Core Course Essential Readings

Week 1 (25th – 29th September)

GI402 Week One: Introduction (26/09/2017)

This introductory session asks you to begin thinking about how knowledge is gendered, and what difference that might make for research in the field of gender studies. You will be introduced to the vibrancy of a variety of positions within feminist, queer, and postcolonial knowledge projects, and asked to think expansively about the possibilities offered for gender researchers. We will ask: What does it mean to “know” something, and in what ways is gender itself a way of knowing? We will conclude with a panel of two gender researchers who will share their insights with you.

Key Reading:

Sumi Madhok and Mary Evans (2014) “Epistemology and Marginality” in Mary Evans et al (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Feminist Theory*. London: SAGE. pp. 1–9

PART 1 Epistemology and Marginality Sumi Madhok and Mary Evans For a ‘Handbook of Feminist Theory’, a section on epistemology is important for several reasons. Forms of epistemological enquiries, their resultant knowledges and the nature of sociality these uphold are cen- tral to feminist thinking not only because of their power to define who gets to be a ‘sub- ject’ and a ‘knower’ but also which know- ledges and phenomena are deemed valid ‘objects’ of study and consequently worthy of recognition, authority and legitimacy. Epistemological enquiries and processes uphold a particular view of the world, endorse certain forms of gender relations and assume a specific set of hierarchical social and political relations as standard. Therefore, in insisting upon uncovering the identity of the ‘knower’ and the nature of ‘knowing’, feminist theory is committed to knowledge as linked both to power and to a certain politics. In conceiving this section, we focus in particular on the links between epistemology and marginality. In emphasizing the question of epistemic marginality we encouraged the contributors to conceive their pieces in light of the associations that feminist scholars have drawn between the production of knowledge and continuing social injustices including those resulting from the setting up of epistemic hierarchies and the production of marginal statuses, identities and knowl- edges and from the societal impact of deep epistemic divides – between those who are designated as ‘knowers’ and those deemed to be bereft of the capacity to ‘know’ – on forms of epistemic violence and everyday modes of oppression. Feminist writing about epistemic marginality and exclusion is, of course, not new. In writing about marginality and knowledge- production feminist scholars have reflected on questions of who can be ‘Knowers’, what is regarded as ‘Knowing’ and what can be ‘Known’ (Hawkesworth, 1989), and drawn on their own institutional and epistemic marginality to note at least three things: the marginal status of feminist epistemology as a legitimate ‘field of enquiry’; the marginaliza- tion of feminist epistemologists as a group (not least in philosophy departments, where epistemology is a central field of enquiry and curriculum), and the marginal status of feminist and gender studies as knowledge- producing or a ‘discipline’. To be sure, while the above can be seen as empirical ‘evidence’ of the way in which epistemic processes and relations work in the ‘academy’, feminist scholars use this empirical fact to ask broader questions about marginality that are political, structural and ethical. But why does it matter that the connection between knowledge and marginality – the processes of knowledge- production and legitimation, who produces it, for whom and to what end – be opened up for critical and democratic scrutiny? It matters because feminist epistemology not only con- cerns itself with critique and producing new forms of knowledge; it is also deeply invested in the transformation of existing inequitable societal relations. And, there- fore, it follows that, if theory is both a way of seeing the world and providing a blue- print for political action, then the world it illuminates, acknowledges and seeks to define cannot simply replicate the one that is the already normative, the always already privileged, the powerful and the authorita- tive. Furthermore, in order for theory to be transformative, including implicitly engaged in the transformation of unequal gender rela- tions, then it must serve up a toolbox for challenging existing exploitative structural logics of the normative order in order to reorient it explicitly towards social justice and an ethical politics. Overall, the intellectual oeuvre of feminist epistemology includes both modes as well as the processes of knowledge-production, but it is in its continual insistence on 'knowing' the 'knower', on making 'subjectivity' count (Code, 1993 and in this volume) and on unmasking and assessing the epistemic impact of the 'sex of the knower' (Code, 1993; this volume) on the nature of knowing that feminist epistemology has made important interventions, not least in uncovering the 'politics of epistemic practice' (Fricker, 2007: 2). Consequently, feminist epistemolo- gists have brought under their epistemic scanner processes of knowledge-production such as the 'scientific method' and its accompanying values of objectivity, universality, scientificity and 'value freeness', examined the politics of 'epistemic relations' and 'epis- temic conduct' and insisted on discussing 'the political nature of epistemology' (Fricker, 2007; Alcoff, 1993) itself. The essays in this section reflect the concern with both the content and the processes of knowledge- production. The papers also reflect a multi- disciplinary interest in epistemological ques- tions among scholars working in feminist and gender studies. However, they neither provide an exhaustive 'coverage' of the field of feminist epistemology nor do they present reviews of all the important interventions; but they do build on the latter and put for- ward new directions for feminist epistemo- logical work to consider. In this we do not attempt to replicate those important antholo- gies edited by Helen Crowley and Susan Himmelweit (1992) and Alcoff and Potter (1993) but, rather, suggest ways of taking forward and developing various debates. Over the years, feminists have become accustomed to invoking epistemic harms and to reading and writing about 'epistemic injustice' (Fricker, 2007), 'epistemic vio- lence' (Spivak, 1988) and 'epistemic scandal' (Chow, 2006). The intellectual potency of this language derives its poignancy and urgency from the structural injustices that order the organization of everyday life. As we write the introduction to this section, aspects of 'epistemic and testimonial injus- tice' (Fricker, 2007), 'politics of testimony' (Code, this volume), the withholding of 'epistemic agency' and the reinforcing of epistemic marginality, are in operation across the globe in now all-too-familiar revealing and sinister ways, and not least in a court- room in Sanford, Florida, where the trial of the murdered US black teenager Trayvon Martin has just concluded. We cannot ignore formations of marginality and the epistemic questions they raise; these have, as feminist scholars have powerfully argued and reminded us, a strong and enduring material basis. The emergence of the language of epistemic harm, of course, is itself an outcome of a long struggle not only against prevalent epistemo- logical practices and dogmas but also against the reproduction of existing hierarchies and of coloniality within feminist theory itself. The critique of feminism's and of feminist theories' 'internal colonialism' is now strongly regis- tered (Mohanty, 1991; hooks, 2000; Collins, 2000; Lorde, 2001; Rich, 1986; Spivak, 1988; Crenshaw, 1989; Lugones, 2010; Bhavnani, 1993; Chow, 2006), and, as bell hooks notes (2000), the feminist movement is 'the most self-critical' among all movements of social justice, but despite this self-criticism and even self-reflexivity within epistemic practices, it is hardly short of a 'persisting epistemic scandal' that much of feminist epistemology continues to be 'self-referential' and to exhibit a 'strange complacency of its provincial contents' (Chow, 2006: 13), only 'telling feminist stories' (Hem- mings, 2005) about particular epistemic histo- ries, cultures and practices. In this respect we acknowledge the limitations of this section – nearly all the essays here focus upon ongoing epistemic debates within feminist epistemol- ogy from metropolitan locations and engage epistemic questions and scholarship that are rooted firmly within the 'western canonical' tradition. While this shortcoming of feminist epistemological investigations cannot be understood in isolation from present geopolitical, historical and economic contexts – in fact, knowledge-production, ped- agogical, research and institutional priorities and are conditioned by these – an acknowledgement of one's complicity in reproducing and keeping in place intellectual hierarchies, however, can be an important first step. Many essays in this section are deeply troubled by questions of coloniality and critical of 'othering' practices in knowledge- production while also accepting their own structural implication within these. They are in the best tradition of feminist scholarship – not only reflexive but also concerned with questions of accountability and responsibil- ity. But the difficulty remains nevertheless: how to resolve this ‘epistemic scandal’? The reader will, we hope, understand if we refrain from providing simple and ready-to-use solutions here. For we doubt that these exist. One thing we’re certain of, though, is that simply resorting to what Sandra Harding referred to in another context as ‘add and stir’ is not going to do. In other words, to provide spaces for ‘other’ forms or modes of knowl- edge-production in a mechanical way, with- out attempting to show how these either effectively query or even displace the epis- temic premises upon which questions of knowledge-production occur, hardly consti- tutes a ‘solution’. In this section, contributors re-examine existing epistemic arguments and recalibrate epistemic questions and materials not by seeking to displace their own privilege (as if they could!) but through acknowledg- ing their epistemic provincialism, their geo- political and institutional location as also the raced and classed identities of their readings. By acknowledging that epistemology is political (Alcoff, 1993) and that knowledge is not ‘value free’ but is always a product of certain forms of political investments, these essays build on what is now a basic building block of feminist epistemological analysis – namely, that gender is not a unitary category of analysis but one that is mediated through the intersection of race, class, sexualities and other forms of marginality (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). This epistemic insight, that gender intersects with other forms of marginality, has been heralded as the most ‘significant’ conceptual contribution of the last twenty years, since it not only uncovered (feminist) epistemology’s ‘irrepressible con- nection with social power’ (Fricker, 2007: 2) but also dealt a blow to the ‘theoretical framework of individualism and compulsory rational idealization’ predominantly favoured in epistemic arguments (see also Code in this section). Thinking seriously about mar- ginality has challenged the methodological individualism as well as the assumptions of ‘human homogeneity’ that underpin epistemological enquiry and unmasked the pro- cesses through which subordinate groups are denied subjectivity and status as ‘knowers’. Gayatri Spivak (1988) has written powerfully about the ‘epistemic violence’ that accompa- nies the silencing of marginalized groups and Patricia Collins writes evocatively about the denial of subjectivity and the cognitive com- petence of Black women (Collins, 2000). bell hooks (2000) writes of the need ‘to develop feminist theory that emerges from ‘individu- als who have knowledge of both margin and center’ (2000: xvii) and for ‘understanding marginality’ as a ‘position and place of resist- ance’ that is ‘crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonised people’ (1990: 150–51). Standpoint theorists such as Sandra Harding, for instance, write in favour of a methodology that involves ‘starting thought from the lives of marginal- ised peoples’, arguing that this will reveal more of the unexamined assumptions influ- encing science and generate not only more critical questions but also a ‘strong objectiv- ity’ that would both recognize the social situ- atedness of knowledge and also critically evaluate it in order ‘to determine which social situations tend to generate the most objective claims’. For standpoint theorists, the key questions that are asked, investigated and indeed addressed by academic disciplines are those which affect the privileged and the powerful. And therefore, by implication, the intellectual investments are those which seek to entrench privilege in place and not displace it. As a corrective, standpoint theorists pro- pose that if we are to challenge privileged views of the world then we will have to start producing knowledge about the world from the standpoint of those who are marginalized. But can the claim to epistemic privilege, which is the claim to speak in a authoritative way by marginalized groups, put forward a distinct and discrete voice of the oppressed, a voice that can challenge the authority of the oppressor? Bar On (1993) cautions that, in fact, it cannot. Although the ‘claim to epistemic privilege’ may be deployed by the oppressed as a ‘tool’, she follows Audre Lorde in arguing that it remains, in the final instance, ‘a master’s tool … because when the oppressed feel a need to authorize speech, they are acting on feelings that are a function of their own oppression’ (Bar On, 1993: 97). Writing in this volume, Lorraine Code, one of the pioneers of feminist epistemology, encourages us to think of ‘multiple margin- alities’ while also pointing out that not all ‘centres’ are equally epistemically privileged. Although these ‘multiple marginalities’, she writes, ‘may appear to operate singly in some instances, often they overlap or are interwo- ven in silencing, ignoring, or discrediting certain voices and points of view’. Readers will recall of course, that Code (1993) had directed one of the early challenges at episte- mological thinking when she asked whether the ‘sex of the knower’ mattered in any epis- temic way. For Code, asking this question alone ‘gives rise to a range of questions about knowledge and subjectivity … no longer is the “knower” imaginable as a self contained, infinitely replicable “individual” making uni- versally valid knowledge claims from a “god’s eye” position removed from the inci- dental features and the power and privilege structures of the physical-social world’ (Code, this volume: 10). Through her now famous formulation, S knows that P, Code argued that contemporary epistemo logies, particu- larly their positivist–empiricist varieties, not only insisted on ‘value neutrality’, ‘pure objec- tivity’ and ‘perspectiveless’ knowing but were also underpinned by the idea of a universal human nature or ‘human homogeneity’ (Code, this volume). As opposed to the ‘hegemonic model of mastery’ (Code, this volume) that dominates mainstream Anglo-American epis- temology, Code writes that, as most of our knowledge is interactive and dependent on others, ‘knowing others’ is a much more sig-nificant epistemic practice and that ‘taking subjectivity into account’ would reveal a very different ‘geography of the epistemic terrain’. In her contribution, Code, reflects on her seminal essay while casting a theoretically expansive eye over questions of ‘centrality and marginality’ within feminist ‘cognitive practices’ and also those of mainstream epis- temic thinking. She writes that subjectivity matters and that ‘knowledges are situated’, and that acknowledging this fact ‘opens up’ thinking on the epistemological implications of ‘multiple intersecting specificities of sub- jectivity and positionality’ and thereby, into questions about credibility, testimony, mar- ginality and epistemic responsibility Astrida Neimanis, in this volume, is also concerned with questions of responsibility and accountability. She points out that the ‘master model’ that informs epistemological thinking is held in place by a conceptual framework organized around the opposi- tional division between ‘nature’ and ‘cul- ture’. This binary division is not a benign separation but is value-laden, inscribing value to one (i.e., culture) and ‘denigrating’ the other (i.e., nature). Neimanis writes that this nature/culture distinction is not a refer- ence to discrete entities alone but has come to stand in for a whole host of representa- tional practices and relations whereby asso- ciations with ‘culture’ indicate ‘masculin- ity’, ‘western’ and ‘cosmopolitan ways of life’, while ‘nature’ is used to denote asso- ciational links with ‘femininity’, primi- tiveneness and backward, non-progressive world views and life worlds. Neimanis pro- vides a ‘schematization’ of the ‘various feminist positions’, outlines a ‘detailed evaluation of “new materialist” positions on nature/culture’ and argues that if feminist theory is to realize a much more expansive idea of ethical and political accountability then it must bring in as part of its commit- ment to intersectional analyses not only environmental concerns but also non-human others. In her contribution Gayle Letherby, fol- lowing Lorraine Code, argues in favour of foregrounding subjectivity in the research process, or for a ‘theorised subjectivity’, pointing out that ‘political complexities of subjectivities and their inevitable involvement in the research process’ render the search for a ‘definitive objectivity’ ultimately unsuccessful. Letherby explains ‘theorised subjectivity’ as one that ‘requires the constant, critical interrogation of our personhood – both intellectual and personal – within the production of the knowledge’. As distinct from standpoint theorists, Letherby is not really interested in pursuing ‘strong objectiv- ity’ or, indeed, in finding more theoretically adequate ways of pursuing objectivity; instead, she argues for starting from the point of making research ‘value explicit’ rather than ‘value free’. Thus, theorized subjectiv- ity starts by recognizing the value (as in worth, rather than moral value) – both posi- tive and negative – of the subjective (Leth- erby, this volume). Sabine Grenz’s paper also examines the process of knowledge-production. In her contribution she reflects on the flow of power within the research process and, in relationships between the researcher and the researched, in particular. In her research on sexuality and on clients of prostitutes, she writes that although feminist research has demonstrated sensitivity in relation to inter- sectional workings of power and has paid attention to minimizing power differentials in research relationships, it has not always been successful in negotiating ‘reversed power relations’ or when the researcher her- self is marginalized, for instance, through being subject to racist and sexist behaviour. But, as Grenz argues, a research project should not been seen as sealed from the prevailing power social dynamics but is in fact comprehensively ‘integrated’ and plugged into the ‘surrounding discourses on the topic in question as well as related issues’. However, there remains at least one prior question to that of making subjectivity matter epistemically and it is this: whose values and experiences are allowed to be brought into the research process? And, relatedly, how do we access these values? Acknowledging the subjectivity of knowers and their different loca- tions means acknowledging that knowers are positioned differently and that their position- ing is an outcome of existing social divisions. Acknowledging differently located knowers and their different subject positionings draws into serious question knowledge accounts that claim not only a universality across time and space but also an unmediated neutrality of knowledge produced from archi- median positions which view the world from ‘nowhere’ in particular and by extension, therefore, from everywhere and for everyone. The question that begets is: how do we think about difference in ways that are sociologi- cally illuminating, intellectually meaningful and also politically useful? And, furthermore, if identities and oppressions are intersection- ally experienced, how do we access and articu- late experience? And what sort of epistemic weight do we accord experience? Sharing women's 'lived experience' has been an important feature of feminist consciousness- raising exercises and of building 'sisterhood'. However, questions of whose experience counted soon came to the fore, not least as a result of the emerging debates over intersec- tionality, race, class and postcoloniality within feminist scholarship. Epistemic claims based on an identitarian reality found them- selves under critical scrutiny by several post-structuralist feminist scholars, with Joan Scott's essay titled 'Experience' becoming the most paradigmatic of this critique. In the essay, Scott cautions against using experience as 'foundational', as self-evident and as something authentic always already present and waiting to be tapped into, suggesting instead that we change our object of study from events and 'reality' to discursive sys- tems that shape experience. For example, alongside studying the experience of American slaves in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, she writes, we should study the discursive systems of racism and capitalism that produced slavery as an effect. Scott concludes by calling for the study of the processes of subject creation, not just experi- ence itself, and writes, "it is not individuals who have experiences, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (Scott, 1992: 25–6). In her contribution to this section, Sonia Kruks revisits Scott's critique and reassesses the epistemological role of experience through a phenomenological lens. According to Kruks, the 'lived body' is profoundly imbri- cated in the 'ethical and political project of feminism' and, in fact, it would be 'hard to imagine feminist political practices in which embodied orientations and affective experi- ence play little part'. However, Kruks cau- tions against regarding experience as 'natural' or immediate and argues for experience to be explored and theorized through phenomeno- logical inquiry. According to Kruks, phenom- enology offers access to significant registers of women's lives and to embodied and affec- tive ways of knowing, judging, and acting that cannot be grasped by discourse analysis, or by other objectivizing approaches to expe- rience. She points to the possibilities for building bridges of solidarity that a recogni- tion of the inter-subjective quality of lived bodies offer, but is equally careful to point out that in a complex and hierarchically organ- ized world, phenomenology also enables an understanding of the limits of empathy and the dangers of over-identification with and objectification of the 'other' that can result from not acknowledging one's own location, 'distance' and privilege. While problematizing experience is an important aspect of the politics of subjectiv- ity and identity, we are still frequently con- fronted with the question 'what do women want today?' From the popular media to key psychoanalytic texts, this question occupies our popular and political imaginations. Campbell argues that this question is, in fact, a 'key question for third wave feminisms' and for feminist epistemologies. Engaging with the question of what 'we want today', writes Campbell, means not only asking how we come to 'know ourselves' but also how we know 'our others'. 'Third Wave Episte- mologies', writes Campbell, is not meant to indicate a 'fixed referent' or a 'framework' or a 'taxonomy'; it is, rather, a 'collective' pro- ject which seeks to examine the intersection between the politics of subjectivity and the politics of knowledge. In her contribution she sets out elements of what she calls a EPISTEMOLOGY AND MARGINALITY 7 'post-Lacanian feminist epistemology', which, she argues, will help us negotiate the relationship between 'feminist knowing sub- jects', feminist epistemic practices and femi- nist politics. She writes: 'A feminist psycho- analytic approach can help to understand the operation of …social fictions of femininity and the pleasures and pains of these 'femi- nine' desires. However, it also reveals that the operation of feminist knowledges can intervene in these discourses, and how these knowledges can symbolize more liberating forms of what women might want. This sym- bolization of new social subjects and rela- tions represents both the most radical prom- ise and the most difficult task for third wave feminist epistemologies in these times of neoliberal politics and consumer cultures' But what if the answer to the question 'what do women want today?' is, in effect, that what they really want is religion? How will feminist epistemology respond to such an answer? Not very well, as it happens. Both Sîan Hawthorne and Mary Evans examine the fraught history of feminist responses to this answer. Sîan Hawthorne writes that, when it comes to religious sub- jectivities, feminist sensitivity to intersec- tionally positioned subjects somehow seems to get temporarily abandoned. Feminist scholars are deeply invested in and thereby unable to extricate themselves from the well-entrenched narrative that posits an unquestioned 'inimical relationship' between religion and gender oppression; in fact, reli- gion, Hawthorne points out, is never seen in an emancipatory frame, and only always as oppressive – the familiar argument being that the more religious observant societies are, the more observably gender oppressive they are likely to be. The important point that Hawthorne makes is this: religion is not only epistemological but also an ontological marker/maker of difference and, therefore, epistemic judgements on religious subjec- tivities are not simply epistemological but also carry a civilizational weight. As a conse- quence, '"religion" has become an identity marker as well as an intellectual category' and, therefore, 'our focus cannot merely be to be concerned with epistemological reflection; it must also necessarily be directed towards the ontological dimensions of cate- gory formation …'. In her contribution, Mary Evans notes that while debates over social progress measured in the successful mobilizations of secular world views and the consequent rolling back of religious ones have more often than not been played out on the terrain of gender, the 'negative' repre- sentation of religious socialities within secu- lar, humanist intellectual projects is not without resonances in feminist theory too. In fact, as Saba Mahmood has argued (2005), the normative bias in favour of the secular liberal subject has resulted in the denial of subjecthood to religious women. The epis- temic divide between religion and feminist subjectivity, however, writes Evans, has more often than not been overplayed and there are, at least epistemologically speak- ing, areas of both 'similarity' as well as dif- ference between the epistemic structures of both religion and feminism. For both, 'the transcendence of the limits of the human person' is an important goal – all world reli- gions 'encourage the possibility that each human being is malleable into a form', and feminism, too, demands a future different than one determined by one's biology. Sec- ondly, Evans points out that both religious and feminist epistemologies begin their enquiry into the world from the starting point of social relations, although, of course, they diverge quite radically both in their analysis of these and also in relation to pre- scribed paths and goals of emancipation. Feminist theorists, writes Evans, should note that religious discourse is neither stable nor coherent and therefore offers many possi- bilities for engagement – an engagement that feminists must urgently take up if they are not only to avoid misdescriptions of the relationship between the secular and the modern but also to both 'recognize' and actively engage with the growing 'legiti- macy' that religious discourse is acquiring across the globe.

In this section our purpose has been to explore various issues associated with the concept of a 'feminist' epistemology. What emerges from the various papers is both agreement and dissent: agreement that the question of gender and gender relations has to become an issue for the discussion of episte- mology, not least because feminist theory has so convincingly demonstrated the presence of gendered relations of power within human interaction. This does not mean, as might once have been understood, that epistemo- logical transformation can be achieved through the challenge to male power, but that the dialectic of human gender relations has to become part of any epistemology. The papers here all suggest ways of considering this impact, not least of which is a critical discus- sion of the concept of a specific 'feminist' epistemology, one which is somehow divorced from fixed assumptions about the relations of gender. We propose that taking forward the importance of gendered episte- mologies is crucial to the development of less partial understandings of human existence.

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Audre Lorde (2007) “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” *Sister Outsider. Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley: Crossing pp. 110–113

The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House

Audre Lorde

I agreed to take part in a New York University Institute for the Humanities conference a year ago, with the understanding that I would be commenting upon papers dealing with the role of difference within the lives of American women: difference of race, sexuality, class, and age. The absence of these considerations weakens any feminist discussion of the personal and the political.

It is a particular academic arrogance to assume any discussion of feminist theory without examining our many differences, and without a significant input from poor women, Black and Third World women, and lesbians. And yet, I stand here as a Black lesbian feminist, having been invited to comment within the only panel at this conference where the input of Black feminists and lesbians is represented. What this says about the vision of this conference is sad, in a country where racism, sexism, and homophobia are inseparable. To read this program is to assume that lesbian and Black women have nothing to say about existentialism, the erotic, women's culture and silence, developing feminist theory, or heterosexuality and power. And what does it mean in personal and political terms when even the two Black women who did present here were literally found at the last hour? What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow parameters of change are possible and allowable.

The absence of any consideration of lesbian consciousness or the consciousness of Third World women leaves a serious gap within this conference and within the papers presented here. For example, in a paper on material relationships between women, I was conscious of an either/or model of nurturing which totally dismissed my knowledge as a Black lesbian. In this paper there was no examination of mutuality between women, no systems of shared support, no interdependence as exists between lesbians and womenidentified women. Yet it is only in the patriarchal model of nurturance that women "who attempt to emancipate themselves ay perhaps too high a price for the results," as this paper states.

For women, the need and desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive, and it is within that knowledge that our real power I rediscovered. It is this real connection which is so feared by a patriarchal world. Only within a patriarchal structure is maternity the only social power open to women.

Interdependency between women is the way to a freedom which allows the I to be, not in order to be used, but in order to be creative. This is a difference between the passive be and the active being.

Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency

become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of difference strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters.

Within the interdependence of mutual (nondominant) differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being. Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged.

As women, we have been taught either to ignore our differences, or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.

Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference -- those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older -- know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support.

Poor women and women of Color know there is a difference between the daily manifestations of marital slavery and prostitution because it is our daughters who line 42nd Street. If white American feminist theory need not deal with the differences between us, and the resulting difference in our oppressions, then how do you deal with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are, for the most part, poor women and women of Color? What is the theory behind racist feminism?

In a world of possibility for us all, our personal visions help lay the groundwork for political action. The failure of academic feminists to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower.

Why weren't other women of Color found to participate in this conference? Why were two phone calls to me considered a consultation? Am I the only possible source of names of Black feminists? And although the Black panelist's paper ends on an important and powerful connection of love between women, what about interracial cooperation between feminists who don't love each other?

In academic feminist circles, the answer to these questions is often, "We do not know who to ask." But that is the same evasion of responsibility, the same cop-out, that keeps Black women's art our of women's exhibitions, Black women's work our of most feminist publications except for the occasional "Special Third World Women's Issue," and Black women's texts off your reading lists. But as Adrienne Rich pointed out in a recent talk, which feminists have educated themselves about such an enormous amount over the past ten years, how come you haven't also educated yourselves about Black women and the differences between us -- white and Black -- when it is key to our survival as a movement?

Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance and to educated men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of women of Color to educate white women -- in the face of tremendous resistance -- as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought.

Simone de Beauvoir once said: "It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting."

Racism and homophobia are real conditions of all our lives in this place and time. I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears. Then the personal as the political can begin to illuminate all our choices

Prospero, you are the master of illusion.
Lying is your trademark.
And you have lied so much to me
(Lied about the world, lied about me)
That you have ended by imposing on me
An image of myself.
Underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,
That s the way you have forced me to see myself
I detest that image! What's more, it's a lie!
But now I know you, you old cancer,
And I know myself as well.
~ Caliban, in Aime Cesaire's A Tempest

Lorde, Audre. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” 1984. Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Ed. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. 110-114. 2007. Print.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You” *Touching Feeling*. Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 123-151

See PDF

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GI403 Week One: Introduction: (28/09/2017)

This week will be an introduction to the course and its preoccupations highlighting the key questions that the course asks: why does representation matter? How is gender mediated and policed in contemporary culture? What are the politics of gender in popular culture? Does the media objectify women? And men? And what of those who resist the gender binary? What role does the reception of gendered representation play in the negotiation of gendered identities and social roles .

