This is precisely why she argues that women (workers) should join together in the first place. The third desideratum of intellectual and emotional transformation might also be added on to coalitional solidarity. Even though Mohanty doesn't envision a transformation as a result of building solidarities, one could imagine how the process of gaining feminist consciousness and starting to analyze one's situation in critical ways would entail a certain emotional transformation of the self, especially once women recognize their structural similarities.

However, the second desideratum poses a problem for coalitional solidarity. Perhaps an example will help show why.[301] Let's say a group of businesswomen organize a national conference because they recognize that they share similar structural sources of oppression. For example, they might realize that their co-workers characterize them as masculine, aggressive, frigid, or may hold certain assumptions of them as bad mothers (if they are mothers), "battle-axes," or simply as misplaced in the business world. Some of the women may have internalized some of these stereotypes and think of themselves, for example, as bad mothers if they think they do not spend enough time with their children (in

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[301] Many thanks to Carole Lee for this example.

relation to some cultural standard). In addition to this, the businesswomen might share similar experiences of not getting promotions ("glass ceiling") or perhaps experience unwanted sexual advancements from co-workers due to sexism (sexual harassment) in the workplace.

One could, thus, characterize such a conference as coalitional solidarity in the sense that these women are coming together out of the recognition that they face certain sexist and capitalist structures that construct their contexts in certain ways (so the first desideratum is fulfilled). In order to build solidarity, they might need to overcome differences in race and sexuality, and also go through some of the transformations involved in the third desideratum.

This example stands in contrast to the second desideratum because the businesswomen do not have any further obligations to women outside of their particular structural contexts. Even though it is a feminist conference in that it seeks to unite the women in order to understand sexist structures in the business world and figure out how to overcome them, this example of coalitional solidarity does not struggle against classism. In fact, it would be *against* their interest to fight against classism because doing so indirectly undermines their own means of monetary success. In this way, coalitional solidarity is an exclusive interest-based grouping that cannot necessarily include the interests of all women to fight sexist oppression (especially when that oppression intersects with racism, classism, and sexuality). Thus coalitional solidarity does not fit into all of the three desiderata.

However, I would not like to reject it because I believe it has value for practical situations in which women choose to fight against the dominant structures they face. Ultimately, coalitional solidarity and sisterhood solidarity are two conceptualizations of solidarity. The one that a group of women relies upon to conceptualize its own political or group agenda might depend entirely on the situation and personal/political preferences as to which one to choose when fighting against sexist oppression. I tend towards sisterhood solidarity in a choice between the two because I believe in the importance of not undermining the struggles against racism and classism (for example) when engaging in feminist action. So, for example, I might agree that businesswomen should join together to organize against the specific sexist structures they face. But the businesswomen's context might need to be analyzed even further as to how they stand in power relations towards their secretaries, for example. Within this struggle, then, there might be conflict about how the businesswomen treat their secretaries, which might in turn lead to the kind of transformational processes described in sisterhood solidarity. In other words, sisterhood solidarity might be more beneficial to feminist struggles in the long run.

There are some cases where sisterhood solidarity and coalitional solidarity come together, for example in sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence. These are some problems all women face, and both kinds of solidarity discussed here might provide ways to combat them.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSION

Feminist solidarity between women, then, is a political, intellectual, and emotional commitment to act in feminist ways to end sexist oppression. It is the choice to bond through coalitions for this common interest. Solidarity can be enacted on several different levels: between individuals, between individuals and groups, within groups, and among groups.

In order to achieve this solidarity, women must understand their own situations, transform their selves by overcoming biases, try to sympathize and emotionally understand other women and their situations, respect and maintain their distinctness, and try to educate themselves about diverse groups of women.

In order to practice feminist solidarity, women must act in feminist, anti-racist, anti-class-based, anti-homophobic ways on a daily basis and actively try to end oppression, whether individually or in groups. This means that when we choose to practice feminist solidarity, it is important that we adopt consistent behaviors that reflect our political beliefs. To use one of bell hooks' examples, "Wearing second-hand clothing and living in low-cost housing in a poor neighborhood while buying stock is not a gesture of solidarity."[302] In other words, daily practices must be evaluated to see if they correspond with our ideals. For women with feminist beliefs, such practices might include not calling other

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[302] hooks, 495.

women bitches, sluts, or whores (in the same ways these words are used by men against women), trying not to compete with other women for men's attention or advantages within employment, and generally not engaging in woman-hating activities. Instead, women can try to bond with other women (and not assume they are the enemy), and also show compassion and try to understand women's motivations and struggles within patriarchal conditions.

On a more activist-oriented level, showing solidarity might include joining a feminist group, or, if already in one, building coalitions with other groups that are not necessarily exclusively feminist, but are working towards other issues of social justice (as mentioned above). For example, a group that is focused on ending violence against women might choose to participate in certain actions that involve workers' rights if this means supporting other women in a just cause.

Problems arise when groups or individuals cannot agree on what is a "just cause" or maybe even more generally what a feminist ideal is. After all, feminism is hardly unified (which is another reason why the concept of solidarity is so pertinent), and there are many issues on which people who all call themselves feminists don't agree. For example, there is a divide between feminists who support abortion and those who don't. It almost seems like an unsolvable debate between feminists. However, we might want to consider hooks' notion of confrontation and educating oneself about the other's situation. In the abortion debate, this means that we as feminists should inform ourselves about various aspects of abortion, for example about the procedures and legal parameters, but

also listen to each other and women's testimonies who have had abortions or decided against it and why. This might achieve more consensus and understanding in the feminist community. Even if we don't come to a full consensus, this does not mean that feminists cannot come together on other issues or show solidarity in other areas.

I would like to come back to the question of why feminist solidarity between *women* is so important. Critics might say any human can have feminist values, and thus strive for feminist solidarity. However, my project is more narrowly concentrated on feminist solidarity between women, which is why I write mostly about women. I would like to think of it as part of a larger project, or perhaps as a step towards a broader aspect of feminist solidarity that needs to happen.

Writing from the location of women's college, I have seen how women relate in contexts when there are no or few men around. As I wrote in Part One, I was surprised to find a lack of feminists and students with shared feminist values and beliefs. I was surprised at the levels of internalized sexism, as well as racism and classism.

How do the three desiderata I posit for a concept of feminist solidarity between women fit into the context of Mount Holyoke College? The first desideratum might be partly fulfilled. We are already a collectivity here at Mount Holyoke. Women might come here in part because of the belief that women's colleges are necessary to provide a safe space for women as well as to promote

women's higher education in general. However, I think students would benefit if we reminded ourselves of this once in a while. This might lessen the antagonism towards Smith College, which can be seen as fulfilling some of the same objectives as Mount Holyoke.

As far as the second and third desiderata go, I believe there is still work that needs to be done. We are a collectivity, but that does not mean we automatically have a sense of community. While racism and classism are definitely an issue on this campus, I think especially horizontal hostility and internalized sexism need to be addressed if we want to see a decrease in woman-hating behaviors from women. Perhaps feminist consciousness-raising would induce a spark to reconsider and re-evaluate how women treat each other and what kinds of images of women's bodies are placed on posters. Of course, with a rise in feminist consciousness, there will also be a need for intellectual and emotional transformation of the women involved in the process.

I have a strong belief that it is necessary for women specifically to come together in order for there to be greater achievements in the fight against sexism and misogyny. This stems from my deep concerns and hurt over the harm that women are doing to other women. As long as women are participants in sexist, racist, class-based, and homophobic oppressions, there cannot be feminist solidarity between women.

WORKS CONSULTED

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