Seminar activity: Introductions and Discussion

Key Reading:

- **Carter, C. and Steiner, L. (2004) 'Mapping the Contested Terrain of Gender and Media Research', in C. Carter and L. Steiner (eds) Critical Readings: Media and Gender, Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp. 11-35.**

Carter, Cynthia and Linda Steiner

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Chapter 2: Mapping the Contested Terrain of Media and Gender Research

pp. 11-35

Carter, C. & Steiner, L. (eds), (2004) Critical readings : media and gender, 1st edition, Maidenhead: Open University Press

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Course of Study: GI403 - Gender and Media Representation

Title: Critical readings : media and gender

Name of Author: Carter, C. & Steiner, L. (eds)

Name of Publisher: Open University Press

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MAPPING THE CONTESTED TERRAIN OF MEDIA AND GENDER RESEARCH

Cynthia Carter and Linda Steiner

> The whole point of gender dimorphism, as it has been constructed for centuries, is that it means that someone – almost invariably someone who isn't female – gets to judge what is and isn't acceptable for women .... It is still much harder for women than for men to express themselves as individuals and the penalties for failing to conform remain high ...
>
> (Smith 1997: 166-7)

> Most men are still culturally propelled to incorporate dominance, whether in terms of crude physical strength or displays of 'masculine' rationality and competence, into the presentation of self. Of course, by presenting gender as cultural and performative, the paradigm that holds that masculinity and femininity are straitjackets into which all biological males and females are automatically fitted, begins to be severely undermined.
>
> (Beynon 2002: 11)

This introductory essay maps out what we believe to be the most important and relevant conceptual concerns around gender in the fields of media and cultural studies today. Since we understand media in terms of a highly inter- structured or 'articulated' relationship among texts, institutions and audiences, we offer brief accounts of current scholarly debates around representation found in Part I: Texts in Context; we examine media eco- nomics and workplace issues in Part II: (Re)producing Gender; and outline a range of insights generated by critical audience research in Part III: Audiences and Identities. Given the triangular relationships among texts, media organizations and industries, and audiences' practices, at some level, one cannot discuss one theme without raising the other two. That said, the sections below sketch key terms and issues, broadly outlining the historical, theoretical and methodological contexts for what is now a wealth of gender-sensitive research.

Texts in Context

Central to the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity in the Western media is the idea that they are opposites, and that boys and girls are 'naturally' and fundamentally different. Not surprisingly, children's media – like their toys – are among the first contexts that each of us encounters for demonstrating how masculinity and femininity 'ought' to be performed. Boy's action figure 'GI Joe' in the USA or 'Action Man' in the UK depicts a muscled, tough and aggressive character armed with the latest guns, missiles and explosives. Currently, popular films such as *Gladiator*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Men in Black* and *Spiderman* indicate what are deemed to be 'normal' or 'appropriate' forms of masculine behaviour. While a 'real man' may use his intelligence to outwit an opponent, in the end, the most valued attribute of a man in these films is his physical prowess. The threat of violence is often all that is needed to reconfirm one's masculine credentials, although a willingness and ability to use it must necessarily and credibly back up that threat. On children's television, cartoons such as *Digimon: Digital Monsters* and *Yu-gi-oh* combine images primarily of boys and men who use their smarts, strength and superhuman monsters to exert their will/ superiority over others. Each week, the cast of characters must employ certain masculine skills and repertoires of expertise to defeat similarly inclined enemies and, finally, to confirm their superiority.

For girls, quite opposite points of identification were already apparent in early fairytales, many of which date to the seventeenth century. For example, female characters in *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel* and *Sleeping Beauty* are portrayed as being beautiful, emotional and timid, waiting for a man to come along to rescue them (preferably a prince or a knight in shining armour!). Nineteenth-century industrialization and the relocation of work from the family and farm to the factory and the town shop contributed to the development of unequal, gendered spheres of work (the 'public' sphere of men and political affairs versus the 'private' sphere of women and domesticity). Girls were raised to be the consumers of the future – domestic, caring, and objects of beauty – rather than producers. This idea was widely cultivated and promoted by newspapers and women's magazines. Continuing through the twentieth century, the modern media contrasted good girls (pretty, quiet, sensitive, selfless and nurturing) with 'evil' girls, who are assertive, sexual, stubborn and selfish. Since 1959, the 'Barbie' doll has rovided several generations of girls with an image of 'ideal' (white, het- rosexual) femininity – a figure who is attractive, impossibly thin, long legged and big breasted – accessorized with the latest fashions, accommodation, transport and boyfriend Ken.[1]

Although many clearly gendered stereotypes still inform media content today, the rigidity of such hierarchical feminine gendered identity has nevertheless begun to break down. An increasingly varied array of feminine images and role models is now available, some of which offer progressive and sometimes challenging alternatives. For example, in *Star Wars: Episode 1* (1999) one of the main female characters is the teenaged Queen Amidala who, through a combination of intelligence and exceptional military planning and fighting skills, is able to help defeat the evil that threatens her people. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) features the pre-teen character Hermione Granger, who is portrayed as possessing knowledge of magic superior to her closest friends, Harry Potter and Ron Weasley. Nevertheless, socialization into not merely different but also unequal gender roles and behaviours has not disappeared altogether. Likewise, it is important to keep in mind that such socialization continues to have real, negative material (economic, social, political) effects on the life chances of girls (as well as boys) as they grow up (Mattelart 1986).

Turning to a consideration of the historical development of gender and media content research, it is important to note that as early as the 1960s media scholars influenced by concepts emerging from early 'second wave' feminism sought to understand and explain how the media depicts unequal gendered relations. The reason for this, of course, was to collect evidence of media sexism in order to intervene and substitute more positive and realistic images – ones that did not confine women to passivity and inferiority. A key concept generated by an early generation of media content researchers was that of 'symbolic annihilation'. This term was initially used by US mass communication scholars George Gerbner (1978) and Gaye Tuchman (1978) to describe the claim that powerful groups in society suppress the less powerful by marginalizing them to such an extent that they are ren- dered virtually invisible as a representable group. The media function – at least in the period they were describing – by either effectively erasing women's presence, by fundamentally denying their humanity, trivializing or mocking them, or by reducing them to a single 'feminine' characteristic, even if that characteristic could be regarded as 'positive' (like 'innocent', 'nurturing' or 'concerned for others').

Much of the generation of research inspired by these notions confirmed that media images through to the end of the 1980s tended to stay within a narrow set of sex role stereotypes, primarily limiting women to a domestic/

private sphere that experienced uncertain, if not low social status compared to that of men. Studies often concluded that men were usually depicted in a wider range of occupational roles, primarily in the public sphere, which enjoys higher social status. Feminist researchers generally assumed that the limited portrayals of women contributed to sexist and therefore harmful attitudes. For example, scholars argued that sexist stereotypes encourage people to believe that women are suited only (and always) to so-called 'traditional' female sex roles and discourage people from accepting women who are strong, assertive, independent and self-confident, thus inhibiting women's ability to realize their full personal and professional potential. Scholars and activists joined in a movement to challenge the media to depict women more fairly, in a wider array of occupational roles and with variation in intellectual and emotional traits. Meanwhile, pressure was also brought to bear on the media to portray men in ways that suggest chat they can be sensitive, emotional and interested in and committed to their parenting and domestic responsibilities (see Craig 1992). Some changes did result from these efforts, although much work remains to be done.

In any case, role reversals are not the point. Altering mediated images of women and men to portray them in a wider range of roles is at best a start. Certainly the point of advocating change is not merely to argue that prime- time dramas should feature women as career-driven attorneys or that music videos should portray women as whip-wielding dominatrices. That a new US television series *The Bachelorette* will counter an existing one for men, *The Bachelor,* is not really a sign of gender progress. Analyses and critiques of media forms, institutions and production practices need to be very carefully constructed to show how media discourses contribute to, or conversely, challenge the structural (re)production of gender inequalities.

That is, the political issue to be addressed is not merely either 'positive' or 'negative' images of a given fictional character's occupational role and surface-level indicia of their emotional stability (or lack thereof). Ideology researchers argue that the analysis of media texts can shed important light not only on the ideologically gendered assumptions underpinning their narratives but also on the gendered mode of address to their audiences. Which audiences are being served? Are women and men addressed differ- ently, via texts with different varieties of intellectual and emotional content? To understand how gender difference is (re)produced ideologically in the media, attention needs to be paid to the ways in which media forms aimed at men are regarded as normatively the 'correct' ones, while those for women are marked as 'different', 'alternative', 'marginal' or, in other words, as non-normative. For example, the national television news and broadsheet press in both the USA and UK are widely considered to be 'objective' (non-ideological/non-gendered = masculine) while television talk hows like *Oprah* in the USA or *Richard and Jud y* in the UK are regarded as ubjective' (ideological/gendered = feminine) (see Allan 1999).

s Recently, feminist researchers have been more insistent about the ·mportance of analysing media texts produced primarily for female audi- nces (see Inness, Brown and Shattuc – Chapters 7, 15 and 16 in this volume). Day-time talk shows (Shattuc 1997), women's films (Lloyd and Johnson 2003; Stacey 1994; Vares 2002), women's magazines (Ballaster et al. 1991; Basu 2001; Beecham 1996; Currie 1999; Hermes 1995), soap operas (Brunsdon 2000; Brown 1994; Geraghty 1990) and other texts primarily intended for women h.ave long been widely regarded as .mrgmal and trivial, not only by many m the media audience, but also m main- stream' media scholarship. Why is this the case, these researchers enquire, and what is the significance of these perceptions? Media forms coded as 'gendered'/feminine have tended to be regarded by the academic adminis- trators in positions of power over hiring and promotion as tangential to 'real' media scholarship – for a long time largely synonymous with studies of journalism and the news (see Brunsdon 2000). This effectively dis- couraged some from focusing on analysis of 'women's genres'. Much like the system of reward and punishment associated with boys' and girls' compliance to traditional gender roles, an academic system based on gender difference was used to construct and maintain a system of unequal scho- larship relations (see Shirvani et al. 2002). Again, as essays in this volume show, this is now (slowly) changing. A lively and productive generation of scholarship taking these forms seriously is now beginning to thrive.

Representations in the media of people, events and relationships never simply appear from 'no place'. At some level, of course, this assertion that media messages do not simply appear like Venus emerging from the sea is obvious, but often discussions of content either begin and end with that content, or acquire explanations that turn immediately to highly macro- level societal conditions: patriarchy accounts for sexist content. Media organizations and the gendered issues attendant to those organizations are certainly responsive to social-political movements – and to the reactions against them – as well as to broad economic and social changes. However, between the very broad, general conditions and power relations in the world and the ideological messages which shape media texts that are delivered to audiences is an important system of production. Messages emerge from complex – indeed, extremely complex and often hierarchical – co-ordinated activities of increasingly globalized media organizations. The next section of this essay turns to examine the processes of producing media tets and the impact of gender difference within media institutions.

(Re)producing Gender

How gender is (re)produced in the media demands a consideration of the ways in which media forms are produced.[2] Just as gender itself cannot be understood in isolation from 'race', class and sexuality, so media production cannot be seen as solely a result of media workers, or owners. Nor, as catchy as McLuhan's idea was in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), is the sole answer that 'the medium is the message'. What is critical is the complex interaction of institutional structures, organizational/ corporate constraints, the basis of financing and the possibility of advertiser pressure, the regulatory context, as well as the predispositions of individual workers and owners. For social movements trying to create alternative media, certain technical, technological and socio-economic factors also loom large. Can a newspaper or magazine physically get distributed to its potential readers? What kinds of skills and equipment are necessary to produce content? What is the cost of access to a medium – not so much the cost to consumers of purchasing or consuming a single 'issue' than the cost of buying (or starting) and operating a media organization such as a newspaper or radio station? Are potential audiences literate? Furthermore, like the analyses of texts, the analyses of media organizations (from hiring and promotion patterns to structures for decision making) need to be grounded in a dual systems approach that takes note of both 'gender biases' and the interests of commercial organizations in maximizing profit.

A brief historical detour to assess women's long presence in newsrooms raises many of the questions that are relevant to how work routes, divisions of labour, the need to find practical financing structures and a host of other features of textual production interact in the media construction of gender difference. To succeed economically, editors and especially publishers have long understood that newspapers need to obtain enough subscribers of a kind that would attract a sufficient number of advertisers. By this logic, it is perhaps not surprising that early newspapers in both the USA and UK (and in other industrialized countries) were largely masculine enterprises. Men were the most desired readers, so newspapers were written to attract them. The assumption was that women writers would be unable to cover issues of interest to men or to write in ways that men would find appealing. Initially, the few women who managed to enter newsrooms were nearly always the sisters, daughters or wives of newspaper and magazine publishers and editors (Sebba 1994). Later, a few women were hired specifically to write about things of interest to that somewhat marginalized audience, women (Mills 1990). It was assumed that female journalists were best suited to writing about fashion, domestic chores and social news. More to the point, he women's page has always been regarded as a 'low-rent ghetto' within journalism. 'Women's journalism' is not 'real' journalism (see Stott 1973; ills 1997; van Zoonen 1998). Men did not want to write about things of interest to women nor, as their autobiographies attest, did women want to write for women's pages (Steiner 1998).

Women in the USA with access to money and the ability to make purchases for themselves and their families eventually became desirable markets. The *Delineator,* which lasted until the 1930s, was started in 1872 by Ebenezer Butterick to promote tissue patterns for sewing, as was *McCall's.* In 1837, Sarah Josepha Hale merged her *Ladies Magazine* with her competitor's *Godey's Lady's Book* , and ran it for 40 years. Other women's magazines have lasted for more than a century – the *Ladies' Home journal* goes back to 1883, *Good Housekeeping* to 1885. The point is not that 'refined' middle-class women were in particular need of moral uplift, but that magazine publishers became convinced that they needed to ensure this. These magazines were not only cheap to produce and easy to read, but their staffs worked hard to convince women that they needed the magazines' models of 'proper' womanhood. Women became an ever more attractive market for advertisers as their spending power increased (see also Beetham 1996).

Women's magazines continue to raise a host of crucial issues for a consideration of gender. First, a logic within capitalism demands that femininity be defined and continually re-defined in ways that are financially profitable (see Macdonald, Chapter 3 in this volume). Particular definitions are tied to specific products that women are told that they need or that they can be made to desire and need through advertising. The emergence in the twenty-first century of multiple identities for women constitutes a boon to publishers and advertisers. There are now more niche markets. Marketing consultants have identified a growing number of feminine identities, each of which can be sold a range of products, although many of these identities are soon abandoned after they turn out not to be profitable (McCracken 1993). Each member of a niche market – whether defined by age, size, career, 'race', hobbies or even marital status – is handed her own set of problems and challenges which can be explained and solved by subscribing to the magazine and by using the products and services it advertises. In some cases, readers might not even know that they had such problems until discovering them in the magazine. Recently, many of the same issues have emerged in the new men's magazines, including the invention of successive styles of masculinity (see Beynon, Chapter 11 in this volume; see also Jackson et al. 2001). Nevertheless, the intense pressure from advertisers on women's magazines to offer complementary copy – essentially free advertising disguised as editorial copy run in conjunction with advertising – may signal both a particular lack of respect for women and the idea that women's anxieties about femininity can continue to be manipulated fo financial gain.

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Feminists who have tried over the last 150 years to establish their own media institutions have not necessarily avoided these financial pressures and constraints, even when they have been wholly uninterested in making a profit (Steiner 1992). Suffrage newspapers of the 1870s and 1880s, sex education journals of the 1920s and radical separatist magazines of the 1970s found it difficult or impossible to operate without some advertising revenue, but also found it difficult or impossible to attract this revenue when they wanted it. Even when the labour is donated, production transmission an distribution of media forms can cost a lot of money'. Questions revolving around funding and advertising have continued to be particularly troublesome for alternative media organizations, including those produced by feminists hoping to offer alternative definitions of femininity and portray non-hierarchical gender relations. Potential advertisers often assert that the readership of such media are not sufficiently interested m consumption, or at least in the specific products and services that advertisers have been accustomed to aiming at women. Alternatively, advertisers have pressured the feminist media to run certain kinds of stories covers and illustrations, often in ways that were inconsistent with th politics of these organizations.

In the USA, certain feminist newspapers, magazines, radio shows and cable television programmers have succeeded, but usually only when they are the brainchild of an individual woman or because they are produced by relatively no_n-hierarchical collectives. Gloria Steinem (1990), one of the co-founding editors of *Ms.,* which is by far the largest feminist periodical published in the USA, famously described how the magazine's refusal to let itself be co-opted by advertisers meant the loss of many potential accounts. In 1980, for example, Revlon halted its plans to advertise in *Ms.* after four Soviet women exiled for publishing underground samizdat (self-published, usually photocopied news written by political dissidents) appeared on a *Ms.* cover without make-up. In another incident, when *Ms.* not only refused to provide complei:ientary copy but also reported that hair dyes might be carcinogenic, Clairol stopped advertising in the magazine. Relying on high subscription rates, from 1990 until 2002 *Ms.* ran no advertising at all. Its current owner, the US feminist organization Feminist Majority, however, has decided to accept some advertisements from progressive organizations and businesses.

Although the gatekeeping function of news media is well known, the gendered character of gatekeeping processes within news organizations is rarely systematically studied (van Zoonen 1998). That is to say, little attention has been paid to the extent to which organizational and bureaucratic procedures by which stories are selected and assigned are male dominated. While news decisions reflect certain institutional decisions about 'newsworthiness', exclusivity and the availability of credible sources, among other considerations, gendered power dynamics are also inflected when stories are changed to fit legal standards, editors' and owners' pre- judices, community culture and advertiser demands (Christmas 1997; Mills 1997; Rhodes 2001).

Outside the news, there are even fewer systematic studies of the organizational impacts of gender, although anecdotal stories circulate about how, on one hand, individual politicians or feminist groups have com- plained about television or film plots, and on the other, how scripts have been changed when something seems too controversial. The structure of media institutions – in terms of the relative flexibility and adaptability of various technologies as well as the constraints imposed by certain economic and financing systems – has necessarily figured in debates about gender. The point of such work is to encourage a critical examination of how and when gender matters to media professionals and in media workplaces.

The production of messages also involves questions of genre, given media organizations' preference for and reliance on well-established ones like soap operas, daytime television talk shows and women's magazines, since these are seen to have enduring audience appeal. Even here, it is worth noting that the production of these and other gendered media genres has specific consequences for women. For example, in television soap operas, narrative time rarely follows clock time; plots continue for years, constituting the television soap as a serial form that resists narrative closure (Modleski 1982). In addition, soaps emphasize dialogue, problem solving, intimate conversation and domestic settings. On one hand, then, it can be argued that these devices are deployed to offer familiarity and thereby provide pleasure to women viewers in the home. However, one could also argue that these features are specifically employed as a commodity in order to hook a market for the commercials, to keep women watching, day after day, and month after month (see Brunsdon 2000).

John Fiske (1987: 308) has made a similar point about television news, referring to it as a 'masculine soap opera'. Like soaps, television news relies on a serial/continuous format for its stories about the world of men and resists narrative closure. So too does the news emphasize dialogue (through journalist/source interviews, for example) and problem solving (how to manage post-war Iraq as the focus of seemingly endless discussions, for instance). Where conversation is intimate in soap operas and related to women's experiences in the private sphere, the news instead emphasizes collective conversation in a public (masculine) setting. The discursive devices used in television news are ones that are well known to their (largely male) audiences, providing viewers with pleasures associated with their familiarity of the genre and its largely masculine mode of address. So too does the news discursively invite male viewers to return to the narrative, day in, day out, to follow stories as they unfold. In the UK, the evening news bulletins attract some of the largest audiences of the viewing day. These audiences are not only highly attractive to advertisers on the commercial television stations (because of their large numbers and relatively high disposable income), but also to the BBC, which needs to bring in large audiences in order to justify its continuing reliance on funding from the television licence fee.

In the context of commercial television in the USA, maintaining and expanding audiences for soap operas is driven by the commercial logics of advertisers who demand reliable and consistent access to this consumer market. Here the central interest of television producers is to sustain a market on behalf of advertisers, while serving the particular interests of an audience is of secondary importance (Modleski 1982). Similarly, popular romance novels – which major publishing houses like Harlequin and Mills & Boon produce several times a week, nearly by an assembly line, using simple and standardized narrative formats – are designed to keep their fans buying. The point is, as a particular popular culture genre, the romance novel is written to be consumed easily and quickly so that the reader shortly needs to buy yet another one (a similar logic to that of women's magazines). The actual story may be displaced within this scenario by the act of consuming the product itself. To put this point more bluntly, although it is tempting to think that media products are not produced in the same ways and for the same reasons as toothpaste and chairs, as commodities, the logic is pretty much the same. Indeed, whether the media product is a soap opera, romance novel, women's magazine or newspaper, it is not the product that is the central commodity, but the audience itself – an audience that can be sold to advertisers who want to sell to that audience other commodities.

The institutional processes and systems that give rise to media forms are largely indiscernible to their audiences. Such invisibility works to the economic and ideological advantage of media organizations, which face fewer challenges and enjoy greater resonance when audiences cannot step back to think who is responsible for the selection and production of texts but instead merely accept texts as 'mirrors of reality'. Nonetheless, students – in the broadest sense of the word – are becoming increasingly interested not only in the texts that media producers are currently providing for audiences but also who are producing them, what or who is missing, and who is not being addressed. Sometimes analysis of the sexist and capitalist interests of media institutions may be disruptive and may even spoil the fun of (unthinking) media consumption. That said, understanding the issues can also stimulate new ideas and political interventions in media institutions. We would argue that in most cases, as the next section on gendered audiences shows, understanding how the media operate, and why, and how they produce certain content can enormously enhance one's pleasure and appreciation of specific media genres.

Audiences and Identities

Media and cultural studies scholars understand audiences as comprising human actors who are necessarily active meaning-makers, although there is some debate over the extent to which viewers can be described as self-determining individuals. The messages of media texts never simply mirror or reflect 'reality', but instead construct hegemonic definitions of what should be accepted as 'reality'. To understand how audiences 'decode' media texts, it is important to understand how the hegemonic conditions of their encoding encourage audiences to make sense of them in certain 'preferred' ways – ones that help to (re)produce hegemonic definitions of 'reality'. Stuart Hall's (1980) 'encoding/decoding' model of communication underscored how audiences might accept hegemonic definitions of 'reality' although they might also partially resist them, or indeed read messages oppositionally. During the 1980s and 1990s, feminist and critical scholars variously investigated the conditions of production and reception of television soap operas, popular romance fiction, Hollywood cinema and women's magazines, often with the ambition of showing how female audiences negotiate the media's hegemonic constructions of the 'reality' of gender difference. Quite often this research argues against the common assumption that femininity is inferior to masculinity in popular culture, and advocates a revaluing of so-called feminine media forms and a reassessment of female audiences.

Audience scholars have been quite innovative in borrowing from other disciplines a range of methodological tools, including letters from readers and fans, ethnography, questionnaires, personal and focus group interviews and participant observation. The brief sketches of some key studies in this field that follow below also show how this still-emerging body of research takes seriously the genres and audiences that had been ignored or marginalized by previous generations of research. These studies are broadly grouped, first, into those that were undertaken within the context of the household, where researchers were seeking to understand how everyday interactions among family members shaped the gendered dynamics of media consumption. Second, we examine those studies that were conducted in other settings, such as in workplaces, university classrooms and cafes where comprehending how gendered household dynamics shaped audienc reception was not central to the study.

Two relatively early examples of British media research that address media use in domestic contexts include important studies by Dorothy Hobson and David Morley. In Hobson's (1980) pioneering research on housewives' use of the media in their everyday lives, she interviewed young, working-class women with small children.[3] Hobson discovered that these young mothers tended to prefer those media genres related to a 'woman's world'. For example, soap operas, popular radio programmes and women's magazines were all viewed favourably for their focus on women's problems in relationships, with the family and in dealing with the gendered dynamics of social relations outside the home. Conversely, the women showed little interest in media that they understood as more closely related to concerns in a 'man's world' (the news, current affairs and scientific and documentary television programmes). They considered such texts to be 'both alien and hostile to the values of women', although they also viewed them as important and serious (Hobson 1980: 109). Hobson emphasized the importance of women's own distinction between media related to a 'woman's world' and a 'man's world'. While women's use of the media provides them with a connection to the 'outside' world, it also reinforces 'the privatised isolation by reaffirming the consensual position – there are thousands of othe women in the same situation, a sort of "collective isolation" ' (1980: 94-5). By discursively positioning women within the private sphere, she concluded, the media actively (re)produced a hierarchical sexual division of labour.

David Morley's research on household media consumption patterns involved detailed interviews with 20 families in southeast England and observations of their media use in their homes. He reported his findings in the book *Family Television* (1986) where he argues that the micro-politics of the household fundamentally shape how individual members make sense of media messages. Understanding how men and women relate to each other within the household and how sexual politics influences media consumption (in terms of genre preference, style and length of viewing, who has control of the remote, and so on) helps explain how the relations of gender inequality in both the private and public spheres are reproduced in everyday life. While gender identities are never permanently fixed and are open to contestation, there are nevertheless certain patterned ways in which family members are interpolated which are largely tacit and therefore difficult to resist. For instance, like Hobson, Morley found that many women were not interested in the national news, largely because they did not see how it might link in any meaningful way to their daily lives. However, a number of women indicated that they liked to watch local television news. They were interested in what these programmes could tell them about local crimes, for instance, which 'they feel they need to know about [. . .] both for their own sake and their children's sakes' (1986: 169). It seems clear that women's interest in this type of story forms part of what Hobson referred to as a 'woman's world'. That is, women regard local news outlets as relevant to their family roles and duties (the care and protection of family members, particularly children, being fundamental). Said one of Morley's respondents: 'Sometimes I like to watch the [national] news if it's something that's gone on – like where that little boy's gone and what happened to him. Otherwise, I don't, not unless it's local only when there's something that's happened local' (1986: 169).

Ann Gray's (1992) *Video Playtime* followed up on this line of argumentation through an examination not only of the gendered patterns of media preferences (soap opera, family drama) but also of media technology use.[4] Gray discovered that women displayed a particular affinity for the video recorder and the telephone. Videos, she concluded, enable women to record programmes to be played back when daily household labour is complete or at times when they can be shared with female friends. The telephone is also important because it allows women to keep in touch with other women in the household and to maintain familial relationships.[5] In terms of the women's media preferences, women use soap opera, for example, as a way of facilitating their female friendships and validating the importance of the genre in women's lives (men tend to dismiss soaps as trivial). The programmes women enjoy provide them with periods of escape from the mundane routines of everyday life and, however temporarily, normative definitions of femininity.

Moving to audience research conducted outside the household, we note that some of the most important studies have combined analysis of texts and political economy of media industries with feedback from fans or audience questionnaires. Janice Radway's (1984) *Reading the Romance*, for example, conducted focus group and long interviews with romance fiction fans in a US Midwestern town she called 'Smithton'.[6] Radway also provided her own interpretation of the typical plots of romance novels, and she studied the institutional processes by which those novels were written, published and distributed. Instead of relating to romance plots in the 'preferred' way (accepting the patriarchal definitions of love, marriage and women's subordinate position in marriage), what she found was that these women regarded the female heroines as independent, assertive and powerful. Additionally, they all seemed able to incorporate these traits into their own (positive) self-image as women. In other words, these fans managed to read 'against the grain' of the narrow definitions of femininity on offer in romance texts, using the novels as a way of claiming a space for personal leisure. Romance reading constituted their declaration of independence from family and domestic responsibilities. Family members understood that when a wife or mother was reading a romance, she was to be left alone (even if they then violated this tacit understanding). Despite the discursive spaces that the romance genre provides for women to challenge normative assumptions about a woman's 'natural' roles in life (wife and mother), however, these texts do not offer a critique of patriarchal hegemony. As Radway (1984: 217) reasons:

> Because it refurbishes the institution of marriage by suggesting how it might be viewed continuously as a courtship, because it represents real female needs within the story and then depicts their satisfaction by traditional heterosexual relations, the romance avoids questioning the institutionalised basis of patriarchal control over women even as it serves as a locus of protest against some of its emotional consequences.

In the end, romance fiction does nothing to undermine the structural (re)production of the patriarchal control in the public sphere of work and political decision making.

Television talk shows provide another example of a feminized media genre that has undergone feminist analysis in recent years. Jane Shattuc's (1997) investigation of US daytime talk shows begins in an interesting way by offering a short cultural history of 'sob sister journalism' of nineteenth-century tabloids, which she regards as a possible forerunner of today's television talk shows. She also undertakes an extensive analysis of the industrial production requirements for these shows, including the logic of choosing themes, steering guests and experts, and manipulating audience members at home and in the studio.[7] The narratives of daytime talk shows, like soap operas, are woman-centred and celebrate women's agency and assertiveness. Still, the goal is to manufacture an expert consumer, not a feminist critic of capitalism. Although, as with Radway, little was made in the book of her survey data, Shattuc also distributed questionnaires to healthcare and hospital workers and visitors at two Boston hospitals. Two focus groups discussions gave Shattuc more thoughtful (and more critical) notions of how viewers use the talk shows than did her survey data, exposing an understanding of the shows' manipulative sensationalism and even some anger at how the shows construct people as 'trash'.

Yet another example of such triangulated, rigorous research is Amy Erdman Farrell's tough-minded critique of *Ms.* as a magazine offering a popular version of liberal feminism, indeed the first and perhaps only commercial magazine in the USA to espouse feminism. Farrell interviewed magazine staffers, went through its archives and examined all issues, including the 'No Comment' section that was contributed by readers. But a key feature of *Yours in Sisterhood* (1998) is her analysis of all the letters published in *Ms.* from 1972 to 1989, as well as a significant portion of the unpublished letters. Farrell shows how *Ms.* readers wrote, or rewrote, the magazine for themselves, specifically working to 'right' the magazine, to return it to the promise they had seen in it as a feminist resource. Not surprisingly for a magazine that was explicitly intended to be reader- centred, its readers developed a relationship of reciprocity and identification with the magazine that was reinforced by a second and highly adversarial relationship of resistance and contestation. Ultimately, Farrell was pessimistic about the likelihood of success for hybrids of feminism and commercial popularity, but they do provide crucial – and necessary – sites of intervention.

Other research has been much more specifically grounded on gathering audience data. Ien Ang based *Watching Dallas* (1985) on letters written by 42 Dutch fans of the US night-time dramatic (or melodramatic) serial *Dallas.* She placed an advertisement in a Dutch women's magazine asking women to write to her to tell her why they like to watch the programme. The main premise of her study was that programmes like *Dallas* had 'feminist potential'. They could be analysed by feminists to highlight some of the pleasures generated by such programmes as well as other forms of popular culture produced for largely female audiences that media scholars often derided as trivial or that were condemned, especially by international media critics, as symbolizing US cultural imperialism. In Ang's view, *Dallas* and similar 'weepies' could no longer be simply condemned, given the pleasure they inspired in fans, for their psychological realism, albeit one based on a deeply tragic structure of feeling and focus on domestic horrors, similar to the daytime soap operas. The visual stylization of *Dallas* and its extreme degree of external 'unrealism' are acknowledged, but she argues that the pleasure in the fantasy of *Dallas* need not necessarily lead to political passivity or anti-feminism.

To examine more closely some of the ways in which the media construct feminine identity and how women respond to these constructions, Andrea Press conducted extensive open-ended interviews with 20 working-class and 21 middle-class women of different generations.[8] Reporting the results of her study in the book *Women Watching Television* (1991), Press showed how class and generational differences influence how women make sense of television programming. She refuted the then academically fashionable claim that audiences always resist mediated cultural hegemony as well as the claim that the media determine how audiences make sense of their messages. Instead, she insisted that gender, social class and generation are fundamental factors, among others, influencing audiences' perceptions. For example, she found that the working-class women tended to relate to television most closely in terms of their class identity rather than their gender. For middle-class women, the reverse turned out to be true. Examining generational differences, both the youngest and oldest women, however, largely identified with gender aspects of television programming rather than those related to social class. As Press (1991: 177) notes: 'Younger women [are) more critically suspicious of television's images picturing women's changing social positions, and older women more hopeful and accepting of the stories these images tell.'

Phillip Schlesinger et al.'s UK study provides an examination of women's responses to violent film and television content.[9] The book coming out of this research, *Women Viewing Violence* (1992), was based on focus group interviews and surveys with female audiences of varying cultural backgrounds, personal experiences of male violence and social class; they were asked to respond to media representations of violence against women. For some of the women in the study, media violence made them remember terrible incidents of violence in their lives. For others, it contributed to a general fear of being attacked. Still others, with no personal experience of violence, regarded the mediated violence as abstract and distant from their everyday lives. How women viewed the violence very much depended on their social background and any direct experiences of violence. In other words, the study provided clear evidence for the argument that audiences should never be seen as a homogeneous group. That said, while ethnicity, social class and experience of violence tended to differentiate women from one another, a strong similarity among women was a fear of male violence in general, and rape in particular. As active critics of media violence, the group of women in the study insisted that the media must portray violence realistically and with the aim of educating the public about women's everyday experiences of violence. What must be taken into consideration in all media portrayals of violence against women is how they might affect women who have been victims of violence or who fear such violence. As the authors conclude, *'the issue is not whether depictions of violence increase the likelihood of similar violence among potential perpetrators, but the* *feelings and reactions that it creates among those who are the actual or potential victims of violence'* (1992: 170, emphasis in the original, see also Carter and Weaver, 2003).

For more than four decades, an enormously popular television genre, particularly with female audiences, has been the soap opera. Mary Ellen Brown's focus group discussions with US soap opera fans published in *Soap Opera and Women's Talk* (1994) concludes that, despite a widespread view that this is an exploitative genre that simply reproduces hegemonic notions of femininity, female fans often use soap narratives as a way of resisting restrictive forms of feminine identity.[10] Similar to Radway's (1984) argument about romance novels, soaps create opportunities for their predominantly female audiences to construct social networks where their talk about the programmes can be seen as an instance of resistive pleasure against patriarchy. Resistance to patriarchy, Brown insists, need not only be theorized at the macro level – that is of social changes in women's gender roles. Instead, it may also be achieved through micro-level changes in people's consciousness about gender – through a 'constant awareness of contradiction and the struggle to secure a space for the voice of the female spectator who speaks as well as sees' (1994: 182).

Female spectators are at the centre of Jackie Stacey's investigation into feminine identification, published as *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (1994). Stacey's study is based on an analysis of letters and questionnaires sent to her by women who were avid cinema spectators in the 1940s and 1950s.[11] One of its aims was to challenge what she perceived to be universalistic arguments of psychoanalytic theorizing around female spectatorship prevalent at the time – much of which assumed that women view film through a 'male gaze' (Mulvey 1975). This claim, Stacey argued, largely ignored the historical realities of women's experiences as film audiences. Centred for analysis in her study was the historical and contextual place and importance of female movie stars in female spectators' memories of war-time and post-war Britain. To understand the relationship between sexual difference, spectatorship and visual pleasure, Stacey argued for the need to provide historical accounts of the relationship between female spectators and stars. This meant abandoning the assumption that female audiences passively accept what they see at the cinema. This claim was borne out in her audience research, where she found that women were aware of the impossibility of attaining the feminine ideal image as presented in Hollywood cinema. Nevertheless, they all took real delight in looking back to the youthful pleasures they experienced in the cinema – of identification (with the star), commodity consumption, glamour and escape from the monotony of everyday life. What these women highlighted was their contradictory experiences of the restrictiveness as well as the fluidity of feminine subjectivities – thus challenging claims around women's almost complete subordination in patriarchal war-time and post-war Britain.

While most critical audience research from the late 1980s and 1990s assumed that audiences are active and critical daily consumers of media, Joke Hermes's study of women's magazine use, published in her book *Reading Women's Magazines* (1995), makes a very different point.[12] Based on interviews with women of various ethnic, social class, educational backgrounds and ages, Hermes concluded that women's magazines might not be terribly important in their lives after all. While most of the women to whom she spoke find these publications to be accessible and pleasurable, they also regard them as having little cultural value or meaning. This finding, Hermes insists, challenges the view that media texts are always deeply significant to audiences. The place and importance of these magazines in women's lives is that they are easily incorporated into the demands of everyday life. She concludes, 'Women's magazines as a text [sic] are not highly significant, but as an everyday medium they are a means of filling a small break and of relaxing that does not interrupt one's schedule, because they are easy to put down' (1995: 144). These publications are perhaps the easiest to pick up when time permits and put down when the demands of childcare leave 'little time or energy, and accordingly narrows down your choice of media to relax with, to learn from or to be diverted by' (1995: 152). The speculation, then, is that perhaps their importance to women has been overestimated in previous research into this genre.

Each of the studies sketched out here is used to highlight the need to examine the taken-for-granted assumptions about communication processes in order to make apparent the often subtle and uneven ways in which unequal gender relations structures are (re)produced when audiences make sense of media texts. This is where audience research comes into its own – in the way that it can render problematic taken-for-granted ideas and beliefs circulating in society about gender. Such investigations show us how constructed these preferences are (in the name of audience differentiation, niche marketing and so on). Audience research contributes to a 'denaturalization' of gender difference and demonstrates in whose interest it tends to operate. In other words, it shows us that gender is a social construction and that while the media play a role in (re)producing gender norms, audiences do not automatically accept what they are seeing as the 'truth' of gender identity. The research outlined here shows that the ways in which audiences make sense of messages about gender in the media varies, sometimes considerably, from largely accepting traditional definitions of femininity to outright rejection (and somewhere in between). At its best, it contributes to efforts to challenge common-sense assumptions about gender by providing a wealth of empirical evidence that sometimes turns these assumptions on their head. As such, audience research is able to make apparent the fact that gender identities are culturally constructed, and therefore open to challenge, rather than 'natural', unchangeable and inevitable.

Conclusion

In explaining the extent to which the media contribute to the perpetuation of hierarchical forms of gender difference, many scholars are mcreasmgly attentive to the interlocking interests of two ideological systems: capitalism and patriarchy. Interests in maximizing profit, it is argued, combine with male dominance, thereby shaping quite fundamentally the product10n of mainstream media texts' norms, values and beliefs. The power of these systems, however, can be challenged and contested. ndeed, in . many industrialized societies the rigidity of masculine and femmme identity has diminished in recent years. The view currently prevailing may be that women 'have it all' and men are experiencing a 'crisis in masculinity'. Indeed, many media producers are now more alive to feminist thought and in developing the feminist sensibilities of their audiences. Media forms often 'play' with sexist imagery, for example, in a 'knowing' or reflexive manner, implicitly acknowledging the media's past complicity in portraymg women in narrow, demeaning and sometimes offensive ways.

On the flip side, it is worth examining not only what has changed but also what remains problematic and as yet uncontested. Gender, always socially constituted, continues to be ruled by conventions, albeit in dynamic processes and expectations that have changed over the years. As Whitehead and Barrett (2001: 23) point out with regard to masculine identity: 'No matter how definitions of masculinity change, they are always in contrast to some definition of femininity and always elevated over this. In this way . . . anti-femininity lies at the heart of masculinity.' Pointing to examples of 'hard men' such as US boxer Mike Tyson and Vinnie Jones, the former British soccer player turned film actor, they (2001: 7) add:

> Countless numbers of men still act dominant and 'hard', deny their emotions, resort to violence as a means of self-expression, and seek to validate their masculinity in the public world of work rather than the private world of family and relationships. Moreover, such performances not only often go uncriticised, they are in fact lauded by many, both women and other men.

That is, the concept of masculinity is no more a biological given or standardized certainty than is femininity, and no less a problem. Masculine identities are becoming increasingly complex and fractured, and perhaps no less unhealthy, as the percentage of young men with eating disorders and body distortion problems seems to suggest. Many researchers connect boys' muscle dysmorphia (also called bigorexia) to the proliferation of media images of men with 'perfect' and highly muscular bodies (Pope et al. 1999; Beynon 2002). Trying to buck conventions about femininity or masculinity continues to be scary and even risky for both girls and boys.

Sexism has not yet been eliminated from the media, as several essays in this volume show. In particular, the continuing proliferation of pornographic representations in print, film and more recently on the Internet points to a continuing objectification and dehumanization of women. Sincere people may disagree about whether particular representations are pornographic, whether particular forms of pornography can be said to have 'pro-social' uses and, more generally, whether pornography can be defined neatly enough to be legally regulated. But people do not sincerely disagree that most pornography promotes a highly narrow and even false sexual script, suggesting that women are always sexually available and that even when women say 'no' they mean 'yes'.

Furthermore, although both woman-centred texts and female audience members have a new found status in the academy, scholars are right to highlight the power of commercial and consumer values that constrain and limit audience agency. In a climate of complacency around issues of gender inequality, we would argue that now, perhaps more than ever, feminist and critical gender research investigation is needed of the ways in which the media perpetuate narrow gender identities and sexual hierarchies. The authors' work included in this Reader contributes to a political agenda that seeks to deconstruct and subvert these conventions and expectations, challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about their inevitability and paving the way for genuinely democratic gender relations. We hope that our readers will find this Reader to be an intellectually exciting and indispensable resource for the important task of making sense of the gendered structures of media texts, production and audience reception.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the globalization of Barbie, see Hegde (2001).
2. We use the term '(re)production' rather than 'reproduction' to signal that while the media may represent femininity in certain narrow and restrictive ways, none

the less gender identity is constantly being redefined, renegotiated and struggled over in the processes of production and reception of media texts. While we acknowledge that gender binarisms continue to disadvantage women and girls, we also think that gender identity has always been (to varying degrees) more open, fluid and challengeable than some feminists have suggested.

3. Hobson (1980) undertook tape-recorded interviews and participant observation in the women's homes, asking them about a wide range of experiences in their everyday lives, including their use of the media.
4. There were 30 women of various ages and social classes interviewed in their homes. Gray began her study in 1984 when video technology was still in its infancy and thus little research had yet been undertaken. Interviews were organized around a set of loosely structured questions, with each interview lasting approximately 1V2 hours.
5. Lana Rakow's (1992) ethnography of telephone use in a Midwestern rural community which found that women relied on the telephone in distinctive ways – ways that were often very different to men's telephone use.

6. Radway's (1984) audience research consisted of two four-hour focus group interviews in a US Midwestern town she called 'Smithton' with 16 female romance fiction fans and long individual interviews with five of the most articulate women out of this group. She also used obtained information about , female romance fans from 'Dorothy Evans' who also provided her with names of romance readers she might interview. Radway also described the institutional production of these novels and analysed the typical plots.

7. Shattuc's (1997) fieldwork involved distributing questionnaires to healthcare workers and visitors to cafeterias at two Boston hospitals in March 1995. Her sample of 118 responses includes 79 women, 32 men. Sixty-four per cent of the women in the same were aged 21-40 years old and college educated; around 60 per cent of the same identified as 'white', 27 per cent as 'black', 5 per cent 'Hispanic', 2 per cent Native Americans and 1 per cent Asian. Nursing, social work, hospital administration and medical technology were the most frequently cited occupations.
8. Press's (1991) research was based on open-ended, long interviews with 20 working-class and 21 middle-class women of different generations (from 17 to 78) in the San Francisco Bay area in 1985-86. Additional interviews were undertaken during 1986-88 in Southern Florida and Lexington, Kentucky to strengthen her findings.

9. Schlesinger et al. (1992) included interviews with 91 women, 52 of whom had directly experienced violence. The women were organized into 14 viewing groups, based on experience of violence and national background, ethnicity and class and were shown *Crimewatch UK, Update,* one episode of the soap opera *EastEnders,* and the television drama *Closing Ranks* or the feature film *The Accused*. Group discussions lasted for seven hours. They were also asked to fill out a questionnaire containing their personal data and another questionnaire asking them about each of the programmes that they were viewing that day.

10. Brown's (1994) fieldwork consisted of focus group interviews with 30 US daytime television soap opera fans, 26 of whom were female and 4 male. Out of these, 11 were adults, 9 were young adults in their early twenties and 10 were teenagers. She broke this larger group into seven smaller ones. In all of the groups she included people who were related to one another or who were living in the same household for other reasons (college students) in order to be able to say something about kinship and friendship networks.
11. Stacey's (1994) audience study consists of 350 letters and 280 long questionnaires sent to her by British women who were keen cinema goers from the 1940s and 1950s in response to her advertisement in two weekly UK women's magazines.
12. Hermes (1995) interviewed 80 people who read a fairly wide variety of Dutch women's magazines (from weeklies to glossies), both men and women, of different ages, economic backgrounds, ethnicities in both Amsterdam, where Hermes lives, and in rural areas. Interviews largely took place where she found people reading these magazines, in railway stations, coffee shops and other public places. Interviews were semi-structured and were audio-taped for later transcription and analysis. In addition to this interview material, she also undertook textual analysis of selected women's magazines.

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S. Hall (Ed)

The Work of Representation

pp. 15-64

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Course of Study: GI403 - Gender and Media Representation

Title: Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying

Practices Name of Author: S. Hall (Ed)

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presentation meaning and language

In this chapter we will be concentrating on one of the key processes in the 'cultural circuit' (see du **Gay, Hall et al.,** 1997, and the Introduction to this volume) – the practices of *representation.* The aim of this chapter is to introduce you to this topic, and to explain what it is about and why we give it such importance in cultural studies.

The concept of representation has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture. Representation connects meaning and language to culture. But what exactly do people mean by it? What does representation have to do with culture and meaning? One common-sense usage of the term is as follows: 'Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people.' You may well ask, 'Is that all?' Well, yes and no. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It *does* involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things. But this is a far from simple or straightforward process, as you will soon discover.

How does the concept of representation connect meaning and language to culture? In order to explore this connection further, we will look at a number of different theories about how language is used to represent the world. Here we will be drawing a distinction between three different accounts or theories: the *reflective,* the *intentional* and the *constructionist* approaches to representation. Does language simply reflect a meaning which already exists out there in the world of objects, people and events *(reflective)?* Does language express only what the speaker or writer or painter wants to say, his or her personally intended meaning *(intentional)?* Or is meaning constructed in and through language *[constructionist)?* You will learn more in a moment about these three approaches.

Most of the chapter will be spent exploring the *constructionist* approach, because it is this perspective which has had the most significant impact on cultural studies in recent years. This chapter chooses to examine two major variants or models of the constructionist approach – the *semiotic* approach, greatly influenced by the great Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the *discursive* approach, associated with the French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault. Later chapters in this book will take up these two theories again, among others, so you will have an opportunity to consolidate your understanding of them, and to apply them to different areas of analysis. Other chapters will introduce theoretical paradigms which apply constructionist approaches in different ways to that of semiotics and Foucault. All, however, put in question the very nature ofrepresentation.

We turn to this question first.

g mean resenting things

representation

What does the word **representation** really mean, in this context? What does the process of representation involve? How does representation work?

To put it briefly, representation is the production of meaning through language. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* suggests two relevant meanings for the word:

1 To represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses; as, for example, in the sentence, 'This picture represents the murder of Abel by Cain.'

2 To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for; as in the sentence, 'In Christianity, the cross represents the suffering and crucifixion of Christ.'

The figures in the painting *stand in the place of*, and at the same time, *stand for* the story of Cain and Abel. Likewise, the cross simply consists of two wooden planks nailed together; but in the context of Christian belief and teaching, it takes on, symbolizes or comes to stand for a wider set of meanings about the crucifixion of the Son of God, and this is a concept we can put into words and pictures.

Here is a simple exercise about representation. Look at any familiar object in the room. You will immediately recognize what it is. But how do you *know* what the object is? What does 'recognize' mean?

Now try to make yourself conscious of what you are doing - observe what is going on as you do it. You recognize what it is

> because your thought- processes decode your visual perception of the object in terms of a concept of it which you have in your head. This must be so because, if you look away from the object, you can still *think* about it by conjuring it up, as we say, 'in your mind's eye'. Go on -try to follow the process as it happens: There is the object ... and there is the concept in your head which tells you what it is, what your visual image of it *means.*
>
> Now, tell me what it is. Say it aloud: 'It's a lamp' – or a table or a book or the phone or whatever. The concept of the object has passed through your mental representation of it to me *via* the word for it which you have just used. The word stands for or represents the concept, and can be used to reference or designate either a 'real' object in the world or indeed even some imaginary object, like angels dancing on the head of a pin, which no one has ever actually seen.

This is how you give meaning to things through language. This is how you 'make sense of' the world of people, objects and events, and how you are able to express a complex thought about those things to other people, or communicate about them through language in ways which other people are able to understand.

Why do we have to go through this complex process to represent our thoughts? If you put down a glass you are holding and walk out of the room, you can still *think* about the glass, even though it is no longer physically there. Actually, you can't think with a glass. You can only think with *the concept of* the glass. As the linguists are fond of saying, 'Dogs bark. But the concept of "dog" cannot bark or bite.' You can't speak with the actual glass, either. You can only speak with the *word* for glass GLASS which is the linguistic sign which we use in English to refer to objects which you drink water out of. This is where *representation* comes in. Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer to* either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events.

systems of representation

So there are *two* processes, two **systems of representation,** involved. First, there is the 'system' by which all sorts of objects, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or *mental representations* which we carry around in our heads. Without them, we could not interpret the world meaningfully at all. In the first place, then, meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or 'represent' the world, enabling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads.

Before we move on to look at the second 'system of representation', we should observe that what we have just said is a very simple version of a rather complex process. It is simple enough to see how we might form concepts for things we can perceive people or material objects, like chairs, tables and desks. But we also form concepts of rather obscure and abstract things, which we can't in any simple way see, feel or touch. Think, for example, of our concepts of war, or death, or friendship or love. And, as we have remarked, we also form concepts about things we never have seen, and possibly can't or won't ever see, and about people and places we have plainly made up. We may have a clear concept of, say, angels, mermaids, God, the Devil, or of Heaven and Hell, or of Middlemarch (the fictional provincial town in George Eliot's novel), or Elizabeth (the heroine of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice).*

We have called this a *'system* ofrepresentation'. That is because it consists, not of individual concepts, but of different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them. For example, we use the principles of similarity and difference to establish relationships between concepts or to distinguish them from one another. Thus I have an idea that in some respects birds are like planes in the sky, based on the fact that they are similar because they both fly -but I also have an idea that in other respects they are different, because one is part of nature whilst the other is man-made. This mixing and matching of relations between concepts to form complex ideas and thoughts is possible because our concepts are arranged into different classifying systems. In this example, the first is based on a distinction between flying/not flying and the second is based on the distinction between natural/man-made. There are other principles of organization like this at work in all conceptual systems: for example, classifying according to sequence – which concept follows which or causality what causes what and so on. The point here is that we are talking about, not just a random collection of concepts, but concepts organized, arranged and classified into complex relations with one another. That is what our conceptual system actually is like. However, this does not undermine the basic point. Meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world – people, objects and events, real or fictional and the conceptual system, which can operate as *mental representations* of them.

Now it could be the case that the conceptual map which I carry around in my head is totally different from yours, in which case you and I would interpret or make sense of the world in totally different ways. We would be incapable of sharing our thoughts or expressing ideas about the world to each other. In fact, each of us probably does understand and interpret the world in a unique and individual way. However, we are able to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways. That is indeed what it means when we say we 'belong to the same culture'. Because we interpret the world in roughly similar ways, we are able to build up a shared culture of meanings and thus construct a social world which we inhabit together. That is why 'culture' is sometimes defined in terms of 'shared meanings or shared conceptual maps' (see **du** Gay, **Hall et al.,** 1997).

However, a shared conceptual map is not enough. We must also be able to represent or exchange meanings and concepts, and we can only do that when we also have access to a shared language. Language is therefore the second system of representation involved in the overall process of constructing meaning. Our shared conceptual map must be translated into a common language, so that we can correlate our concepts and ideas with certain written words, spoken sounds or visual images. The general term we use for words, sounds or images which carry meaning is *signs.* These signs stand for or represent the concepts and the conceptual relations between them which we carry around in our heads and together they make up the meaning-systems of our culture.

Signs are organized into languages and it is the existence of common languages which enable us to translate our thoughts (concepts) into words, sounds or images, and then to use these, operating as a language, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people. Remember that the term 'language' is being used here in a very broad and inclusive way. The writing system or the spoken system of a particular language are both obviously 'languages'. But so are visual images, whether produced by hand, mechanical, electronic, digital or some other means, when they are used to express meaning. And so are other things which aren't 'lnguistic' in any ordinary sense: the 'language' of facial expressions or of gesture, for example, or the 'language''of fashion, of clothes, or of traffic lights. Even music is a 'language', with complex relations between different sounds and chords, though it is a very special case since it can't easily be used to reference actual things or objects in the world (a point further elaborated in **du Gay,** ed., 1997, and **Mackay,** ed., 1997). Any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning is, from this point of view, 'a language'. It is in this sense that the model of meaning which I have been analysing here is often described as a 'linguistic' one; and that all the theories of meaning which follow this basic model are described as belonging to 'the linguistic turn' in the social sciences and cultural studies.

At the heart of the meaning process in culture, then, are two related 'systems of representation'. The first enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or a .chain of equivalences between things – people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. and our system of concepts, our conceptual maps. The second depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts. The relation between 'things', concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call 'representation'.

Language and representation

Just as people who belong to the same culture must share a broadly similar conceptual map, so they must also share the same way of interpreting the signs of a language, for only in this way can meanings be effectively exchanged between people. But how do we know which concept stands for which thing? Or which word effectively represents which concept? How do I know which sounds or images will carry, through language, the meaning of my concepts and what I want to say with them to you? This may seem relatively simple in the case of visual signs, because the drawing, painting, camera or TV image of a sheep bears a resemblance to the animal with a woolly coat grazing in a field to which I want to refer. Even so, we need to remind ourselves that a drawn or painted or digital version of a sheep is not exactly like a 'real' sheep. For one thing, most images are in two dimensions whereas the 'real' sheep exists in three dimensions.

Visual signs and images, even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted. In order to interpret them, we must have access to the two systems of representation discussed earlier: to a conceptual map which correlates the sheep in the field with the concept of a 'sheep'; and a language system which in visual language, bears some resemblance to the real thing or 'looks like it' in some way. This argument is clearest if we think of a cartoon drawing or an abstract painting of a 'sheep', where we need a very

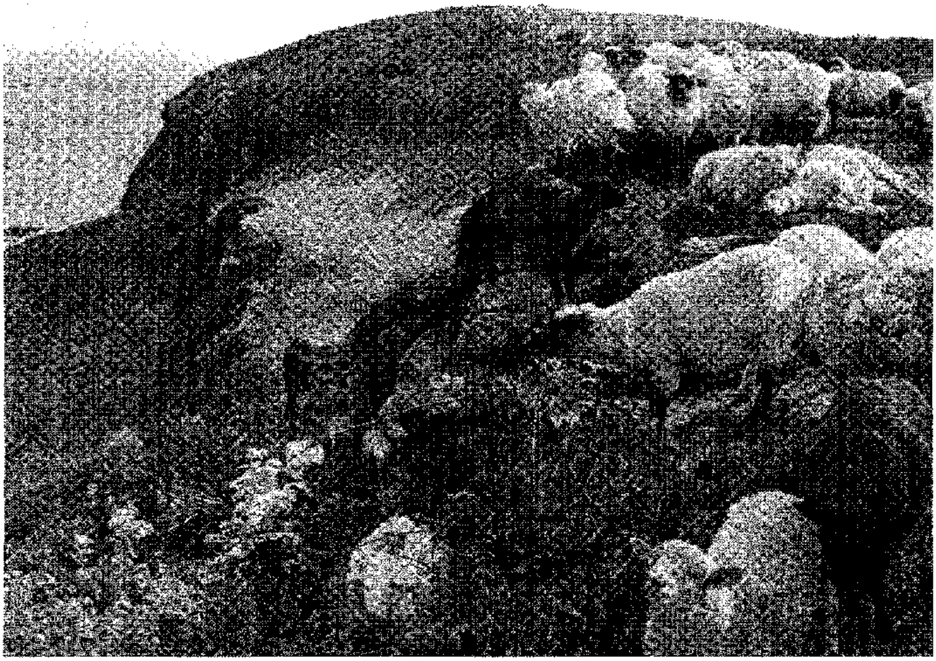


FIGURE 1.1

William Holman Hunt, *Our English* Coasts *('Strayed Sheep')*, 1852.

sophisticated conceptual and shared linguistic system to be certain that we are all 'reading' the in the same way. Even then we may find ourselves wondering whether it really is a picture of a sheep at all. As the relationship between the sign its referent becomes clear-cut, the meaning begins to slip and slide away from us into uncertainty. Meaning is no longer transparently passing from one person to another ...

So, even in the case of visual language, where the relationship between the concept and the sign seems fairly straightforward, the matter is far from simple. It is even more difficult with written or spoken language, where words don't look or sound anything like the things to which they refer. In part, this is because there are different kinds signs. Visual signs are what are called *iconic* signs.
That is, they bear, in their form, a certain resemblance to the object, person or event to which they refer. A photograph of a tree reproduces some of the actual conditions of our visual perception in the visual sign. Written or spoken signs, on the other hand, are what is called *indexicaL*

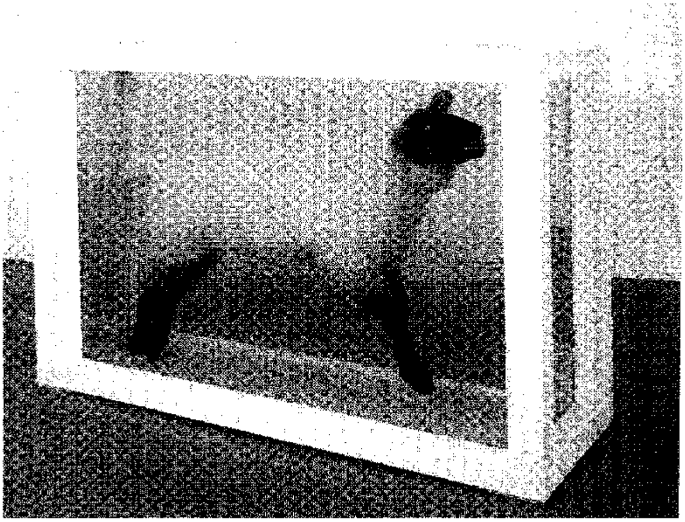


FIGURE 1.2

Q: When is a sheep not a sheep!

A: When it's a work of art.

(Damien Hirst, *Away from* the *Flock*, 1994).

They bear no obvious relationship at all to the things to which they refer. The letters T,R,E,E, do not look anything like trees in Nature, nor does the word 'tree' in English sound like 'real' trees (if indeed they make any sound at all!). The relationship in these systems of representation between the sign, the concept and the object to which they might be used to refer is entirely *arbitrary.* By 'arbitrary' we mean that in principle any collection of letters or any sound in any order would do the trick equally well. Trees would not mind if we used the word SEERT – 'trees' written backwards – to represent the concept of them. This is clear from the fact that, in French, quite different letters and a quite different sound is used to refer to what, to all appearances, is the same thing – a 'real' tree – and, as far as we can **tell,** to the same concept a large plant that grows in nature. The French and English seem to be using the same concept. But the concept which in English is represented by the word, TREE, is represented in French by the word, ARBRE.

Sharing the codes

The question, then, is: how do people who belong to the same culture, who share the same conceptual map and who speak or write the same language (English) know that the arbitrary combination of letters and sounds that makes up the word, TREE, will stand for or represent the concept 'a large plant that grows in nature'? One possibility would be that the objects in the world themselves embody and fix in some way their 'true' meaning. But it is not at all clear that real trees *know* that they are trees, and even less clear that they know that the word in English which represents the concept of themselves is written TREE whereas in French it is written ARBRE! As far as they are concerned, it could just as well be written COW or VACHE or indeed XYZ. The meaning is *not* in the object or person or thing, nor is it *in* the word. It is we who fix the meaning so firmly that, after a while, it comes to seem natural and inevitable. The meaning is *constructed by the system of representation.* It is constructed and fixed by the *code,* which sets up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system in such a way that, every time we think of a tree, the code tells us to use the English word TREE, or the French word ARBRE. The code tells us that, in our culture -that is, in our conceptual and language codes the concept 'tree' is represented by the letters T,R,E,E, arranged in a certain sequence, just as in Morse code, the sign for V (which in World War II Churchill made 'stand for' or represent 'Victory') is Dot, Dot, Dot, Dash, and in the 'language of traffic lights', Green = Go! and Red Stop!

„, One way of thinking about 'culture', then, is in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the *codes which govern the relationships of translation between them.* Codes fix the relationships between concepts and signs. They stabilize meaning within different languages and cultures. They tell us which language to use to convey which idea. The reverse is also true. Codes tell us which concepts are being referred to when we hear or read which signs. By arbitrarily fixing the relationships between our conceptual system and our linguistic systems (remember, 'linguistic' in a broad sense), codes make it possible fo ,us to speak and to hear intelligibly, and establish the translatability betw n our concepts and our languages which enables meaning to pass from speaker to hearer and be effectively communicated within a culture. This translatability is not given by nature or fixed by the gods. It is the result of a set of social conventions. It is fixed socially, fixed in culture. English or French or Hindi speakers have, over time, and without conscious decision or choice, come to an unwritten agreement, a sort of unwritten cultural covenant that, in their various languages, certain signs will stand for or represent certain concepts. This is what children learn, and how they become, not simply biological individuals but cultural subjects. They learn the system and conventions of representation, the codes of their language and culture, which equip them with cultural 'know-how' enabling them to function as culturally competent subjects. Not because such knowledge is imprinted in their genes, but because they learn its conventions and so gradually *become* 'cultured persons' – i.e. members of their culture. They unconsciously internalize the codes which allow them to express certain concepts and ideas through their systems of representation – writing, speech, gesture, visualization, and so on and to interpret ideas which are communicated to them using the same systems.

You may find it easier to understand, now, why meaning, language and representation are such critical elements in the study of culture. To belong to a culture is to belong to roughly the same conceptual and linguistic universe, to know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language can be interpreted to refer to or *reference* the world. To share these things is to see the world from within the same conceptual map and to make sense of it through the same language systems. Early anthropologists of language, like Sapir and Whorf, took this insight to its logical extreme when they argued that we are all, as it were, locked into our cultural perspectives or 'mind-sets', and that language is the best clue we have to that conceptual universe. This observation, when applied to all human cultures, lies at the root of what, today, we may think of as cultural or linguistic *relativism.*

ACTIVITY 2

You might like to think further about this question of how different cultures conceptually classify the world and what implications this has for meaning and representation.

The English make a rather simple distinction between sleet and snow. The Inuit (Eskimos) who have to survive in a very different, more extreme and hostile climate, apparently have many more words for snow and snowy weather. Consider the list of Inuit terms for snow from the Scott Polar Research Institute in Table 1.1. There are many more than in English, making much finer and more complex distinctions. The Inuit have a complex classificatory conceptual system for the weather compared with the English. The novelist Peter Hoeg, for example, writing about Greenland in his novel, *Miss Smilla's Feeling For* Snow- (1994, pp. 5-6), graphically describes 'frazzil ice' which is 'kneaded together into a soapy mash called porridge ice, which gradually forms free-floating plates, pancake ice, which one, cold, noonday hour, on a Sunday, freezes into a single solid sheet'. Such distinctions are too fine and elaborate even for the English who are always talking about the weather! The question, however, is do the Inuit actually experience snow differently from the English? Their language system suggests they conceptualize the weather differently. But how far is our experience actually bounded by our linguistic and conceptual universe?

Table I.I Inuit terms for snow and ice

snow	1s	into *masak*	**ice**
	watery —		--pan, broken
blowing —		piqtuluk piqtuluktuq	
is snowstorming			— ice water
		qanik qaniktuq	
			melts to
			make water
		qaniaraqtuq	candle —
-is falling; is			
light falling			f
			l
light — is falling			a
		mauya aniu aquluraq	
first layer of -in fall			t
soft			
		pukak masak	
		masaguqtuaq	g
packed -to make water			l
light soft —		maqayak	a
sugar- waterlogged,			r
mushy			e

piled	**siku**
rough	siqumniq
shore —	
shorefast	
	immiuga
slush young	
	immiuqt
	uaq
	illauy
	iniq
	qaim
	iq
	quas
	aq
	ivunr
	it
	iwuit
	tu
	vaq
	qun
	a
	sik
	ulia
	q
wet	misak
wet	qanikkuk
wet — is falling	qanikkuktuq
drifting along a surface	natiruvik
––is drifting along a surface	natiruviktuaq
— lying on a surface	apun
snowflake	qanik
is being drifted over with —	

One implication of this argument about cultural codes is that, if meaning is the result, not of something fixed out there, in nature, but of our social, cultural and linguistic conventions, then meaning can never be *finally* fixed. We can all 'agree' to allow words to carry somewhat different meanings as we have for example, with the word 'gay', or the use, by young people, of the word 'wicked!' as a term of approval. Of course, there must be *some* fixing of meaning in language, or we would never be able to understand one another. We can't get up one morning and suddenly decide to represent the concept of a 'tree' with the letters or the word VYXZ, and expect people to follow what we are saying. On the other hand, there is no absolute or final fixing of meaning. Social and linguistic conventions do change over time. In the language of modern managerialism, what we used to call 'students', 'clients', 'patients' and 'passengers' have all become 'customers'. Linguistic codes vary significantly between one language and another. Many cultures do not have words for concepts which are normal and widely acceptable to us. Words constantly go out of common usage, and new phrases are coined: think, for example, of the use of 'downsizing' to represent the process of firms laying people off work. Even when the actual words remain stable, their connotations shift or they acquire a different nuance. The problem is especially acute in translation. For example, does the difference in English between *know* and *understand* correspond exactly to and capture exactly the same conceptual distinction as the French make between *savoir* and *connaitre?* Perhaps; but can we be sure?

The main point is that meaning does not inhere in things, in the world. It is constructed, produced. It is the result of a signifying practice -a practice that *produces* meaning, that *makes things mean.*

Theories of representation

There are broadly speaking three approaches to explaining how representation of meaning through language works. We may call these the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist or constructivist approaches. You might think of each as an attempt to answer the questions, 'where do meanings come from?' and 'how can we tell the "true" meaning of a word or image?'

reflective or mimetic approach

In the **reflective approach,** meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to *reflect* the true meaning as it already exists in the world. As the poet Gertrude Stein once said, 'A rose is a rose is a rose'. In the fourth century BC, the Greeks used the notion of *mimesis* to explain how language, even drawing and painting, mirrored or imitated Nature; they thought of Homer's great poem, *The Iliad*, as 'imitating' a heroic series of events. So the theory which says that language works by simply reflecting or imitating the truth that is already there and fixed in the world, is sometimes called 'mimetic'.

Of course there is a certain obvious truth to mimetic theories of representation and language. As we've pointed out, visual signs do bear some relationship to the shape and texture of the objects which they represent. But, as was also pointed out earlier, a two-dimensional visual image of a *rose* is a sign it should not be confused with the real plant with thorns and blooms growing in the garden. Remember also that there are many words, sounds and images which we fully well understand but which are entirely fictional or fantasy and refer to worlds which are wholly imaginary – including, many people now think, most of *The Iliad!* Of course, I can use the word 'rose' to *refer* to real, actual plants growing in a garden, as we have said before. But this is because I know the code which links the concept with a particular word or image. I cannot *think* or *speak* or *draw* with an actual rose. And if someone says to me that there is no such word as 'rose' for a plant in her culture, the actual plant in the garden cannot resolve the failure of communication between us. Within the conventions of the different language codes we are using, we are both right – and for us to understand each other, one of us must learn the code linking the flower with the word for it in the other's culture.

The second approach to meaning in representation argues the opposite case. It holds that it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. Words mean what the author intends they should mean. This is the **intentional approach.** Again, there is some point to this argument since we all, as individuals, do use language to convey or communicate things which are special or unique to us, to our way of seeing the world. However, as a general theory of representation through language, the intentional approach is also flawed. We cannot be the sole or unique source of meanings in language, since that would mean that we could express ourselves in entirely private languages. But the essence of language is communication and that, in turn, depends on shared linguistic conventions and shared codes. Language can never be wholly a private game. Our private intended meanings, however personal to us, have to *enter into the rules, codes and conventions of language* to be shared and understood. Language is a social system through and through. This means that our private thoughts have to negotiate with all the other meanings for words or images which have been stored in language which our use of the language system will inevitably trigger into action.

intentional approach

The third approach recognizes this public, social character of language. It acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Things don't *mean:* we *construct* meaning, using representational constructionist approach

systems – concepts and signs. Hence it is called the constructivist or **constructionist approach** to meaning in language. According to this approach, we must not confuse the *material* world, where things and people exist, and the *symbolic* practices and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate. Constructivists do not deny the existence of the material world. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others.

Of course, signs may also have a material dimension. Representational systems consist of the actual *sounds* we make with our vocal chords, the *images* we make on light-sensitive paper with cameras, the *marks* we make with paint on canvas, the digital *impulses* we transmit electronically.

Representation is a practice, a kind of 'work', which uses material objects and effects. But the *meaning* depends, not on the material quality of the sign, but on its *symbolic function.* It is because a particular sound or word *stands for, symbolizes or represents* a concept that it can function, in language, as a sign and convey meaning or, as the constructionists say, signify (sign-i-fy).

The language of traffic lights

The simplest example of this point, which is critical for an understanding of how languages function as representational systems, is the famous traffic lights example. A traffic light is a machine which produces different coloured lights in sequence. The effect of light of different wavelengths on the eye – which is a natural and material phenomenon – produces the sensation of different colours. Now these things certainly do exist in the material world. But it is our culture which breaks the spectrum of light into different colours, distinguishes them from one another and attaches names – Red, Green, Yellow, Blue to them. We use a way of *classifying* the colour spectrum to create colours which are different from one another. We *represent* or symbolize the different colours and classify them according to different colour-concepts. This is the conceptual colour system of our culture. We say 'our culture' because, of course, other cultures may divide the colour spectrum differently. What's more, they certainly use different actual *words* or *letters* to identify different colours: what we call 'red', the French call 'rouge' and so on. This is the linguistic code the one which correlates certain words (signs) with certain colours (concepts), and thus enables us to communicate about colours to other people, using 'the language of colours'.

But how do we use this representational or symbolic system to regulate the traffic? Colours do not have any 'true' or fixed meaning in that sense. Red does not mean 'Stop' in nature, any more than Green means 'Go'. In other settings, Red may stand for, symbolize or represent 'Blood' or 'Danger' or 'Communism'; and Green may

represent 'Ireland' or 'The Countryside' or 'Environmentalism'. Even these meanings can change. In the 'language of electric plugs', Red used to mean 'the connection with the positive charge' but this was arbitrarily and without explanation changed to Brown! But then for many years the producers of plugs had to attach a slip of paper telling people that the code or convention had changed, otherwise how would they
know? Red and Green work in the language of traffic lights because 'Stop' and 'Go' are the meanings which have been assigned to them in our culture by the code or conventions governing this language, and this code is widely known and almost universally obeyed in our culture and cultures like ours though we can well imagine other cultures which did not possess the code, in which this language would be a complete mystery.

Let us stay with the example for a moment, to explore a little further how, according to the constructionist approach to representation, colours and the 'language of traffic lights' work as a signifying or representational system.
Recall the *two* representational systems we spoke of earlier. First, there is the conceptual map of colours in our culture the way colours are distinguished

from one another, classified and arranged in our mental universe. Secondly, there are the ways words or images are correlated with colours in our language – our linguistic colour-codes. Actually, of course, a *language* of colours consists of more than just the individual words for different points on the colour spectrum. It also depends on how they function in relation to one another -the sorts of things which are governed by grammar and syntax in written or spoken languages, which allow us to express rather complex ideas. In the language of traffic lights, it is the sequence and position of the colours, as well as the colours themselves, which enable them to carry meaning and thus function as signs.

Does it matter which colours we use? No, the constructionists argue. This is because what signifies is not the colours themselves but (a) the fact that they are different and can be distinguished from one another; and (b) the fact that they are organized into a particular sequence – Red followed by Green, with sometimes a warning Amber in between which says, in effect, 'Get ready! Lights about to change.' Constructionists put this point in the following way. What signifies, what carries meaning -they argue – is not each colour in itself nor even the concept or word for it. It is *the difference between Red and Green* which signifies. This is a very important principle, in general, about representation and meaning, and we shall return to it on more than one occasion in the chapters which follow. Think about it in these terms. If you couldn't differentiate between Red and Green, you couldn't use one to mean 'Stop' and the other to mean 'Go'. In the same way, it is only the difference between the letters P and T which enable the word SHEEP to be linked, in the English language code, to the concept of 'the animal with four legs and a woolly coat', and the word SHEET to 'the material we use to cover ourselves in bed at night'.

In principle, any combination of colours like any collection of letters in written language or of sounds in spoken language would do, provided they are sufficiently different not to be confused. Constructionists express this idea by saying that all signs are 'arbitrary'. 'Arbitrary' means that there is no natural relationship between the sign and its meaning or concept. Since Red only means 'Stop' because that is how the code works, in principle any colour would do, including Green. It is the code that fixes the meaning, not the colour itself. This also has wider implications for the theory of representation and meaning in language. It means that signs themselves cannot fix meaning. Instead, meaning depends on *the relation between* a sign and a concept which is fixed by a code. Meaning, the constructionists would say, is 'relational'.

ACTIVITY 3

Why not test this point about the arbitrary nature of the sign and the importance of the code for yourself? Construct a code to govern the movement of traffic using two different colours Yellow and Blue – as in the following:

> When the yellow light is showing, ...
>
> Now add an instruction allowing pedestrians and cyclists only to cross, using Pink.

Provided the code tells us clearly how to read or interpret each colour, and everyone agrees to interpret them in this way, any colour will do. These are just colours, just as the word SHEEP is just a jumble of letters. In French the same animal is referred to using the very different linguistic sign MOUTON. Signs are arbitrary. Their meanings are fixed by codes.

As we said earlier, traffic lights are machines, and colours are the material effect of light-waves on the retina of the eye. But objects – things – can also function as signs, provided they have been assigned a concept and meaning within our cultural and linguistic codes. As signs, they work symbolically they represent concepts, and signify. Their effects, however, are felt in the material and social world. Red and Green function in the language of traffic lights as signs, but they have real material and social effects. They regulate the social behaviour of drivers and, without them, there would be many more traffic accidents at road intersections.

We have come a long way in exploring the nature of representation. It is time to summarize what we have learned about the constructionist approach to representation through language.

Representation is the production of meaning through language. In representation, constructionists argue, we use signs, organized into languages of different kinds, to communicate meaningfully with others. Languages can use signs to symbolize, stand for or reference objects, people and events in the so-called 'real' world. But they can also reference imaginary things and fantasy worlds or abstract ideas which are not in any obvious sense part of our material world. There is no simple relationship of reflection, imitation or one-to-one correspondence between language and the real world. The world is not accurately or otherwise reflected in the mirror of language. Language does not work like a mirror. Meaning is produced within language, in and through various representational systems which, for convenience, we call 'languages'. Meaning is produced by the practice, the 'work', of representation. It is constructed through signifying i.e. meaning-producing practices.

How does this take place? In fact, it depends on two different but related systems of representation. First, the concepts which are formed in the mind function as a system of mental representation which classifies and organizes the world into meaningful categories. If we have a concept for something, we can say we know its 'meaning'. But we cannot communicate this meaning without a second system of representation, a language. Language consists of signs organized into various relationships. But signs can only convey meaning if we possess codes which allow us to translate our concepts into language – and vice versa. These codes are crucial for meaning and representation. They do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions. They are a crucial part of our culture -our shared 'maps of meaning' – which we learn and unconsciously internalize as we become members of our culture. This constructionist approach to language thus introduces the symbolic domain of life, where words and things function as signs, into the very heart of social life itself.

ACTIVITY

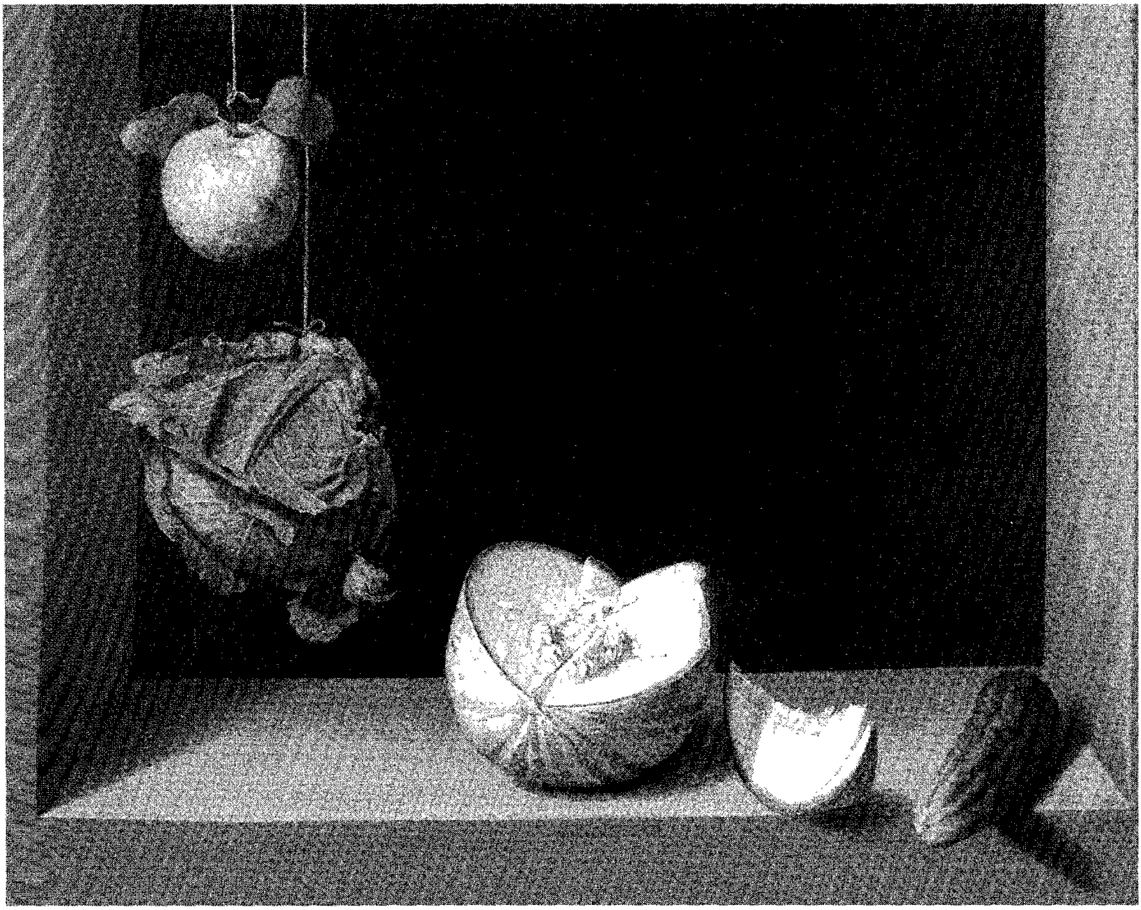
All this may seem rather abstract. But we can quickly demonstrate its relevance by an example from painting.

Look at the painting of a still life by the Spanish painter, Juan Sanchez Cotan (1521-1627), entitled *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber* (Figure 1.3). It seems as if the painter has made every effort to use the 'language of painting' accurately to reflect these four objects, to capture or 'imitate nature'. Is this, then, an example of a *reflective* or *mimetic* form of representation – a painting reflecting the 'true meaning' of what already exists in Cotan's kitchen? Or can we find the operation of certain codes,

FIGURE 1.3

Juan Cotan, *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber,*

c. 1602.



the language of painting used to produce a certain meaning? Start with the question, what does the painting mean to you? What is it 'saying'? Then go on to ask, how is it saying it -how does representation work in th,is painting?

Write down any thoughts at all that come to you on looking at the painting. What do these objects say to you? What meanings do they trigger off?

Now read the edited extract from an analysis of the still life by the art critic and theorist, Norman Bryson, included as Reading A at the end of this chapter. Don't be concerned, at this stage, if the language seems a little difficult and you don't understand all the terms. Pick out the main points about the way *representation* works in the painting, according to Bryson.

Bryson is by no means the only critic of Cot<:in's painting, and certainly doesn't provide the only 'correct' reading of it. That's not the point. The point of the example is that he helps us to see how, even in a still life, the 'language of painting' does *not* function simply to reflect or imitate a meaning which is already there in nature, but to *produce meanings.* The act of painting is a *signifying practice.* Take note, in particular, of what Bryson says about the following points:

1 the way the painting invites you, the viewer, to look -what he calls its 'mode of seeing'; in part, the function of the language is to position you, the viewer, in a certain relation to meaning.

2 the relationship to *food* which is posed by the painting.

3 how, according to Bryson, 'mathematical form' is used by Cotan to *distort* the painting so as to bring out a particular meaning. Can a distorted meaning in painting be 'true'?

4 the meaning of the difference between 'creatural' and 'geometric' space: the language of painting creates its

own kind of space.

If necessary, work through the extract again, picking up these specific points.

Saussure's legacy

The social constructionist view of language and representation which we have been discussing owes a great deal to the work and influence of the Swiss linguist, Saussure, who was born in Geneva in 1857, did much of his work in Paris, and died in 1913. He is known as the 'father of modern linguistics'.

For our purposes, his importance lies, not in his detailed work in linguistics, but in his general view of representation and the way his model of language shaped the *semiotic* approach to the problem of representation in a wide variety of cultural fields. You will recognize much about Saussure's thinking from what we have already said about the *constructionist* approach.

For Saussure, according to Jonathan Culler (1976, p. 19), the production of meaning depends on language: 'Language is a system of signs.' Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, etc. function as signs within language 'only when they serve to express or communicate ideas ... [ToJ communicate ideas, they must be part of a system of conventions ...' (ibid.). Material objects can function as signs and communicate meaning too, as we saw from the 'language of traffic lights' example. In an important move, Saussure analysed the sign i:cto two further elements. There was, he argued, the *form* (the actual word, image, photo, etc.), and there was the *idea or concept* in y-lli-head with which the form was associated. Saussure called thi'.J first element, the signifier, and the second element the corresponding concept it triggered off in your head – the signified. Every time you hear or read or see the *signifier* (e.g. the word or image of a *Walkman,* for example), it correlates with the *signified* (the concept of a portable cassette-player in your head). Both are required to produce meaning but it is the relation between them, fixed by our cultural and linguistic codes, which sustains representation. Thus 'the sign is the union of a form which signifies *(signifier)* ... and an idea signified *(signified).* Though we may speak ... as if they are separate entities, they exist only as components of the sign ... (which is) the central fact of language' (Culler, 1976, p. 19).

Saussure also insisted on what in section 1we called the arbitrary nature of the sign: 'There is no natural or inevitable link between the signifier and the signified' (ibid.). Signs do not possess a fixed or essential meaning. What signifii.es, according to Saussure, is not RED or the essence of 'red-ness', but *the difference between RED and GREEN.* Signs, Saussure argued 'are members of a system and are defined in relation to the other members of that system.' For example, it is hard to define the meaning of FATHER except in relation to, and in terms of its difference from, other kinship terms, like MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON and so on.

This marking of difference within language is fundamental to the production of meaning, according to Saussure. Even at a simple level (to repeat an earlier example), we must be able to distinguish, within language, between SHEEP and SHEET, before we can link one of those words to the concept of an animal that produces wool, and the other to the concept of a cloth that covers a bed. The simplest way of marking difference is, of course, by means of a binary opposition -in this example, all the letters are the same except P and T. Similady, the meaning of a concept or word is often defined in relation to its direct opposite as in night/day. Later critics of Saussure were to observe that binaries (e.g. *black/white)* are only one, rather simplistic, way of establishing difference. As well as the stark difference between *black* and *white,* there are also the many other, subtler differences between *black* and *dark grey, dark grey* and *light grey, grey* and *cream* and *off-white, off-white* and *brilliant white,* just as there are between *night, dawn, daylight, noon, dusk,* and so on. However, his attention to binary oppositions brought Saussure to the revolutionary proposition that a language consists of signifiers, but in order to produce meaning, the signifiers have to be organized into 'a system of differences'. It is the differences between signifiers which signify.

Furthermore, the relation between the *signifier* and the *signified*, which is fixed by our cultural codes, is not – Saussure argued – permanently fixed. Words shift their meanings. The concepts (signifieds) to which they refer also change, historically, and every shift alters the conceptual map of the culture, leading different cultures, at different historical moments, to classify and think about the world differently. For many centuries, western societies have associated the word BLACK with everything that is dark, evil, forbidding, devilish, dangerous and sinful. And yet, think of how the perception of black people in America in the 1960s changed after the phrase 'Black is Beautiful' became a popular slogan – where the *signifier*, BLACK, was made to signify the exact opposite meaning *(signified)* to its previous associations. In Saussure's terms, 'Language sets up an arbitrary relation between signifiers of its own choosing on the one hand, and signifieds of its own choosing on the other. Not only does each language produce a different set of signifiers, articulating and dividing the continuum of sound (or writing or drawing or photography) in a distinctive way; each language produces a different set of signifieds; it has a distinctive and thus arbitrary way of organizing the world into concepts and categories' (Culler, 1976, p. 23).

The implications of this argument are very far-reaching for a theory of representation and for our understanding of culture. If the relationship between a signifier and its signified is the result of a system of social conventions specific to each society and to specific historical moments – then all meanings a.re produced within history and culture. They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is thus no single, unchanging, universal 'true meaning'. 'Because it is arbitrary, the sign is totally subject to history and the combination at the particular moment of a given signifier and signified is a contingent result of the historical process' (Culler, 1976, p. 36). This opens up meaning and representation, in a radical way, to history and change. It is true that Saussure himself focused exclusively on the state of the language system at one moment of time rather than looking at linguistic change over time. However, for our purposes, the important point is the way this approach to language *unfixes* meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant 'play' or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations.

However, if meaning changes, historically, and is never finally fixed, then it follows that 'taking the meaning' must involve an active process of **interpretation.** Meaning has to be actively 'read' or 'interpreted'.

interpretation

Consequently, there is a necessary and inevitable imprecision about language. The meaning we take, as viewers, readers or audiences, is never exactly the meaning which has been given by the speaker or writer or by other viewers. And since, in order to say something meaningful, we have to 'enter language', where all sorts of older meanings which pre-date us, are already stored from previous eras, we can never cleanse language completely, screening out all the other, hidden meanings which might modify or distort what we want to say. For example, we can't entirely prevent some of the negative connotations of the word BLACK from returning to mind when we read a headline like, 'WEDNESDAY A BLACK DAY ON THE STOCK EXCHANGE', even if this was not intended. There is a constant *sliding of meaning* in all interpretation, a margin – something in excess of what we intend to say in which other meanings overshadow the statement or the text, where other associations are awakened to life, giving what we say a different twist. So interpretation becomes an essential aspect of the process by which meaning is given and taken. The *reader* is as important as the *writer* in the production of meaning. Every signifier given or encoded with meaning has to be meaningfully interpreted or decoded by the receiver (Hall, 1980). Signs which have not been intelligibly received and interpreted are not, in any useful sense, 'meaningful'.

The social part of language

Saussure divided language into two parts. The first consisted of the general rules and codes of the linguistic system, which all its users must share, if it is to be of use as a means of communication. The rules are the principles which we learn when we learn a language and they enable us to use language to say whatever we want. For example, in English, the preferred word order is subject-verb-object ('the cat sat on the mat'), whereas in Latin, the verb usually comes at the end. Saussure called this underlying rule-governed structure of language, which enables us to produce well-formed sentences, the ***langue*** (the language system). The second part consisted of the particular acts of speaking or writing or drawing, which – using the structure and rules of the *langue* – are produced by an actual speaker or writer. He called this ***parole.*** *'La langue* is the system oflanguage, the language as a system of forms, whereas *parole* is actual speech [or writing], the speech acts which are made possible by the language' (Culler, 1976, p. 29).

structuralist

For Saussure, the underlying structure of rules and codes *(langue)* was the social part of language, the part which could be studied with the law-like precision of a science because of its closed, limited nature. It was his preference for studying language at this level of its 'deep structure' which made people call Saussure and his model of language, **structuralist.** The second part of language, the individual speech-act or utterance *(parole),* he regarded as the 'surface' of language. There were an infinite number of such possible utterances. Hence, *parole* inevitably lacked those structural properties – forming a closed and limited set -which would have enabled us to study it 'scientifically'. What made Saussure's model appeal to many later scholars was the fact that the closed, structured character of language at the level of its rules and laws, which, according to Saussure, enabled it to be studied scientifically, was combined with the capacity to be free and unpredictably creative in our actual speech acts. They believed he had offered them, at last, a scientific approach to that least scientific object of inquiry culture.

In separating the social part of language *(langue)* from the individual act of communication *(parole),* Saussure broke with our common-sense notion of how language works. Our common-sense intuition is that language comes from within us – from the individual speaker or writer; that it is this speaking or writing subject who is the author or originator of meaning. This is what we called, earlier, the *intentional* model of representation. But according to Saussure's schema, each authored statement only becomes possible because the 'author' shares with other language-users the common rules and codes of the language system the *langue* – which allows them to communicate with each other meaningfully. The author decides what she wants to say. But she cannot 'decide' whether or not to use the rules of language, if she wants to be understood. We are born into a language, its codes and its meanings.

Language is therefore, for Saussure, a social phenomenon. It cannot be an individual matter because we cannot make up the rules of language individually, for ourselves. Their source lies in society, in the culture, in our shared cultural codes, in the language system – not in nature or in the individual subject.

We will move on in section 3 to consider how the constructionist approach to representation, and in particular Saussure's linguistic model, was applied to a wider set of cultural objects and practices, and evolved into the *semiotic* method which so influenced the field. First we ought to take account of some of the criticisms levelled at his position.

Critique of Saussure's model

Saussure's great achievement was to force us to focus on language itself, as a social fact; on the process of representation itself; on how language actually works and the role it plays in the production of meaning. In doing so, he saved language from the status of a mere transparent medium between *things* and *meaning.* He showed, instead, that representation was a practice.

However, in his own work, he tended to focus almost exclusively on the two aspects of the sign -*signifier* and *signified.* He gave little or no attention to how this relation between *signifier/signified* could serve the purpose of what earlier we called *reference* – Le. referring us to the world of things, people and events outside language in the 'real' world. Later linguists made a distinction between, say, the meaning of the word BOOK and the use of the word to refer to a *specific* book lying before us on the table. The linguist,

Charles Sanders Pierce, whilst adopting a similar approach to Saussure, paid greater attention to the relationship between signifiers/signifieds and what he called their *referents.* What Saussure called signification really involves *both* meaning and reference, but he focused mainly on the former.

Another problem is that Saussure tended to focus on the *formal* aspects of language – how language actually works. This has the great advantage of making us examine representation as a practice worthy of detailed study in its own right. It forces us to look at language for itself, and not just as an empty, transparent, 'window on the world'. However, Saussure's focus on language may have been too exclusive. The attention to its formal aspects did divert attention away from the more interactive and dialogic features of languagelanguage as it is actually used, as it functions in actual situations, in dialogue between different kinds of speakers. It is thus not surprising that, for Saussure, questions of *power* in language – for example, between speakers of different status and positions – did not arise.

As has often been the case, the 'scientific' dream which lay behind the structuralist impulse of his work, though influential in alerting us to certain aspects of' how language works, proved to be illusory. Language is *not* an object which can be studied with the law-like precision of a science. Later cultural theorists learned from Saussure's 'structuralism' but abandoned its scientific premise. Language remains rulegoverned. But it is not a 'closed' system which can be reduced to its formal elements. Since it is constantly changing, it is by definition *open-ended.* Meaning continues to be produced through language in forms which can never be predicted beforehand and its 'sliding', as we described it above, cannot be halted. Saussure may have been tempted to the former view because, like a good structuralist, he tended to study the state of' the language system at one moment, as if it had stood still, and he could halt the flow of' language-change. Nevertheless it is the case that many of those who have been most influenced by Saussure's radical break with all reflective and intentional models of' representation, have built on his work, not by imitating his scientific and 'structuralist' approach, but by applying his model in a much looser, more open-ended – i.e. 'post- structuralist' -way.

Summary

How far, then, have we come in our discussion of' theories of' *representation?*

We began by contrasting three different approaches. The *reflective* or *mimetic* approach proposed a direct and transparent relationship of imitation or reflection between words (signs) and things. The *intentional* theory reduced representation to the intentions of its author or subject. The *constructionist* theory proposed a complex and mediated relationship between things in the world, our concepts in thought and language. We have focused at greatest length on this approach. The correlations between these levels the material, the conceptual and the signifying are governed by our cultural and linguistic codes and it is this set of' interconnections which produces meaning. We then showed how much this general model of how systems of representation work in the production of' meaning owed to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Here, the key point was the link provided by the codes between the forms of expression used by language (whether speech, writing, drawing, or other types of representation) -which Saussure called the *signifiers* and the mental concepts associated with them -the *signifieds.*

The connection between these two systems of representation produced *signs;* and signs, organized into languages, produced meanings, and could be used to reference objects, people and events in the 'real' world.

3 From language to culture: linguistics to semiotics

Saussure's main contribution was to the study of linguistics in a narrow sense. However, since his death, his theories have been widely deployed, as a foundation for a general approach to language and meaning, providing a model of representation which has been applied to a wide range of cultural objects and practices. Saussure himself foresaw this possibility in his famous lecture-notes, collected posthumously by his students as the *Course in General Linguistics* (1960), where he looked forward to 'A science that studies the life of signs within society ... I shall call it semiology, from the Greek *semeion* "signs" ...' (p. 16). This general approach to the study of signs in culture, and of culture as a sort of 'language', which Saussure foreshadowed, is now generally known by the term **semiotics.**

The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that, since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs; and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amenable to an analysis which basically makes use of Saussure's linguistic concepts (e.g. the signifier/signified and *langue/ parole* distinctions, his idea of underlying codes and structures, and the arbitrary nature of the "sign). Thus, when in his collection of essays, *Mythologies* (1972), the French critic, Roland Barthes, studied 'The world of wrestling', 'Soap powders and detergents', 'The face of Greta Garbo' or 'The *Blue Guides* to Europe', he brought a *semiotic* approach to bear on 'reading' popular culture, treating these act

ivities and objects as signs, as a language through which meaning is communicated. For example, most of us would think of a wrestling match as a competitive game or sport designed for one wrestler to gain victory over an opponent. Barthes, however, asks, not 'Who won?' but 'What is the meaning of this event?' He treats it as a *text* to be *read*. He 'reads' the exaggerated gestures of wrestlers as a grandiloquent language of what he calls the pure spectacle of excess.

semiotics

FIGURE 1.4

Wrestling as a language of 'excess'.

You should now read the brief extract from Barthes's 'reading' of 'The world of wrestling', provided as Reading B at the end of this chapter.

In much the same way, the French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, studied the customs, rituals, totemic objects, designs, myths and folk-tales of so-called 'primitive' peoples in Brazil, not by analysing how these things were produced and used in the context of daily life amongst the Amazonian peoples, but in terms of what they were trying to 'say', what messages about the culture they communicated. He analysed their meaning, not by interpreting their content, but by looking at the underlying rules and codes through which such objects or practices produced meaning and, in doing so, he was making a classic Saussurean or structuralist 'move', from the *paroles* of a culture to the underlying structure, its *langue.* To undertake this kind of work, in studying the meaning of a television programme like *Eastenders,* for example, we would have to treat the pictures on the screen as signifiers, and use the code of the television soap opera as a *genre,* to discover how each image on the screen made use of these rules to 'say something' (signifieds) which the viewer could 'read' or interpret within the formal framework of a particular kind of television narrative (see the discussion and analysis of TV soap operas in Chapter 6).

In the semiotic approach, not only words and images but objects themselves can function as signifiers in the production of meaning. Clothes, for example, may have a simple physical function -to cover the body and protect it from the weather. But clothes also double up as signs. They construct a meaning and carry a message. An evening dress may signify 'elegance'; a bow tie and tails, 'formality'; jeans and trainers, 'casual dress'; a certain kind of sweater in the right setting, 'a long, romantic, autumn walk in the wood' (Barthes, 1967).

These signs enable clothes to convey meaning and to function like a language 'the language of fashion'. How do they do this?

ACTIVITY 5

> Look at the example of clothes in a magazine fashion spread (Figure 1.5). Apply Saussure's model to analyse what the clothes are 'saying'? How would you decode their message? In particular, which elements are operating as *signifiers* and what concepts -*signified s* -are you applying to them? Don't just get an overall impression -work it out in detail. How is the 'language of fashion' working in this example?

The clothes themselves are the *signifiers.* The fashion code in western consumer cultures like ours correlates particular kinds or combinations of clothing with certain concepts ('elegance', 'formality', 'casual-ness', 'romance'). These are the *signified s.* This coding converts the clothes into *signs,* which can then be read as a language. In the language of fashion, the signifiers are arranged in a certain sequence, in certain relations to one another. Relations may be of similarity – certain items 'go together'

(e.g. casual shoes with jeans). Differences are also marked

no leather belts with evening wear. Some signs actually create meaning by exploiting 'difference': e.g. Doc Marten boots with flowing long skirt. These bits of clothing 'say something' – they convey meaning. Of course, not everybody reads fashion in the same way. There are differences of gender, age, class, 'race'. But all those who share the same fashion code will interpret the signs in roughly the same ways. 'Oh, jeans don't look right for that event. It's a formal occasion -it demands something more elegant.'

You may have noticed that, in this example, we have moved from the very narrow linguistic level from which we drew examples in the first section, to a wider, cultural level. Note, also, that two linked operations are required to complete the representation process by which meaning is produced. First, we need a basic *code* which links a particular piece of material which is cut and sewn in a particular way *(signifier)* to our mental concept ofit *(signified)* say a particular cut of material to our concept of 'a dress' or 'jeans'. (Remember that only some cultures would 'read' the signifier in this way, or indeed possess the concept of (i.e. have classified clothes into) 'a dress', as different from 'jeans'.) The combination of signifier and signified is what Saussure called a *sign*. Then, having recognized the material as a

would agree on the meaning ('dress', 'jeans'). At the second level – *connotation* - these signifiers which we have been able to 'decode' at a simple level

denotation

connotation

by using our conventional conceptual classifications of dress to read their meaning, enter a wider, second kind of code -'the language of fashion' -which connects them to broader themes and meanings, linking them with what, we may call the wider *semantic fields* of our culture: ideas of 'elegance', 'formality', 'casualness' and 'romance'. This second, wider
meaning is no longer a descriptive level of obvious interpretation. Here we are beginning to interpret the completed signs in terms of the wider realms of

FIGURE l.S

Advertisement for Gucci, in *Vogue*, September **1995.**

social ideology -the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society. This second level of signification, Barthes suggests, is more 'general, global and diffuse ...'. It deals with 'fragments of an
ideology... These signifieds have a very close communication with culture, knowledge, history and it is through them, so to speak, that the environmental world [of the culture] invades the system [ofrepresentation]' (Barthes, 1967, pp. 91-2).

Myth today

In his essay 'Myth today', in *Mythologies,* Barthes gives another example which helps us to see exactly how representation is working at this second, broader cultural level. Visiting the barbers' one day, Barthes is shown a copy of the French magazine *Paris Match,* which has on its cover a picture of 'a young Negro in a French uniform saluting with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on the fold of the tricolour' (the French flag) (1972b, p. 116). At the first level, to get any meaning at all, we need to decode each of the signifiers in the image into their appropriate concepts: e.g. a soldier, a uniform, an arm raised, eyes lifted, a French flag. This yields a set of signs with a simple, literal message or meaning: *a black soldier is giving the French flag a salute* (denotation). However, Barthes argues that this image also has a wider, cultural meaning. If we ask, 'What is *Paris Match* telling us by using this picture of a black soldier saluting a French flag?', Barthes suggests that we may come up with the message: *'that France is a great Empire, and that all hersons, ivithout any colour discrimination, faith fully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors '* (connotation) (ibid.).

Whatever you think of the actual 'message' which Barthes finds, for a proper semiotic analysis you must be able to outline precisely the different steps by which this broader meaning has been produced. Barthes argues that here representation takes place through two separate but linked processes. In the first, the signifiers (the elements of the image) and the signifieds (the concepts – soldier, flag and so on) unite to form a sign with a simple denoted message: *a black soldier is giving the French flag a salute.* At the second stage, this completed message or sign is linked to a second set of signifieds

a broad, ideological theme about French colonialism. The first, completed meaning functions as the signifier in the second stage of the representation process, and when linked with a wider theme by a reader, yields a second, more elaborate and ideologically framed message or meaning. Barthes gives this second concept or theme a name – he calls it 'a purposeful mixture of "French imperiality" and "militariness"'. This, he says, adds up to a 'message' about French colonialism and her faithful Negro soldier-sons.

Barthes calls this second level of signification the level of *myth.* In this reading, he adds, 'French imperiality is the very drive behind the myth. The concept reconstitutes a chain of causes and effects, motives and intentions ...

Through the concept ... a whole new history ... is implanted in the myth ... the concept of French imperiality ... is again tied to the totality of the world: to the general history of France, to its colonial adventures, to its present difficulties' (Barthes, 1972b, p. 119).

Turn to the short extract from 'Myth today' (Reading C at the end of this chapter), and read Barthes's account of how myth functions as a system of representation. Make sure you understand what Barthes means by 'two staggered systems' and by the idea that myth is a 'meta-language' (a second-order language).

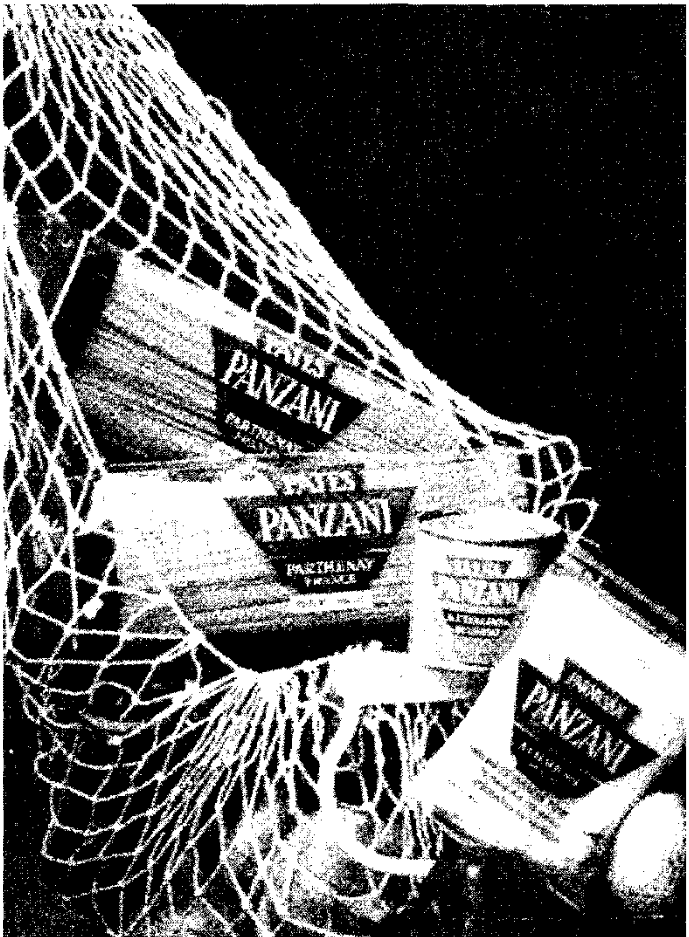
For another example of this two-stage process of signification, we can turn now to another of Barthes's famous essays.

Now, look carefully at the advertisement for *Panzani* products (Figure 1.6) and, with Barthes's analysis in mind, do the following exercise:

1 What *signifiers* can you identify in the ad?

2 What do they mean? What are their *signified s?*

3 Now, look at the ad as a whole, at the level of 'myth'. What is its wider, cultural message or theme? Can you

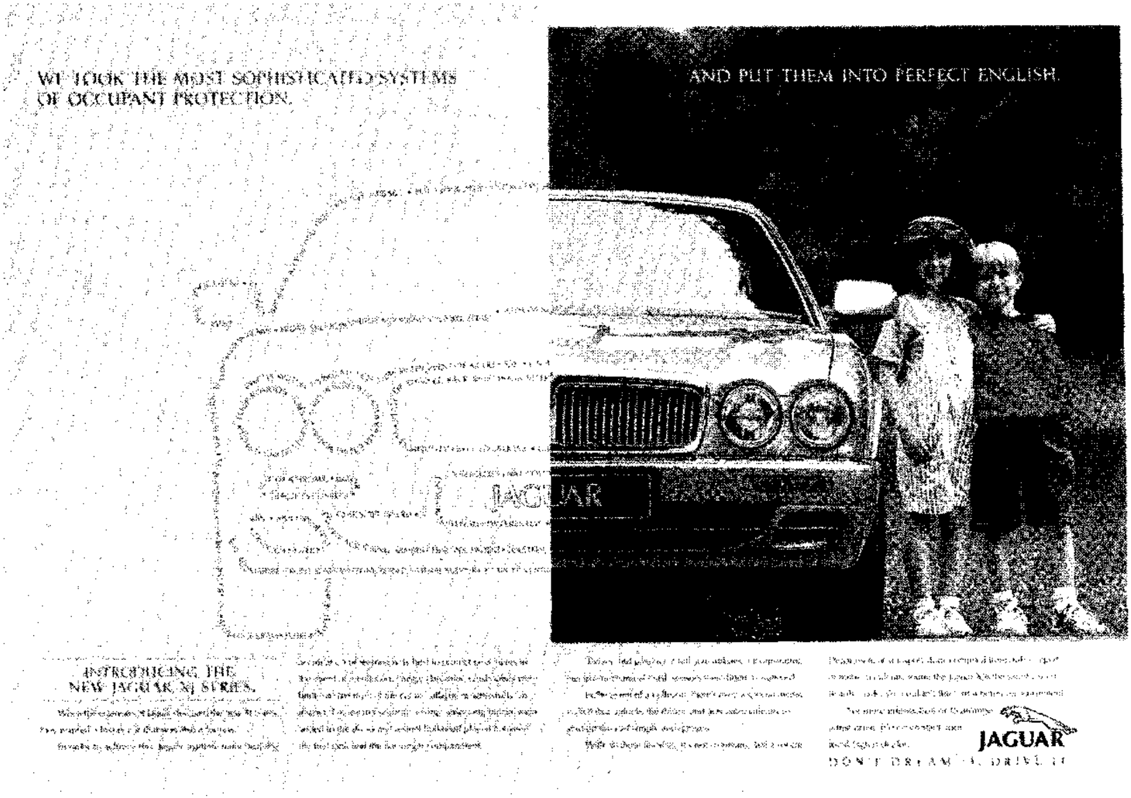


construct one?

Now read the second extract from Barthes, .in which he offers an interpretation of the *Panzani* ad for spaghetti and vegetables in a string bag as a 'myth' about Italian national culture. The extract from 'Rhetoric of the image', in *Image-Music-Text* (1977), is included as Reading D at the end of this chapter.

FIGURE 1.6

'Italian-ness' and the *Panzani* ad.


WE TOOK THE MOST SOPHISTICATED SYSTEMS OF OCCUPANT PROTECTION.
AND PUT THEM INTO PERFECT ENGLISH.
JAGUAR
INTRODUCING THE NEW JAGUAR XJ SERIES.
JAGUAR
DON'T DREAM IT. DRIVE IT.

Barthes suggests that we can read the *Panzani* ad as a 'myth' by linking its completed message *(this is a picture of some packets of pasta, a tin, a sachet, some tomatoes, onions, peppers, a mushroom, all emerging from a half-open string bag)* with the cultural theme or concept of 'Italianicity' (or as we would say, 'Italian-ness'). Then, at the level of the myth or meta-language, the Panzani ad becomes a message about the *essential meaning of Italian-ness as a national culture.* Can commodities really become the signifiers for myths of nationality? Can you think of ads, in magazines or television, which work in the same way, drawing on the myth of 'Englishness'? Or 'Frenchness'? Or 'American-ness'? Or 'Indian-ness'? Try to apply the idea of 'Englishness' to the ad reproduced as Figure 1.7.

Discourse, power and the subject

What the examples above show is that the semiotic approach provides a method for analysing how visual representations convey meaning. Already, in Roland Barthes's work in the 1960s, as we have seen, Saussure's 'linguistic' model is developed through its application to a much wider field of signs and representations (advertising, photography, popular culture, travel, fashion, etc.). Also, there is less concern with how individual words function as signs in language, more about the application of the language model to a much broader set of cultural practices. Saussure held out the promise that the whole domain of meaning could, at last, be systematically mapped. Barthes, too, had a 'method', but his semiotic approach is much more loosely and interpretively applied; and, in his later work (for example, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1975), he is more concerned with the 'play' of meaning and desire across texts than he is with the attempt to fix meaning by a scientific analysis of language's rules and laws.

Subsequently, as we observed, the project of a 'science of meaning' has appeared increasingly untenable. Meaning and representation seem to belong irrevocably to the interpretative side of the human and cultural sciences, whose subject matter society, culture, the human subject - is not amenable to a positivistic approach (i.e. one which seeks to discover scientific laws about society). Later developments have recognized the necessarily interpretative nature of culture and the fact that interpretations never produce a final moment of absolute truth. Instead, interpretations are always followed by other interpretations, in an endless chain. As the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, put it, writing always leads to more writing. Difference, he argued, can never be wholly captured within any binary system (Derrida, 1981). So any notion of a *final* meaning is always endlessly put off, deferred. Cultural studies of this interpretative kind, like other qualitative forms of sociological inquiry, are inevitably caught up in this 'circle of meaning'.

In the semiotic approach, representation was understood on the basis of the way words functioned as signs within language. But, for a start, in a culture, meaning often depends on larger units of analysis – narratives, statements, groups of images, whole discourses which operate across a variety of texts, areas of knowledge about a subject which have acquired widespread authority. Semiotics seemed to confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static, system. Subsequent developments became more concerned with representation as a source for the production of social *knowledge* a more open system, connected in more intimate ways with social practices and questions of power. In the semiotic approach, the subject was displaced from the centre of language. Later theorists returned to the question of the subject, or at least to the empty space which Saussure's theory had left; without, of course, putting him/her back in the centre, as the author or source of meaning. Even if language, in some sense, 'spoke us' (as Saussure tended to argue) it was also important that in certain historical moments, some people had more power to.speak about some subjects than others (male doctors about mad female patients in the late nineteenth century, for example, to take one of the key examples developed in the work of Michel Foucault). Models of representation, these critics argued, ought to focus on these broader issues of knowledge and power.

Foucault used the word 'representation' in a narrower sense than we are using it here, but he is considered to have contributed to a novel and significant general approach to the problem of representation. What concerned him was the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning) discourse

through what he called **discourse** (rather than just language). His project, he said, was to analyse 'how human beings understand themselves in our culture' and how our knowledge about 'the social, the embodied individual and shared meanings' comes to be produced in different periods. With its emphasis on cultural understanding and shared meanings, you can see that Foucault's project was still to some degree indebted to Saussure and Barthes (see Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 17) while in other ways departing radically from them. Foucault's work was much more historically grounded, more attentive to historical specificities, than the semiotic approach. As he said, 'relations of power, not relations of meaning' were his main concern.

The particular objects of Foucault's attention were the various disciplines of knowledge in the human and social sciences – what he called 'the subjectifying social sciences'. These had acquired an increasingly prominent and influential role in modern culture and were, in many instances, considered to be the discourses which, like religion in earlier times, could give us the 'truth' about knowledge.

We will return to Foucault's work in some of the subsequent chapters in this book (for example, Chapter 5). Here, we want to introduce Foucault and the *discursive* approach to representation by outlining three of his major ideas:
hfa coni:;ept of *discourse;* the issue of *power and knowledge;* and the question

----..::::._

bject. It might be useful, however, to start by giving you a general flavour, in Foucault's graphic (and somewhat over-stated) terms, of how he saw his project differing from that of the semiotic approach to representation. He moved away from an approach like that of Saussure and Barthes, based on 'the domain of signifying structure', towards one based on analysing what he called 'relations of force, strategic developments and tactics':

> Here I believe one's point of reference should not be to the great model of language *(langue)* and signs, but to that of war and

> battle: The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power not relations of meaning …
>
> (Foucault, 1980, pp. 114-5)

Rejecting both Hegelian Marxism (what he calls 'the dialectic') and semiotics, Foucault argued that:

> Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradictions, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. 'Dialectic' is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and 'semiology' is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and lethal character by reducing it to the calm Platonic form of language and dialogue.
>
> (ibid.)

From language to discourse

The first point to note, then, is the shift of attention in Foucault from 'language' to 'discourse', He studied not language, but *discourse* as a system of representation. Normally, the term 'discourse' is used as a linguistic concept. It simply means passages of connected writing or speech. Michel Foucault, however, gave it a different meaning. What interested him were the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods. By 'discourse', Foucault meant 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. ... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But ... since all social practices entail *meaning,* and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect' (Hall, 1992, p. 291). It is important to note that the concept of *discourse* in this usage is not purely a 'linguistic' concept. It is about language *and* practice. It attempts to overcome the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice). Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others.. Just as a discourse 'rules in' certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write, or conduct oneself, so also, by definition, it 'rules out', limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it. Discourse, Foucault argued, never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source. The same discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any one time (what Foucault called the *episteme),* will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society. However, whenever these discursive events 'refer to the same object, share the same style and ... support a strategy ... a common institutional, administrative or political drift and pattern' (Cousins and Hussain,

discursive formation

1984, pp. 84-5), then they are said by Foucault to belong to the same **discursive formation,**

Meaning and meaningful practice is therefore constructed within discourse. Like the semioticians, Foucault was a 'constructionist'. However, unlike them, he was concerned with the tion of knowledge and aning, not t but through discourse. There were therefore similarities, but also substantive differences etween these two versions.

The idea that 'discourse produces the objects of knowledge' and that nothing which is meaningful exists *outside discourse,* is at first sight a disconcerting proposition, which seems to run right against the grain of common-sense thinking. It is worth spending a moment to explore this idea further. Is Foucault saying -as some of his critics have charged -that *nothing exists outside of discourse?* In fact, Foucault does *not* deny that things can have a real, material existence in the world. What he does argue is that *'nothing has any meaning outside of discourse'* (Foucault, 1972). As Laelau and Mouffe put it, 'we use [the term discourse] to emphasize the fact that every social configuration is *meaningful'* (1990, p. 100), The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from.

Turn now to Reading E, by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, a short extract from *New Reflections on the Revolution of our* Time (1990), from which we have just quoted, and read it carefully. What they argue is that physical objects *do* exist, but they have no fixed meaning; they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge *within discourse.* Make sure you follow their argument before reading further.

1. In terms of the discourse about 'building a wall', the distinction between the linguistic part (asking for a brick) and the physical act (putting the brick in place) does not matter. The first is linguistic, the second is physical. But *both* are 'discursive' -meaningful within discourse.
2. The round leather object which you kick is a physical object – a ball. But it only becomes 'a football' within the context of the rules of the game, which are socially constructed.
3. Itis impossible to determine the meaning of an object outside of its context ofuse. A stone thrown in a fight is a different thing ('a projectile') from a stone displayed in a museum ('a piece of sculpture').

This idea that physical things and actions exist, but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse, is at the heart of the *constructionist* theory of meaning and representation. Foucault argues that since we can only have a knowledge of things if they have a meaning, it is discourse – not the things-in-themselves – which produces knowledge. Subjects like 'madness', 'punishment' and 'sexuality' only exist meaningfully *within* the discourses about them. Thus, the study of the discourses of madness, punishment or sexuality would have to include the following elements:

1. statements about 'madness', 'punishment' or 'sexuality' which give us a certain kind of knowledge about these things;
2. the rules which prescribe certain ways of talking about these topics and exclude other ways -which govern what is 'sayable' or 'thinkable' about insanity, punishment or sexuality, at a particular historical moment;
3. 'subjects' who in some ways personify the discourse the madman, the hysterical woman, the criminal, the deviant, the sexually perverse person; with the attributes we would expect these subjects to have, given the way knowledge about the topic was constructed at that time;
4. how this knowledge about the topic acquires authority, a sense of embodying the 'truth' about it; constituting the 'truth of the matter', at a historical moment;

5. the practices within institutions for dealing with the subjects – medical treatment for the insane, punishment regimes for the guilty, moral discipline for the sexually deviant whose conduct is being regulated and organized according to those ideas;
6. acknowledgement that a different discourse or *episteme* will arise at a later historical moment, supplanting the existing one, opening up a new *discursive formation* , and producing, in its turn, new conceptions of 'madness' or 'punishment' or 'sexuality', new discourses with the power and authority, the 'truth', to regulate social practices in new ways.

practices

The main point to get hold of here is the way discourse, representation, knowledge and 'truth' are radically *historicized* by Foucault, in contrast to the rather ahistorical tendency in semiotics. Things meant something and were 'true', he argued, *only within a specific historical context.* Foucault did not believe that the same phenomena would be found across different historical periods. He thought that, in each period, discourse produced forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge, which differed radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them.

Thus, for Foucault, for example, mental illness was not an objective fact, which remained the same in all historical periods, and meant the same thing in all cultures. It was only *within* a definite discursive formation that the object, 'madness', could appear at all as a meaningful or intelligible construct. It was 'constituted by all that was said, in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its development, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own' (1972, p. 32). And it was only after a certain definition of 'madness' was put into practice, that the appropriate subject – 'the madman' as current medical and psychiatric knowledge defined 'him' – could appear.

Or, take some other examples of discursive practices from his work. There have always been sexual relations. But 'sexuality', as a specific way of talking about, studying and regulating sexual desire, its secrets and its fantasies, Foucault argued, only appeared in western societies at a particular historical moment (Foucault, 1978). There may always have been what we now call homosexual forms of behaviour. But 'the homosexual' as a specific kind of social subject, was *produced*, and could only make its appearance, within the moral, legal, medical and psychiatric discourses, practices and institutional apparatuses of the late nineteenth century, with their particular theories of sexual perversity (Weeks, 1981, 1985). Similarly, it makes nonsense to talk of the 'hysterical woman' outside of the nineteenth-century view of hysteria as a very widespread female malady. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), Foucault charted how 'in less than half a century, the medical understanding of disease was transformed' from a classical notion that disease existed separate from the body, to the modern idea that disease arose within and could be mapped directly by its course through the human body (McNay, 1994). This discursive shift changed medical practice. It gave greater importance to the doctor's 'gaze' which could now 'read' the course of disease simply by a powerful look at what Foucault called 'the visible body' of the patient – following the 'routes·... laid down in accordance with a now familiar geometry ... the anatomical atlas' (Foucault, 1973, pp. 3-4). This greater knowledge increased the doctor's power of surveillance vis-a-vis the patient.

Knowledge about and practices around *all* these subjects, Foucault argued, were historically and culturally specific. They did not and could not meaningfully exist outside specific discourses, i.e. outside the ways they were represented in discourse, produced in knowledge and regulated by the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of a particular society and time. Far from accepting the trans-historical continuities of which historians are so fond, Foucault believed that more significant were the radical breaks, ruptures and discontinuities between one period and another, between one discursive formation and another.

discou power knowledge

In his later work Foucault became even more concerned with how knowledge was put to work through discursive practices in specific institutional settings to regulate the conduct of others: He focused on the relationship between knowledge and power, and how power operated within what he called an institutional *apparatus* and its *technologies* (techniques). Foucault's conception of the *apparatus* of punishment, for example, included a variety of diverse elements, linguistic and non-linguistic – 'discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality, philanthropy, etc.

... The apparatus is thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain co-ordinates of knowledge. ... This is what the apparatus consists in: strategies of relations of forces supporting and supported by types of knowledge' (Foucault, 1980b, pp. 194, 196).

This approach took as one of its key subjects of investigation the relations between knowledge, power and the body in modern society. It saw knowledge as always inextricably enmeshed in relations of power because it was always being applied to the regulation of social conduct in practice (i.e. to particular 'bodies'). This foregrounding of the relation between discourse, knowledge and power marked a significant development in the *constructionist* approach to representation which we have been outlining. It rescued representation from the clutches of a purely formal theory and gave it a historical, practical and 'worldly' context of operation.

You may wonder to what extent this concern with discourse, knowledge and power brought Foucault's interests closer to those of the classical sociological theories of ideology, especially Marxism with its concern to identify the class positions and class interests concealed within particular forms of knowledge. Foucault, indeed, does come closer to addressing some of these questions about ideology than, perhaps, formal semiotics did (though Roland Barthes was also concerned with questions of ideology and myth, as we saw earlier). But Foucault had quite specific and cogent reasons why he rejected the classical Marxist problematic of 'ideology'. Marx had argued that, in every epoch, ideas reflect the economic basis of society, and thus the 'ruling ideas' are those of the ruling class which governs a capitalist economy, and correspond to its dominant interests. Foucault's main argument against the classical Marxist theory of ideology was that it tended to reduce all the relation between knowledge and power to a question of *class* power and *class* interests. Foucault did not deny the existence of classes, but he was strongly opposed to this powerful element of economic or class *reductionism* in the Marxist theory of ideology. Secondly, he argued that Marxism tended to contrast the 'distortions' of bourgeois knowledge, against its own claims to 'truth' -Marxist science. But Foucault did not believe that *any* form of thought could claim an absolute 'truth' of this kind, outside the play of discourse. *All* political and social forms of thought, he believed, were inevitably caught up in the interplay of knowledge and power. So, his work rejects the traditional Marxist question, 'in whose class interest does language, representation and power operate?'

Later theorists, like the Italian, Antonio Gramsci, who was influenced by Marx but rejected class reductionism, advanced a definition of 'ideology' which is considerably closer to Foucault's position, though still too preoccupied with class questions to be acceptable to him. Gramsci's notion was that particular social groups struggle in many different ways, including ideologically, to win the consent of other groups and achieve a kind of ascendancy in both thought and practice over them. This form of power Gramsci called hegemony. Hegemony is never permanent, and is not reducible to economic interests or to a simple class model of society. This has some similarities to Foucault's position, though on some key issues they differ radically. (The question of

hegemony

hegemony is briefly addressed again in Chapter 4.)

What distinguished Foucault's position on discourse, knowledge and power from the Marxist theory of class interests and ideological 'distortion'?
Foucault advanced at least two, radically novel, propositions.

1 Knowledge, power and truth

The first concerns the way Foucault conceived the linkage between knowledge and power. Hitherto, we have tended to think that power operates in a direct and brutally repressive fashion, dispensing with polite things like culture and knowledge, though Gramsci certainly broke with that
model of power. Foucault argued that not only is knowledge always a form of power, but power is implicated in the questions of whether and in what circumstances knowledge is to be applied or not. This question of the

power/knowledge

application and *effectiveness* of **power/knowledge** was more important, he thought, than the question of its 'truth'.

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to *make itself true.* All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true'. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practices. Thus, 'There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations' XFoucault, 1977a, p. 27).

According to Foucault, what we think we 'know' in a particular period about, say, crime has a bearing on how we regulate, control and punish criminals.
Knowledge does not operate in a void. It is put to work, through certain technologies and strategies of application, in specific situations, historical contexts and institutional regimes. To study punishment, you must study how the combination of discourse and power – power/knowledge – has produced a certain conception of crime and the criminal, has had certain real effects both for criminal and for the punisher, and how these have been set into practice in certain historically specific prison regimes.

regime of truth

This led Foucault to speak, not of the 'Truth' of knowledge in the absolute sense – a Truth which remained so, whatever the period, setting, context – but of a discursive formation sustaining a **regime of truth.** Thus, it may or may not be true that single parenting inevitably leads to delinquency and crime. But if everyone believes it to be so, and punishes single parents accordingly, this will have real consequences for both parents and children and will become 'true' in terms of its real effects, even if in some absolute sense it has never been conclusively proven. In the human and social sciences, Foucault argued:

> Truth isn't outside power. ... Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it

> induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned ... the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.
>
> (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

2 *New conceptions of power*

Secondly, Foucault advanced an altogether novel conception of power. We tend to think of power as always radiating in a single direction – from top to bottom – and coming from a specific source – the sovereign, the state, the ruling class and so on. For Foucault, however, power does not 'function in the form of a chain' -it circulates. It is never monopolized by one centre. It 'is deployed and exercised through a net-like organization' (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). This suggests that we are all, to some degree, caught up in its circulation – oppressors and oppressed. It does not radiate downwards, either from one source or from one place. Power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life – in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics, the economy and the law. What's more, power is not only negative, repressing what it seeks to control. It is also *productive.* It 'doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but ... it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be thought of as a productive network which runs through the whole social body' (Foucault, 1980, p. 119).

The punishment system, for example, produces books, treatises, regulations, new strategies of control and resistance, debates in Parliament, conversations, confessions, legal briefs and appeals, training regimes for prison officers, and so on. The efforts to control sexuality produce a veritable explosion of discourse talk about sex, television and radio programmes, sermons and legislation, novels, stories and magazine features, medical and counselling advice, essays and articles, learned theses and research programmes, as well as new sexual practices (e.g. 'safe' sex) and the pornography industry. Without denying that the state, the law, the sovereign or the dominant class may have positions of dominance, Foucault shifts our attention away from the grand, overall strategies of power, towards the many, localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates – what Foucault calls the 'meticulous rituals' or the 'micro-physics' of power. These power relations 'go right down to the depth of society' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27). They connect the way power is actually working on the ground to the great pyramids of power by what he calls a capillary movement (capillaries being the thin-walled vessels that aid the exchange of oxygen between the blood in our bodies and the surrounding tissues). Not because power at these lower levels merely reflects or 'reproduces, at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures and behaviour, the general form of the law or government' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27) but, on the contrary, because such an approach 'roots [power] in forms of behaviour, bodies and local relations of power which should not at all be seen as a simple projection of the central power' (Foucault, 1980, p. 201).

To what object are the micro-physics of power primarily applied, in Foucault's model? To the body. He places the body at the centre of the struggles between different formations of power/knowledge. The techniques of regulation are applied to the body. Different discursive formations and apparatuses divide, classify and inscribe the body differently in their respective regimes of power and 'truth'. In *Discipline and Punish,* for example, Foucault analyses the very different ways in which the body of the criminal is 'produced' and disciplined in different punishment regimes in France. In earlier periods, punishment was haphazard, prisons were places into which the public could wander and the ultimate punishment was inscribed violently on the body by means of instruments of torture and execution, etc. a practice the essence of which is that it should be public, visible to everyone. The modern form of disciplinary regulation and power, by contrast, is private, individualized; prisoners are shut away from the public and often from one another, though continually under surveillance from the authorities; and punishment is individualized. Here, the body has become the site of a new kind of disciplinary regime.

Of course this 'body' is not simply the natural body which all human beings possess at all times. This body is *produced* within discourse, according to the different discursive formations the state of knowledge about crime and the criminal, what counts as 'true' about how to change or deter criminal behaviour, the specific apparatus and technologies of punishment prevailing at the time. This is a radically historicized conception of the body a sort of surface on which different regimes of power/knowledge write their meanings and effects. It thinks of the body as 'totally imprinted by history and the processes of history's deconstruction of the body' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 63).

Summary: Foucault and representation

Foucault's approach to representation is not easy to summarize. He is concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning through discourse. Foucault does indeed analyse particular texts and representations, as the semioticians did. But he is more inclined to analyse the whole *discursive formation* to which a text or a practice belongs. His concern is with knowledge provided by the human and social sciences, which organizes conduct, understanding, practice and belief, the regulation of bodies as well as whole populations. Although his work is clearly done in the wake of, and profoundly influenced by, the 'turn to language' which marked the *constructionist* approach to representation, his definition of *discourse* is much broader than language, and includes many other elements of practice and institutional regulation which Saussure's approach, with its linguistic focus, excluded. Foucault is always much more historically specific, seeing forms of power/knowledge as always rooted in particular contexts and histories. Above all, for Foucault, the production of knowledge is always crossed with questions of power and the body; and this greatly expands the scope of what is involved in representation.

The major critique levelled against his work is that he tends to absorb too much into 'discourse', and this has the effect of encouraging his followers to neglect the influence of the material, economic and structural factors in the operation of power/knowledge. Some critics also find his rejection of any criterion of 'truth' in the human sciences in favour of the idea of a 'regime of truth' and the will-to-power (the will to make things 'true') vulnerable to the charge of relativism. Nevertheless, there is little doubt about the major impact which his work has had on contemporary theories of representation and meaning.

Charcot and the performance of hysteria

In the following example, we will try to apply Foucault's method to a particular example. Figure 1.8 shows a painting by Andre Brouillet of the famous French psychiatrist and neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-93), lecturing on the subject of female hysteria to students in the lecture theatre of his famous Paris clinic at La Salpetriere.

ACTIVITY

> Look at Brouillet's painting (Figure 1.8). What does it reveal as a representation of the study of hysteria?

Brouillet shows a hysterical patient being supported by an assistant and attended by two women. For many years, hysteria had been traditionally identified as a female malady and although Charcot demonstrated conclusively that many hysterical symptoms were to be found in men, and a significant proportion of his patients were diagnosed male hysterics, Elaine Showalter observes that 'for Charcot, too, hysteria remains symbolically, if not medically, a female malady' (1987, p. 148). Charcot was a very humane man who took his patients' suffering seriously and treated them with dignity. He diagnosed hysteria as a genuine ailment rather than a malingerer's excuse (much as has happened, in our time, after many struggles, with other illnesses, like anorexia and ME). This painting represents a regular feature of Charcot's treatment regime, where hysterical female patients displayed before an audience of medical staff and students the symptoms of their malady, ending often with a full hysterical seizure.

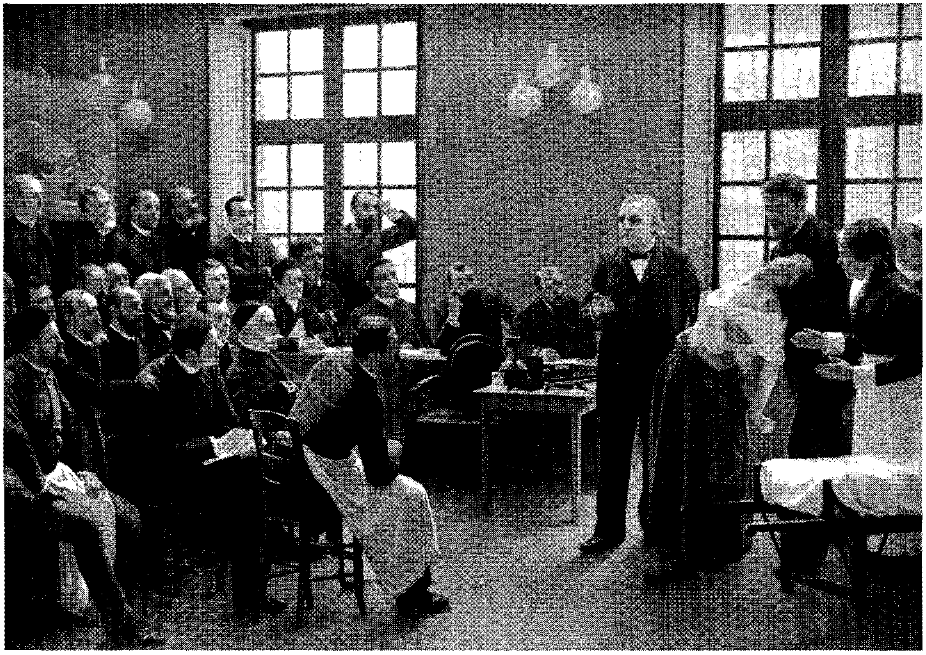


FIGURE 1.8 Andre Brouillet, *A clinical lesson at La Salpetriere (given by Charcot)*, 1887.

The painting could be said to capture and represent, visually, a discursive 'event' the emergence of a new regime of knowledge. Charcot's great distinction, which drew students from far and wide to study with him (including, in 1885, the young Sigmund Freud from Vienna), was his demonstration 'that hysterical symptoms such as paralysis could be produced and relieved by hypnotic suggestion' (Showalter, 1987, p. 148). Here we see the practice of hypnosis being applied in practice.

Indeed, the image seems to capture *two* such moments of knowledge production. Charcot did not pay much attention to what the patints said (though he observed their actions and gestures meticulously). But Freud and his friend Breuer did. At first, in their work when they returned home, they used Charcot's hypnosis method, which had attracted such wide attention as a novel approach to treatment of hysteria at La Salpetriere. But some years later they treated a young woman called Bertha Pappenheim for hysteria, and she, under the pseudonym 'Anna O', became the first case study written up in Freud and Breuer's path-breaking *Studies in Hysteria* (1974/1895). It was the 'loss of words', her failing grasp of the syntax of her own language (German), the silences and meaningless babble of this brilliantly intellectual, poetic and imaginative but rebellious young woman, which gave Breuer and Freud the first clue that her linguistic disturbance was related to her resentment at her 'place' as dutiful daughter of a decidedly patriarchal father, and thus deeply connected with her illness. After hypnosis, her capacity to speak coherently returned, and she spoke fluently in three other languages, though not in her native German. Through her dialogue with Breuer, and her ability to 'work through' her difficult relationship in relation to language, 'Anna O' gave the first example of the 'talking cure' which, of course, then provided the whole basis for Freud's subsequent development of the psychoanalytic method. So we are looking, in this image, at the 'birth' of two new psychiatric *epistemes:* Charcot's method of hypnosis, and the conditions which later produced psychoanalysis.

The example also has many connections with the question of *representation*. In the picture, the patient is performing or 'representing' with her body the hysterical symptoms from which she is 'suffering'. But these symptoms are also being 're-presented' – in the very different medical language of diagnosis and analysis - to her (his?) audience by the Professor: a relationship which involves *power*. Showalter notes that, in general, 'the representation of female hysteria was a central aspect of Charcot's work' (p.148). Indeed, the clinic was filled with lithographs and paintings. He had his assistants assemble a photographic album of nervous patients, a sort of visual inventory of the various 'types' of hysterical patient. He later employed a professional photographer to take charge of the service. His analysis of the displayed symptoms, which seems to be what is happening in the painting, accompanied the hysterical 'performance'. He did not flinch from the spectacular and theatrical aspects associated with his demonstrations of hypnosis as a treatment regime. Freud thought that 'Every one of his "fascinating lectures"' was 'a little work of art in construction and composition'. Indeed, Freud noted, 'he never appeared greater to his listeners than after he had made the effort, by giving the most detailed account of his train of thought, by the greatest frankness about his doubts and hesitations, to reduce the gulf between teacher and pupil' (Gay, 1988, p. 49).

ACTIVI 8

Now look carefully at the picture again and, bearing in mind what we have said about Foucault's method of and approach to representation, answer the following questions:

1 Who commands the centre of the picture?
2 Who or what is its 'subject? Are (1) and (2) the same?
3 Can you tell that knowledge is being produced here? How?
4 What do you notice about relations of power in the picture? How are they represented? How does the *form* and *spatial relationships* of the picture represent this?
5 Describe the 'gaze' of the people in the image: who is looking at whom? What does *that* tell us?
6 What do the age and gender of the participants tell us?
7 What message does the patient's body convey?
8 Is there a *sexual* meaning in the image? If so, what?
9 What is the relationship of you, the viewer, to the image?
10 Do you notice anything else about the image which we have missed'?

READING -

Now read the account of Charcot and La Salpetriere offered by Elaine Showalter in 'The performance of hysteria' from *The Female Malady,* reproduced as Reading F at the end of this chapter. Look carefully at the two photographs of Charcot's hysterical women patients. What do you make of their captions?

Where is 'the subject'?

We have traced the shift in Foucault's work from language to discourse and knowledge, and their relation to questions of power. But where in all this, you might ask, is the subject? Saussure tended to abolish the subject from the question of representation. Language, he argued, speaks us. The subject appears in Saussure's schema as the author of individual speech-acts *[paroles).* But, as we have seen, Saussure did not think that the level of the *paroles* was one at which a 'scientific' analysis of language could be conducted. In one sense, Foucault shares this position. For him, it is *discourse*, not the subject, which produces knowledge. Discourse is enmeshed with power, but it is not necessary to find 'a subject' -the king, the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, the state, etc. – for *power/knowledge* to operate.

On the other hand, Foucault *did* include the subject in his theorizing, though he did not restore the subject to its position as the centre and author of representation. Indeed, as his work developed, he became more and more concerned with questions about 'the subject', and in his very late and unfinished work, he even went so far as to give the subject a certain reflexive awareness of his or her own conduct, though this still stopped short of restoring the subject to his/her full sovereignty.

Foucault was certainly deeply critical of what we might call the traditional conception of the subject. The conventional notion thinks of 'the subject' as an individual who is fully endowed with consciousness; an autonomous and stable entity, the 'core' of the self, and the independent, authentic source of action and meaning. According to this conception, when we hear ourselves speak, we feel we are identical with what has been said. And this identity of the subject with what is said gives him/her a privileged position in relation to meaning. It suggests that, although other people may misunderstand us, *we* always understand ourselves because *we were the source of meaning in the first place.*

However, as we have seen, the shift towards a constructionist conception of language and representation did a great deal to displace the subject from a privileged position in relation to knowledge and meaning. The same is true of Foucault's discursive approach. It is discourse, not the subjects who speak it, which produces knowledge. Subjects may produce particular texts, but they are operating within the limits of the *episteme,* the *discursive formation,* the *regime of truth,* of a particular period and culture. Indeed, this is one of Foucault's most radical propositions: the 'subject' is *produced within discourse.* This subject *of* discourse cannot be outside discourse, because it must be *subjected to* discourse. It must submit to its rules and conventions, to its dispositions of power/knowledge. The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed. But it cannot stand outside power/ knowledge as its source and author. In 'The subject and power' (1982), Foucault writes that 'My objective ... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects ... It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word *subject:* subject to someone else's control and dependence, and tied to his *(sic)* own identity by a conscience and self- knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault, 1982, pp. 208, 212). Making discourse and representation more historical has therefore been matched, in Foucault, by an equally radical historicization of *the subject.* 'One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework' (Foucault, 1980, p. 115).

\\There, then, is 'the subject' in this more discursive approach to meaning, representation and power?

Foucault's 'subject' seems to be produced through discourse in *two* different senses or places. First, the discourse itself produces 'subjects' – figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge which the discourse produces. These subjects have the attributes we would expect as these are defined by the discourse: the madman, the hysterical woman, the homosexual, the individualized criminal, and so on. These figures are specific to specific discursive regimes and historical periods. But the discourse also produces a *place for the subject* (i.e. the reader or viewer, who is also 'subjected to' discourse) from which its particular knowledge and meaning most makes sense. It is not inevitable that all individuals in a particular period will become the subjects of a particular discourse in this sense, and thus the bearers of its power/knowledge. But for them us – to do so, they we – must locate themselves/ourselves in the *position* from which the discourse makes most sense, and thus become its 'subjects' by 'subjecting' ourselves to its meanings, power and regulation. All discourses, then, construct **subject-positions,** from which alone they make sense.

subject-positions

This approach has radical implications for a theory of representation. For it suggests that discourses themselves construct the subject-positions from which they become meaningful and have effects. Individuals may differ as to their social class, gendered, 'racial' and ethnic characteristics (among other factors), but they will not be able to take meaning until they have identified with those positions which the discourse constructs, *subjected* themselves to its rules, and hence become the *subjects of its power/knowledge.* For example, pornography produced for men will only 'work' for women, according to this theory, if in some sense women put themselves in the position of the 'desiring male voyeur' – which is the ideal subject-position which the discourse of male pornography constructs – and look at the models from this 'masculine' discursive position. This may seem, and is, a highly contestable proposition. But let us consider an example which illustrates the argument.

How to make sense of Velasquez' *Las Meninas*

Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1970) opens with a discussion of a painting by the famous Spanish painter, Velasquez, called *Las Meninas.* It has been a topic of considerable scholarly debate and controversy. The reason I am using it here is because, as all the critics agree, the painting itself does raise certain questions about the nature of *representation,* and Foucault himself uses it to talk about these wider issues of the subject. It is these arguments which interest us here, not the question of whether Foucault's is the 'true', correct or even the definitive reading of the painting's meaning. That the Painting has no ed original meaning is, indeed, one of Foucault's most powerful arguments.

The painting is unique in Velasquez' work. It was part of the Spanish court's royal collection and hung in the palace in a room which was subsequently destroyed by fire. It was dated '1656' by Velasquez' successor as court

painter. It was originally called 'The Empress with her Ladies and a Dwarf'; but by the inventory of 1666, it had acquired the title of 'A Portrait of the Infanta of Spain with her Ladies In Waiting and Servants, by the Court Painter and Palace Chamberlain Diego Velasquez'. It was subsequently called *Las Meninas* 'The Maids of Honour'. Some argue that the painting shows Velasquez working on *Las Meninas* itself and was painted with the aid of a mirror ut this now seems unlikely. The most widely held and convincing explanation i's that Velasquez was working on a full-length portrait of the King and Queen, and that it is the royal couple who are reflected in the mirror on the back wall. It is at the couple that the princess and her attendants are looking and on them that the artist's gaze appears to rest as he steps back from his canvas. The reflection artfully includes the royal couple in the picture. This is essentially the account which Foucault accepts.

ACTIVITY 9

Look at the picture carefully, while we summarize Foucault's argument.

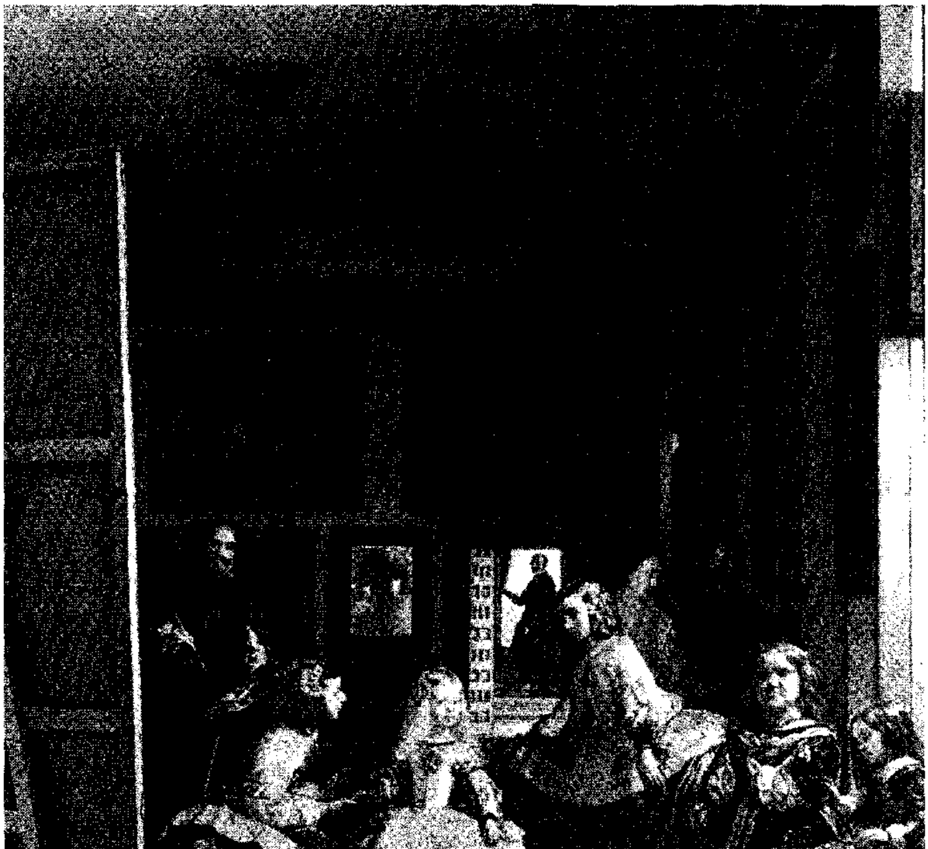


FIGURE 19

Diego Velasquez,

I.tJs Meninas,

1656.

Las Meninas shows the interior of a room perhaps the painter's studio or some other room in the Spanish Royal Palace, the Escorial. The scene, though in its deeper recesses rather dark, is bathed in light from a window on the right. 'We are looking at a picture in which the painter is in turn looking out at us,' says Foucault (1970, p. 4). To the left, looking forwards, is the painter himself, Velasquez. He is in the act of painting and his brush is raised, 'perhaps ... considering whether to add some finishing touch to the canvas' (p. 3). He is looking at his model, who is sitting in the place from which we are looking, but we cannot see who the model is because the canvas on which Velasquez is painting has its back to us, its face resolutely turned away from our gaze. In the centre of the painting stands what tradition recognizes as the little princess, the lnfanta Maragarita, who has come to watch the proceedings. She is the centre of the picture we are looking at, but she is not the 'subject' of Velasquez' canvas. The Infanta has with her an 'entourage of duennas, maids of honour, courtiers and dwarfs' and her dog (p. 9). The courtiers stand behind, towards the back on the right. Her maids of honour stand on either side of her, framing her. To the right at the front are two dwarfs, one a famous court jester. The eyes of many of these figures, like that of the painter himself, are looking out towards the front of the picture at the sitters.

Who are they the figures at whom everyone is looking but whom we cannot look at and whose portraits on the canvas we are forbidden to see? In fact, though at first we think we cannot see them, the picture tells us who they are because, behind the Infanta's head and a little to the left of the centre of the picture, surrounded by a heavy wooden frame, is a mirror; and in the mirror – at last – are reflected the sitters, who are in fact seated *in the position from which we* m·e *looking:* 'a reflection that shows us quite simply what is lacking in everyone's gaze' (p. 15). The figures reflected in the mirror are, in fact, the King, Philip IV, and his wife, Mariana. Beside the mirror, to the right of it, in the back wall, is another 'frame', but this is not a mirror reflecting forwards; it is a doorway leading *backwards* out of the room. On the stair, his feet placed on different steps, 'a man stands out in full-length silhouette'. He has just entered or is just leaving the scene and is looking at it from behind, observing what is going on in it but 'content to surprise those within without being seen himself' (p. 10).

The subject of/in representation

Who or what is *the subject* of this painting? In his comments, Foucault uses *Las Meninas* to make some general points about his theory of representation and specifically aboutthe role of the subject:

1 'Foucault reads the painting in terms of representation and the subject' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 20). As well as being a painting which shows us (represents) a scene in which a portrait of the King and Queen of Spain is being painted, it is also a painting which *tells us something about how representation and the subject work.* It produces its own kind of knowledge.

Representation and the subject are the painting's underlying message -what it is about, its sub-text

2 Clearly, representation here is *not* about a 'true' reflection or imitation of reality. Of course, the people in the painting may 'look like' the actual people in the Spanish court. But the discourse of painting in the picture is doing a great deal more than simply trying to mirror accurately what exists.

3 Everything in a sense is *visible* in the painting. And yet, what it is 'about' – its meaning – depends on how we 'read' it. *It is as much constructed around what you can't see as what you can.* You can't see what is being painted on the canvas, though this seems to be the point of the whole exercise. You can't see what everyone is looking at, which is the sitters, unless we assume it is a reflection of them in the mirror. They are both in and not in the picture. Or rather, they are present through a kind of substitution. We cannot see them because they are not directly represented: but their 'absence' is represented - *mirrored* through their reflection in the mirror at the back. The meaning of the picture is produced, Foucault argues, through this complex inter-play between *presence* (what you see, the visible) and *absence* (what you can't see, what has displaced it within the frame). Representation works as much through what is *not* shown, as through what is.

4 In fact, a number of substitutions or displacements seem to be going on here. For example, the 'subject' and centre of the painting we are looking at seems to be the Infanta. But the 'subject' or centre is also, of course, the sitters – the King and Queen whom we can't see but whom the others are looking at. You can tell this from the fact that the mirror on the wall in which the King and Queen are reflected is also almost exactly at the centre of the field of vision of the picture. So the Infanta and the Royal Couple, in a sense, share the place of the centre as the principal 'subjects' of the painting. It all depends on where you are looking from – in towards the scene from where you, the spectator, is sitting or outwards from the scene, from the position of the people in the picture. If you accept Foucault's argument, then there are *two* subjects to the painting and *two* centres. And the composition of the

picture -its discourse – forces us to oscillate between these two 'subjects' without ever finally deciding which one to identify with. Representation in the painting seems firm and clear – everything in place. But our vision, the way we *look* at the picture, oscillates between two centres, two subjects, two positions oflooking, two meanings. Far from being finally resolved into some absolute truth which is *the* meaning of the picture, the discourse of the painting quite deliberately keeps us in this state of suspended attention, in this oscillating process of looking. Its meaning is always in the process of emerging, yet any final meaning is constantly deferred.

5 Yon can tell a great deal about how the picture works as a discourse, and what it means, by following the orchestration of *looking* – who is looking at what or whom. *Our* look – the eyes of the person looking at the picture, the spectator – follows the relationships of looking as represented in the picture.

We know the figure of the Infanta is important because her attendants are looking at her. But we know that someone even more important is sitting in front of the scene whom we can't see, because many figures -the Infanta, the jester, the painter himself - are looking at them! So the spectator (who is also 'subjected' to the discourse of the painting) is doing two kinds of looking.

Looking at the scene from the position outside, in front of, the picture. And at the same time, looking out of the scene, by *identifying with* the looking being done by the figures in the painting. Projecting ourselves into the subjects of the painting help us as spectators to see, to sense' of it. We take up the positions indicated by the discourse, identify with them, subject ourselves to its meanings, and become its 'subjects'.

6 It is critical for Foucault's argument that the painting does not have a completed meaning. It only means something in relation to the spectator who is looking at it. The spectator completes the meaning of the picture. Meaning is therefore constructed in the dialogue between the painting and the spectator.

Velasquez, of course, could not know who would subsequently occupy the position of the spectator. Nevertheless, the whole 'scene' of the painting had to be laid out in relation to that ideal point in front of the painting from which *any* spectator must look if the painting is to make sense. The spectator, we might say, is painted into position in front of the picture. In this sense, the discourse produces a *subject-position* for the spectator-subject. For the painting to work, the spectator, whoever he or she may be, must first 'subject' himself/herself to the painting's discourse and, in this way, become the painting's ideal viewer, the producer of its meanings -its 'subject'. This is what is meant by saying that the discourse constructs the spectator as a subject -by which we mean that it constructs a place for the subject-spectator who is looking at and making sense of it.

7 Representation therefore occurs from at least three positions in the painting. First of all there is us, the spectator, whose 'look' puts together and unifies the different elements and relationships in the picture into an overall meaning. This subject must be there for the painting to make sense, but he/she is not represented in the painting.

Then there is the painter who painted the scene. He is 'present' in two places at once, since he must at one time have been standing where we are now sitting,
in order to paint the scene, but he has then put himself into (represented himself in) the picture, looking back towards that point of view where we, the spectator, have taken his place. We may also say that the scene makes sense and is pulled together in relation to the court figure standing on the stair at the back, since he too surveys it all but – like us and like the painter -from somewhat outside it.

8 Finally, consider the mirror on the back wall. If it were a 'real' mirror, it should now be representing or reflecting *us*, since we are standing in that position in front of the scene to which everyone is looking and from which everything makes sense. But it does not mirror us, it shows *in our place* the King and Queen of Spain. Somehow the discourse of the painting positions us

in the place of the Sovereign! You can imagine what fun Foucault had with this substitution.

Foucault argues that it is clear from the way the discourse of representation works in the painting that it *must* be looked at and made sense of from that one subject-position in front of it from which we, the spectators, are looking. This is also the point-of-view from which a camera would have to be positioned in order to film the scene. And, lo and behold, the person whom Velasquez chooses to 'represent' sitting in this position is The Sovereign – 'master of all he surveys' -who is both the 'subject of' the painting (what it is about) and the 'subject in' the painting – the one whom the discourse sets in place, but who, simultaneously, makes sense of it and understands it all by a look of supreme mastery.

We started with a fairly simple definition of representation. Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce
meaning. Already, this definition carries the important premise that things – objects, people, events, in the world – do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It.is us – in society, within human cultures – who
make things mean, who signify. Meanings, consequently, will always change, from one culture or period to another. There is no guarantee that every object in one culture will have an equivalent meaning in another, precisely because cultures differ, sometimes radically, from one anotlrnr in their codes the ways they carve up, classify and assign meaning to the world. So one important idea about representation is the acceptance of a degree of *cultural relativism* between one culture and another, a certain lack of

equivalence, and hence the need for *translation* as we move from the mind-set or conceptual universe of one culture or another.

We call this the *constructionist* approach to representation, contrasting it with both the *reflective* and the *intentional* approaches. Now, if culture is a process, a practice, how does it work? In the *constructionist perspective,* representation involves making meaning by forging links between three different orders of things: what we might broadly call the world of things, people, events and experiences; the conceptual world – the mental concepts we carry around in our heads; and the signs, arranged into languages, which 'stand for' or communicate these concepts. Now, if you have to make a link between systems which are not the same, and fix these at least for a time so that other people know what, in one system, corresponds to what in another system, then there must be something which allows us to translate between them – telling us what word to use for what concept, and so on. Hence the notion of *codes.*

Producing meaning depends on the practice of interpretation, and interpretation is sustained by us actively using the code *encoding*, putting things into the code -and by the person at the other end interpreting or *decoding* the meaning (Hall, 1980). But note, that, because meanings are always changing and slipping, codes operate more like social conventions than like fixed laws or unbreakable rules. As meanings shift and slide, so inevitably the codes of a culture imperceptibly change. The great advantage of the concepts and classifications of the culture which we carry around with us in our heads is that they enable us to *think* about things, whether they are there, present, or not; indeed, whether they ever existed or not. There are concepts for our fantasies, desires and imaginings as well as for so-called 'real' objects in the material world. And the advantage of language is that

> our thoughts about the world need not remain exclusive to us, and silent. We can translate them into language, make them 'speak', through the use of signs which stand for them – and thus talk, write, communicate about them to others.

Gradually, then, we complexified what we meant by representation. It came to be less and less the straightforward thing we assumed it to be at first – which is why we need *theories* to explain it. We looked at two versions of constructionism – that which concentrated on how *language* and *signification* (the use of signs in language) works to produce *meanings,* which after Saussure and Barthes we called *semiotics;* and that, following Foucault, which concentrated on how *discourse* and *discursive practices* produce knowledge. I won't run through the finer points in these two approaches again, since you can go back to them in the main body of the chapter and refresh your memory. In semiotics, you will recall the importance of signifier/ signified, *languelparole* and 'myth', and how the marking of difference and binary oppositions are crucial for meaning. In the *discursive* approach, you will recall discursive formations, power/knowledge, the idea of a 'regime of truth', the way discourse also produces the subject and defines the *subject- positions* from which knowledge proceeds and indeed, the return of questions about 'the subject' to the field ofrepresentation. In several examples, we tried to get you to work with these theories and to apply them. There will be further debate about them in subsequent chapters.

Notice that the chapter does *not* argue that the *discursive* approach overturned everything in the *semiotic* approach. Theoretical development does not usually proceed in this linear way. There was much to learn from Saussure and Barthes, and we are still discovering ways of fruitfully applying their insights – without necessarily swallowing everything they said. We offered you some critical thoughts on the subject. There is a great deal to learn from Foucault and the *discursive* approach, but by no means everything it claims is correct and the theory is open to, and has attracted, many criticisms. Again, in later chapters, as we encounter further developments in the theory of representation, and see the strengths and weaknesses of these positions applied in practice, we will come to appreciate more fully that we are only at the beginning of the exciting task of exploring this process of meaning construction, which is at the heart of culture, to its full depths. What we have offered here is, we hope, a relatively clear account of a set of complex, and as yet tentative, ideas in an unfinished project.

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GI407 Week 1: Introduction – (26/09/2017)

Part 1 – Globalisation, uneven development and gender inequalities (DP)

The first half of this lecture introduces different conceptualisations, understandings and methodologies for the analysis of globalisation. Particular attention is given to a perspective that combines political economy with contemporary developments in social and cultural theory and considers change, transformations and transitions. The lecture highlights: economic, social and political dimensions of globalisation; the implications of globalisation for understandings of development; the rise of the global south; tendencies towards simultaneous homogenisation and differentiation across the globe; social, spatial and gender inequalities and the difference a gender perspective makes to the analysis of globalisation. Issues raised in this lecture will be developed throughout the course.

Part 2 – Engendering development (NK)

The second half of this lecture will consider some of the contestations around the meaning of development, distinguishing between development as vision of progress; development as a process of social change and development as the deliberate efforts on the part of the state and other agencies to influence the terms and direction of this change. It will provide an introduction to some of the key concepts and preoccupations that underpin these debates and their implications for methodological questions in this field. And it will explore how feminist scholars, advocates and activists have sought to define their own visions of progress and to intervene in the field of policy and practice to influence social change.

Key reading

Benería, L. Berik, G. and Floro, M. (2015) Gender, Development and Globalization: Economics as if All people Mattered, London: Routledge. (2nd Edition). Chs. 1 and 3.

See PDF

Eschle, C. (2004) 'Feminist Studies of Globalisation: Beyond Gender, Beyond Economism?' Global Society 18 (2): 97-125.

Part II: Globalisation Discourses and the Marginalisation of Gender

I now want to map out the relationship between feminist and non-feminist studies of globalisation with a view to explaining why feminist arguments, including claims about the significance of gender, tend to remain marginal. Of course, the literature on globalisation is highly diverse: just as it is mistaken to assume a monolithic feminist approach to globalisation, so it is with non-feminist approaches. If anything, there is more diversity in the latter: globalisation remains one of the most contested areas of contemporary academic and policy debate. However, it is possible to pick out some broad schools and trends, which help to clarify where feminist approaches do or do not fit. One final qualification is necessary. The dichotomy between feminist and non-feminist discourses is a rather stark one, particularly given the foregoing emphasis on heterogeneity. As will become clear below, there has been an effort in some strands of the literature to incorporate feminist concerns. However, such an effort is not central to the project of the authors identified. Further, self-declared feminist literature on globalisation, as I will make clear in Part III, has some clear identifying characteristics that non-feminist literature does not share.

It is common to subdivide academic studies of globalisation into two sets of approaches, reflecting key differences of substantive focus and disciplinary location. Economic–political approaches are characteristic of the bulk of work on the topic in IR, development studies and economics: they focus on the integration of the global economy and the impact of this upon the nation-state and other political institutions. Cultural–social approaches are clustered in sociology, anthropology and cultural studies: they depict globalisation as constituted by intertwined economic, political and social forces but disciplinary proclivities tend to encourage a focus on processes and outcomes concerning culture and identity—migration, nationality, hybridity, etc. 27 Marchand and Runyan, “Introduction. Feminist Sightings of Global Restructuring: Conceptualisations and Reconceptualisations”, op. cit., p. 3; compare, for example, the economic–political focus of Ian Clark, Globalization and International Relations Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, Globalization in Question, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999); and Leslie Sklair, Globalization: Capitalism and its Alternatives, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2002) with the cultural–social preoccupations of Michael Feathersone (ed.), Global Modernities: Nationalism, Globalisation and Modernity (London: Sage, 1990); Michael Featherstone, Undoing Culture: Globalisation, Postmodernism and Identity (London: Sage, 1995); Roland Robertson (1992) Globalization; Social Theory and Global Culture (London: Sage, 1990) and John Tomlinson, Globalization and Culture (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999). View all notes A further subdivision is made by Marchand and Runyan amongst proponents of cultural–social approaches: between homogenisers, emphasising cultural universals and integration, and heterogenisers, emphasising the interplay or mutual constitution of universal processes and localised cultural forms, and the resulting patterns of fragmentation, difference, and hybridity. 28 Marchand and Runyan, “Introduction. Feminist Sightings of Global Restructuring: Conceptualisations and Reconceptualisations”, op. cit., p. 3, following Featherstone and Lash. Compare, for example, George Ritzer’s The McDonaldization of Society, revised edn (London: Sage/Pine University Press, 2000) with Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). Appadurai’s work is also notable for his development of a multidimensional approach, explained in more length below: he attempts to bridge the disciplinary divide with a cultural–economy framework which delineates the operations of five distinct global flows or “scapes” View all notes David Held and colleagues offer a third possible set of distinctions, which is in effect a subdivision of the economic–political approach on the basis of different attitudes toward the extent of economic integration and its impact upon the state. Hyperglobalists believe that the impact is profound and irreversible, and that it is undermining state sovereignty and state power as traditionally understood. Sceptics argue that levels of international trade are currently similar to those found at the end of the 19th century and that most integration has been at the regional level. Further, they insist that states remain dominant over economic interaction and capable of regulating and even subverting current trends. Transformationalists argue that recent changes are more profound than sceptics allow but not irreversible or uni-directional as hyperglobalists assume. Globalisation is seen as complex, contradictory, unequal and contestable. Most states are not in control of globalisation processes but neither are they being killed off; rather, they are being reshaped in significant ways. 29 David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathon Perraton, Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 3–10; for hyperglobalists of very differing ideological perspectives, see Kennichi Ohmae, The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy (London: HarperCollins, 1994) and Stephen Gill, Power and Resistance in the New World Order (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. xii; the most widely cited sceptical work is probably Hirst and Thompson, op. cit.; the most high-profile of the transformationalists are probably Held and his colleagues—as well as Global Transformations, see Held, Democracy and the Global Order (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995). View all notes

Finally, approaches to globalisation can be distinguished on the basis of their normative or political attitude to globalisation. According to Jan Aart Scholte, we can identify liberals, conservative sceptics and critics. 30 Jan Aart Scholte, “Beyond the Buzzword: Toward a Critical Theory of Globalization”, in Kofman and Youngs (eds.), op. cit., pp. 49–53. View all notes The first category draws attention to the obvious fact that much of the hyperglobalist literature, which accepts and, further, condones globalisation, is of a liberal orientation. It should be recognised that there are significant differences between the most ardent neoliberal proponents of globalisation, who believe that the opening up of markets will bring prosperity, harmonisation and peace, and the warier liberal institutionalists and welfare liberals, who insist that economic and political reform is necessary to curb the more unequal and destructive effects of market forces. 31 Compare Ohmae, op. cit., with the Commission on Global Governance, Our Global Neighbourhood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). This distinction between liberal perspectives on globalisation and global governance is elaborated in Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods, “Globalisation and Inequality”, Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1995), pp. 447–470 and Richard Falk, “Liberalism at the Global Level: The Last of the Independent Commissions?”, Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1995), pp. 563–576. View all notes To a large extent, Scholte’s second category maps on to Held et al.’s “sceptics” identified above. Attention is drawn to the fact that analytical scepticism about the character and extent of globalisation tends to be rooted in social-democratic, nationalist or mercantilist political traditions that defend the state as the locus of legitimate political decision making and the nation as the source of cultural authenticity. 32 For example, Hirst and Thompson, op. cit.; Kenneth Waltz, “Globalization and Governance”, PS Online (December 1999), available: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/walglob.htm> View all notes The third category of “critics”, according to Scholte, draws on postmodernism or Marxism—I would add that specifically neo-Gramscian reformulations of Marxism have been particularly influential in IR. 33 For example, Gill, op. cit.; Robert Cox, “Democracy in Hard Times: Economic Globalization and the Limits of Democracy”, in Anthony McGrew (ed.), The Transformation of Democracy? Globalization and Territorial Democracy (Cambridge: Polity, 1997); several essays in Barry K. Gills (ed.), Globalization and the Politics of Resistance (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); for a distinctive marriage of Marxism and postmodernist modes of critical theorising on globalisation, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). There are also critical elements in cultural-homogenisation texts such as Ritzer, op. cit. View all notes Critics in general believe that globalisation is profoundly damaging and exploitative, functioning to increase poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and conflict. States and interstate institutions are seen as bound up within and compromised by globalisation processes, and thus the appropriate locus for political and cultural responses lies in localised communities or transnational activism. Interestingly, critics often share with liberal advocates a hyperglobalist analysis of the scope and extent of globalisation and an homogenising view of its cultural effects—although they clearly reject a neoliberal appraisal of all this as positive. The flowering of critical literature in the late 1990s has been paralleled by a much-remarked rise in social movement activism, and an accompanying activist-produced literature, targeting those processes and actors seen to be representative of globalisation and most harmful—from the World Trade Organisation to genetically modified food. 34 For example, Kevin Danaher and Roger Burbach (eds.), Globalize This! The Battle against the World Trade Organization and Corporate Rule (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2000); Naomi Klein, No Logo (London: Flamingo, 2000); Amory Starr, Naming the Enemy: Anti-corporate Movements Confront Globalization (London: Zed Books, 2001); Emma Bircham and John Charlton (eds.), Anti-capitalism: A Guide to the Movement, 2nd edn (London: Bookmarks Publications, 2001); Robin Broad (ed.), Global Backlash: Citizens' Initiatives for a Just World Economy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002). View all notes

Notwithstanding this diversity of perspectives, I would agree with Robertson and Khondker that "the most prominent current usage of the term 'globalization' is undoubtedly associated with the global expansion of the market economy" 35 Robertson and Khondker, op. cit., p. 25. View all notes Further, it is also commonly believed that "globalization means global homogenisation. … When globalization is seen as an obliterating tidal wave, it is frequently represented in primarily economic or politicoeconomic terms—as a new form of economic and cultural imperialism, as Westernization, as Americanization." 36 Robertson and Khondker, op. cit., pp. 28, 31. Similar arguments about the prevalence of this economistic and homogenising assumption, from rather different perspectives, can be found in Martin Albrow, The Global Age: State and Society beyond Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), ch. 4, and Martin Shaw, Theory of the Global State: Globality as an Unfinished Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 80–90. View all notes Or as Leslie Sklair puts it:

The approach to globalization that I put forward in 1990 argued that there was one dominant global system structured around the transnational corporations, a transnational capitalist class and the culture–ideology of consumerism. In the early 1990s it was not clear to everyone that this apparently one-sided conception of globalization was the most fruitful approach to take. However, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, in the aftermath of the battle of Seattle and many other challenges to capitalist hegemony, it is difficult to deny the centrality of the struggle between the forces for and against capitalist globalization … globalization has come to be identified in the minds of most people with the capitalist system. 37 Leslie Sklair, Globalization: Capitalism and its Alternatives, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1, 4. View all notes

Although the status of capitalism as such is more contested than Sklair allows, what we have here is a convergence on the assumption that there is now a dominant model of globalisation, one that I will call the economic-homogenisation model. As Robertson and Khondker insist, such a model is economistic, in that it positions economic dynamics as causal of what are seen as unidirectional developments in other domains.

Why and to what extent has this framework become dominant? Robertson and Khondker acknowledge that different disciplinary discourses of globalisation reflect different disciplinary interests but they also point to the “global ascendancy of economics and economists in politically influential national, international and supranational contexts [to the extent that] … the discourse of economic globalization is extremely pervasive.” 38 Robertson and Khondker, op. cit., p. 36. View all notes This is a claim about the hegemonic influence of the economics discipline. It needs further to be recognised that this discipline has in the last few decades become unified to an extraordinary extent around neoliberal, hyperglobalising orthodoxies, although some cracks in this consensus have appeared more recently. 39 Mark Rupert, Ideologies of Globalization: Contending Visions of a New World Order (London: Routledge, 1999), chs. 3 and 7; Robin Broad, “The Washington Consensus Meets the Global Backlash: The Shifting Debate over Development in Theory and in Practice”, Paper presented at the International Studies Association 44th Annual Convention (February 2003), Portland, Oregon, USA. View all notes Amongst analyses with a more cultural disciplinary and substantive focus, work by homogenisers on mass commodification, Westernisation, the “global village”, “the end of history” and “McDonaldisation” has received significantly more popular attention than the musings of heterogenisers on postcoloniality and hybridity. 40 Witness the continuing influence and high profile of Marshall McLuhan (with Bruce R. Powers), The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century, reprint edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Ritzer, op. cit.; Francis Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992). View all notes This is quite possibly because such hyperglobalising analyses have generally been written in a significantly more accessible style than analyses of postcoloniality and the like. It may also be because they share a tendency to position the global economy as determining cultural shifts which resonates strongly with hegemonic economic frameworks. Those few heterogenisers who have gained more widespread attention, such as Samuel Huntington with his “clash of civilisations” thesis and Benjamin Barber with his argument about Jihad versus McWorld, also share this underlying approach: cultural difference and particularity are positioned as responses to globalisation which is perceived in economic-homogenisation terms. 41 Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (London: Touchstone, 1998); Benjamin Barber, Jihad versus McWorld (New York: Times Books, 1996). View all notes

Further, the rise of critical perspectives on globalisation feeds into and off the dominance of the economic-homogenisation model. Such a claim undermines the assertion by Marchand and Runyan that the “critical wave of literature on globalization … is rejecting the narrow economistic and often unquestioning literature of the first wave” 42 Marchand and Runyan, “Introduction. Feminist Sightings of Global Restructuring: Conceptualisations and Reconceptualisations”, op cit., p. 7; following Kofman and Youngs, I note that Marchand and Runyan subsequently qualify this endorsement of critical literature by pointing to the fact that much of it, including neo-Gramscian literature with its high-profile attempt to carve out a causal role for ideas and institutions, remains wedded to “materialist foundations”, p. 8. View all notes It is necessary here to make a careful distinction between approaches that are critical of neoliberal economic orthodoxy with those that are critical of economism as such. It is my contention that a large proportion of critical voices on globalisation are the former but not the latter. They assume an economic-homogenisation model of globalisation—as a deliberate neoliberal policy or because it is the latest stage of capitalism—and it is against this that their critiques are directed. Thus Sklair, for example, insists that the most important global force at the beginning of the twenty-first century is the capitalist global system. Transnational corporations provide the material base for a transnational capitalist class that unquestionably dictates economic transnational practices and is the most important single force in the struggle to dominate political and culture-ideology transnational practices. 43 Sklair, op. cit., p. 9. View all notes

Or consider a recent collection of analyses by Stephen Gill, which focuses on what he calls “capitalist globalisation”: “This great transformation is associated with the intensification and extension of exchange relations and the mediation of social relations by money, a process that is largely shaped by the discipline of capital” 44 Gill, op. cit., p. xii. View all notes Sklair and Gill are both Marxists but neither subscribes to the more structurally determinist versions of Marxism. Sklair emphasises the role of economic, political and cultural practices and Gill uses a neo-Gramscian framework that pays attention to the ideologies and institutions of civil society, and into which Gill has integrated Foucauldian insights on surveillance and disciplining as forms of power. Nonetheless, their analyses of globalisation remain economistic, in terms of their clear a priori location of causality in economic relations, processes and actors.

Although it should be remembered that non-economistic poststructuralists and ecologists also lurk in the critical fold, the economistic tendencies of critical academic literature are reinforced by much activist discourse in the aftermath of what Sklair and others call “the battle of Seattle”. Activist discourse, too, demonstrates variation in what is included under the label globalisation but there remains considerable convergence around the view that “the enemy” consists of the increasing power of corporations and of international financial institutions, and the neoliberal policies of trade liberalisation and privatisation propounded by the latter and from which the former benefit. 45 For example, Danaher and Burbach, op. cit.; Starr, op. cit.; Broad, Global Backlash, op. cit.; Klein, Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Frontline of the Globalization Debate (London: Flamingo, 2002) and Web sites of groups such as Peoples’ Global Action, available: <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/iniativ/agp/en/PGAInfos/manifest.htm>; the World Social Forum, available: <http://www.forumsocialmundial.org/>; or Globalise Resistance, available: <http://www.resist.org/about/standfor.html> View all notes Some activists then insist that they are not anti-globalisation as such but are instead opposed more specifically to neoliberalism, or to “economic globalisation”, or to “globalised capitalism”, and are in favour of an alternative, more humane globalisation. 46 For example, David Graeber, “The New Anarchists”, New Left Review, No. 13 (January–February 2002), pp. 62–66; Klein, Fences and Windows, op. cit.; Danaher and Burbach, op. cit., Introduction. View all notes This points to a differentiated approach to globalisation, which poses a challenge to economism as well as to neoliberal economic orthodoxy and which has affinities with feminist approaches, as we will see below. However, it is counteracted by a strand of movement organising that is influenced more directly by Marxism, albeit of a more ad hoc or structurally determinist variant than that found in academic-oriented texts. This strand links neoliberal economic developments structurally to the underlying processes of capitalism; globalisation is repositioned as the latest stage of capitalism; and the anti-globalisation movement is reoriented as the “anti-capitalist” movement, rooted in class conflict and struggle. 47 For example, Bircham and Charlton, op. cit.; Alex Callinicos, An Anti-capitalist Manifesto (Cambridge:

Polity, 2003). View all notes Thus there is significant convergence in critical academic approaches to globalisation and activist discourse, contributing to the pervasiveness of economism.

An emphasis on the restructuring of the global economy is shared to a large extent by feminist interventions, albeit for different reasons, as outlined in Part I. So why then do feminist voices remain largely ignored in non-feminist debates? Why does the feminist concern with gender receive little—if any—attention?

There are several possible reasons. The first is that globalisation discourses reflect what feminists have convincingly identified as a pervasive male dominance and masculinist bias in academic and public life more generally. Feminists explain how this unequal situation arose and is maintained in ways too numerous to do more than touch on here: ranging from a philosophical critique of rationalist epistemology as predicated on white, Western, masculine traits; to a sociological focus on the “situational constraints” of childcare and domestic chores that prevent many women being fully integrated into public life; to a radical feminist analysis of the operations of global patriarchy, seen as a unified system of male dominance rooted in control of female sexuality and reproductive capacity. 48 For a selection of well-cited feminists texts surveying dominance and bias in society, politics, academia and the pursuit of knowledge from a range of perspectives, see Vicky Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987); Sylvia Walby, Theorizing Patriarchy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2000); Ruth Lister, Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Nira Yuval-Davis, Gender and Nation (London: Sage, 1997); Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (eds.), Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late Capitalist Societies (Cambridge: Polity, 1987); Sandra Harding (ed.), Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (eds.), Women, Knowledge and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). View all notes However it is explained, the fact of male dominance in academic and public life, including in globalisation studies, is hard to dispute. A second, more specific, reason for the marginalisation of feminist insights in globalisation debates could be found in the claim made by some IR scholars that international or global relations are gender neutral. This is related to the assumption of the separateness of the international realm, challenged by theorists ranging from liberalism to poststructuralism; it has also been shown by feminist IR scholars to be rooted in a masculinist standpoint, functioning to reify male dominance of global processes and render women invisible. 49 For example, Tickner, op. cit., pp. 1–5; Sylvester, op. cit., pp. 4–9; Fred Halliday, Rethinking International Relations (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 147–149. View all notes In the wake of such sustained attack, the notion of gender neutrality would seem much less tenable now but it is possible that it lingers on in the habit of some globalisation theorists to adopt a high level of abstraction from concrete human relations, as we will see below. A third possible reason for feminist marginalisation is the self-exclusion of feminists from mainstream international and global debates. 50 Halliday, op. cit., p. 149. View all notes As Robertson and Khondker claim, “there has been a strong tendency in some feminist circles to privilege the local and in fact to regard the discourse(s) of globalization as a masculine preoccupation” 51 Robertson and Khondker, op. cit., p. 37. View all notes However, this claim is unconvincing. In Part I, I attempted to show that feminists have long engaged with global issues; that the shift to the particular in the 1980s was always incomplete; and that at least since then feminists have been developing analyses of phenomena associated with globalisation. They have been explicitly engaging with the discourse of globalisation since the mid-1990s, and are still rarely listened to.

There is a fourth possible reason for feminist marginalisation that has as yet received little attention. I propose that economism, more dominant than ever in non-feminist globalisation discourses, encourages resistance to feminist concerns. This is because an a priori emphasis on the analytical priority of economic dynamics renders gender analysis, and feminist mobilisation, invisible, superstructural or secondary. It becomes very difficult to see that gender might be causal of globalising dynamics and, consequently, that feminist mobilisation challenging gender relations might be integral to reshaping globalisation. This is as true of critical interventions into globalisation debates as it is of neoliberal hyperglobalists. The latter abstract economic rationality and interaction from other domains of social life, naturalising them and seeing them as unavoidable imperatives, thus removing economic decision making, and the gendered assumptions underpinning their economic model, from political debate. Critics and sceptics respond by attempting to resocialise and historicise economic processes. But Marxist critics do so by positioning them as causally prior to all other social phenomena and, frequently, by locating possible resistance in subordinate classes. It is hardly controversial in feminist circles to point to the problems that this has posed historically for feminists: the gendered assumptions about human agency upon which it rests; the equation of feminist concerns about equality in struggle with bourgeois deviation; the consequent urging to subsume feminist movement in the larger struggle. 52 For example, Lydia Sargent (ed.), Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Sheila Rowbotham, Lynn Segal and Hilary Wainwright, Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism (London: Merlin Press, 1979). View all notes Although many Marxists and feminists have sought to expand Marxist frameworks and integrate feminist concerns—with strategies ranging from analysis of the gendered relations of productive and reproductive labour, to "dual-systems" theory on the interconnection of capitalism with patriarchy 53 For example, Friedrich Engels, The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State (New York: International Publishers, 1972); Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation", Monthly Review, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1969), pp. 13–27; Iris Young, "Socialist Feminism and the Limits of Dual Systems Theory", Socialist Review, Vol. 10, Nos. 2–3 (1980), pp. 169–188. View all notes—the relationship between Marxism and feminism has always been a troubled one. Thus it is perhaps rather surprising that feminist globalisation studies in academia have thus far focused their critical fire almost exclusively on neoliberal paradigms, tending to align themselves with critical approaches rather than to interrogate them. 54 As remarked by an anonymous reviewer of this paper, it is notable that many feminist theorists working in the field of international and global studies have been heavily influenced by the neo-Gramscian framework—e.g. Marianne Marchand, Sandra Whitworth, Deborah Stienstra and Jacqui True. While these authors provide some critique of the limitations imposed by the "materialist foundations" of neo-Gramscianism (see footnote 42), a sustained feminist analysis of its analytical and political implications, particularly with regard to globalisation, has not yet been produced. View all notes Academic feminist studies of globalisation might learn here from feminist activists who are involved directly in the movement against aspects of globalisation and who clearly recognise the need to struggle simultaneously on two fronts: against neoliberal economic orthodoxies and against a reductive economism in oppositional discourses and organisation. 55 □ This duality of feminist struggle against neoliberal economic orthodoxy and the economic reductionism of oppositional activism is evident at several points in Klein, Fences and Windows, op. cit.; it is also evident on the Web sites of feminist groups heavily involved in the World Social Forum. See DAWN's World Social Forum Supplements available: <http://www.dawn.org.fj/global/globalisation/socialforum.html>; or articles such as "Where Gender and Race Intersect", Dawn Informs (February 2001), pp. 10–11. Or see Nancy Burrows, "The World March of Women at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre" (2002), available: <http://www.ffq.qc.ca/marche2000/en/fsm2002b. html>. Arguably, the interventions of such groups have made an impact on the declarations associated with the Forum which increasingly pay attention to the intersections of neoliberalism with gendered and racialised hierarchies. See Call of Social Movements, "Resistance to Neoliberalism War and Militarism: For Peace and Social Justice" (2002), available: <http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/ dinamic/eng_portoalegrefinal.asp>. These developments are explored at much greater length in Catherine Eschle, "Skeleton Women: Feminism and Social Movement Resistances to Corporate Power and Neoliberalism", Paper presented at the International Studies Association 44th Annual Convention (February 2003), Portland, Oregon, USA. View all notes

Finally, it should be acknowledged that feminists are not alone in attempting to develop non-economistic accounts of globalisation and that there are other theoretical resources upon which feminists can draw. As Robertson and Khondker insist, the economic-homogenisation model was preceded by the effort to theorise culture, difference, locality and resistance as integral to globalisation in complex ways. 56 □ Robertson and Khondker, op. cit. View all notes Although a large proportion of such work fits broadly within the cultural–social disciplinary focus outlined above, it also crosses disciplinary boundaries and is perhaps best defined as transformationalist or perhaps multidimensional. 57 □ The term "transformationalist" is from David Held et al., Global Transformations, op. cit., drawing attention to the fact that these approaches depict globalisation as transformative of social relations and as subject to transformation through human agency. The term "multidimensional" is my own. View all notes The latter term is helpful in drawing attention to the fact that thinkers like Robertson, Anthony Giddens, Anthony McGrew and David Held have long argued that globalisation is constituted by multiple social, economic, political and cultural forces. An insistence on multiplicity encourages sensitivity to the ways in which globalisation is not monolithic and its direction not predetermined. Stress is placed on the rising density and stretching of social relations across the globe, the reshaping of space and time, and the role of consciousness and reflexivity. Agency and resistance are neither eradicated nor placed outside globalisation but theorised as an integral aspect of its dynamics. Localities are seen as constitutive of global dynamics, as well as the other way round. 58 □ For example, Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Roland Robertson, Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture (London: Sage, 1992); Held et al., Global Transformations, op cit.; David Held and Anthony McGrew (eds.), The Global Transformations Reader, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003); Malcolm Waters, Globalization, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2001); Appadurai, op. cit. View all notes

My purpose in drawing attention to this multidimensional approach to globalisation is to highlight the fact that the economic-homogenisation model is increasingly dominant but it is not uncontested in non-feminist literature. Further, the multidimensional approach is potentially more sympathetic than economistic frameworks, including critical ones, to feminist concerns. However, as my opening discussion of Robertson and Khondker indicated, feminist insights have not yet been taken on board. Robertson and Khondker make the contentious claim that there is a single feminist discourse on the topic of globalisation and that this reflects the feminine viewpoint and values of unity and holism. In earlier work, Robertson acknowledges that the association of women with what he called the more “familial” and “environmental” aspects of globalisation is ambiguous in its origins and political ramifications, and he notes feminist dispute over the universality and potential emancipatory effectiveness of women’s “difference”. He also, briefly, refers to the role of “a diverse international women’s movement and that movement’s particular concern with the theme of ‘women and development’” as “relevant to, and a manifestation of, globalization” 59 □ Robertson, Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture, op. cit., pp. 105–107. View all notes This is a welcome acknowledgement but the ramifications for women, feminists and globalisation remain under-theorised. Giddens has written extensively on issues of identity and intimacy, in which he engages with feminist writings and foregrounds issues of gendered power and (in)equality. 60 □ Giddens, The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991). View all notes There are clear links to these concerns and his work on globalisation in the form of a common emphasis on the disruptive effect of detraditionalisation and disembedding mechanisms in the context of high modernity; the consequent erosion of boundaries between private and public, local and global; and the ensuing struggle to establish a more reflexive consciousness as the basis for relationships with others. But this analysis has its limitations, focusing as it does on the ontological preoccupations of relatively privileged Western women and men and downplaying interconnections with the material structures and relations of power, including the restructuring of capitalism and the changing role of the state. 61 □ The relation of these to globalisation is discussed by Giddens in Consequences of Modernity, op. cit., pp. 70–78; but he does not examine their gendered dimensions. View all notes Neither Robertson nor Giddens engages with the new wave of feminist work on globalisation. This could enrich the multidimensional framework in important ways. It is with this in mind that Part III of this paper explores this new wave, pointing to four key areas in which it makes a distinctive contribution.

Pearson, R. (2005) ‘The rise and rise of gender and development’ in U. Kothari (ed.) A Radical History of Development Studies, Zed Press, pp.157-179.

See PDf

GI413 Week One: Introduction (27/09/2017) MH

This week will provide an introduction to the course and offer an overview of the main themes to be explored.

Key readings

Dowler, L. (2012), Gender, Militarization and Sovereignty. Geography Compass, 6:pp. 490–499.

Not long after the start of “Operation Enduring Freedom”,1 a colleague and I noticed the traditional wedding cake, usually on display in the front window of a local bakery, had been replaced by a similar styled multi-tiered cake. However, this cake with its khaki colored icing was adorned with miniature toy soldiers and instead of the traditional bride and groom topper, the finishing touch was a miniature army tank placed at the base of the cake. The armed vehicle seemed to be positioned to provide artillery support for the male action figures as they advanced up the confectionary terrain. We stared into the window, flummoxed by the display. What was the intent of this cake? Was it for a party? Was it really for consumption or display? Was it a way for this baker to show his/her support of the troops? Was it to mobilize local support for the war? After all, as a nation, we had grown accustomed to the ritual mobilizations of war, such as the hanging of flags from local residents homes2; but this cake and the presumed endorsement of the war seemed out of place.

Or perhaps not! The cake is characteristic of what feminist scholars refer to as the militarization of everyday life. Notable feminist scholars argue that the militarization of the everyday is central to the extension of state power into the daily and, even intimate, interactions of its governed population (Cowen 2008; Cowen and Gilbert 2008; Kinsella 2007; Enloe 2007; Kinsella 2006; Sjoberg 2006; Dowler 2002). From this perspective, the militarized wedding cake represents such an extension; as this political pastry so nonchalantly reveals, the gendering of social life such as the daily and intimate interactions within families, is key to the presentation of militarized logics. For instance, the traditional wedding cake has devolved in cultural meaning from a symbol of virginity, fertility, and male dominance, to signify the promise of a secure home. Similarly this cake is emblematic of society’s faith in the masculine virility and dominance of the male warrior to protect the “home”, most specifically the homeland. For this reason, the cake is an apt cultural representation of how militarization crosses scale and is a process that not only promotes national sovereignty, but also individual sacrifice in the name of the nation-state.

My goal in this essay is to build upon the excellent work in feminist political geography that conveys “the private values of identity into the vision of public analysis of politics” (Sharp 2007, 385). I maintain that the more everyday understandings of militarization have been underexplored in geopolitics in favor of more masculine statements of sovereignty, such as the technical advancements in arms. In this paper, I explore the interrelated processes of gender and militarization in order to create a working dialogue between geopolitics and feminist political geography. I argue that such a dialogue is key for bridging the gap between the typical state scalar approaches of geopolitics, with the attention on daily life that feminist scholars have developed. This multiscalar focus of a feminist geopolitics, (see Dixon and Sallie Marston 2011; Hyndman 2007) is essential for understanding how militarization takes root in the most private of social interactions and how these interactions provide the basis for the acceptance of militarization as a legitimate expression of state sovereignty. This approach to the study of militarization acknowledges that subjective forms of violence, such as wars, always reach deeper into societies than conventional reports would portray and every day forms of violence, such as the structural violence of poverty, hunger and social exclusion, can be waged with a wider variety of means and by a wider variety of actors than previously imagined (Sjoberg 2006, 53; Scheper-Hughes and Bouregeois 2004).

I begin this essay with an overview of the important distinctions between militarism and militarization and explain how militarization is a gender-constitutive process that is inherent to notions of state sovereignty.

Militarism, Militarization and Sovereignty

Concepts such as militarism and militarization are often used interchangeably, however, for the purpose of this essay I make a distinction between the process of militarization, as a form of mobilization for conflict and militarism as the attitudes of a society about military effectiveness. There has been a long history in the study of militarism, however the term militarization is a more newly formed concept that explores the impact of militaristic ideals on everyday culture (Sakamoto 1988). Higate and Henry (2011) discuss this distinction when they explain, “scholars have argued that militarism, is generally shorthand for those ideologies linked with the ‘glorification of war’ ”. Moreover, they describe the more recent scholarship on militarization as and engagement with “social pervasiveness and preparedness for organized violence” (Higate and Henry 2011, 134). For example, a nation would be steeped in militarism when it considers its military to be the highest level of state achievement, power or authority. This could be envisioned as the appreciation of a citizenry for military ideals, such as the maintenance of a strong military for preparedness of enemy attack. As part of this appreciation of the military, societies are willing to sacrifice some, if not all their democratic values, in favor of military resolutions, such as the establishment of The Patriot Act.3 However, militarization as proposed by international relations scholar Cynthia Enloe (2007) influences the creation of dominant narratives, which constructs the experiences of a few as the norm and erases the experiences of others. This type of insight exposes militarization as an everyday and malevolent process that lurks in our everyday spaces. So the Patriot Act can be viewed as the product of a society that is entrenched in militarism; it is tolerated, supported and maintained by everyday assemblages of control. Bonnie Mann argues the reason why spectacular statements of war, such as the treatise of “shock and awe”, were not countered with stunning public protests, relates back to the discursive link between masculinity and sovereignty. Mann suggests that the notions of war and masculinity are so embedded in the roots of western identity, that to interrogate them would be like “trying to leap on our own shadows” (Eagleton 2002 cited in Mann 2006, 150).

It is in the interrogation of these shadows of warfare that feminist scholars find that militarization is the process that gives rise to a societal belief-system that violence and war are appropriate ways to resolve conflict. Most importantly, feminists who investigate militarization argue that this approach to conflict, is not only viewed as the norm, but is a hyper- masculine evolution that also impacts issues of class, race and sexuality. Most critically rendering violence as masculine, not only creates unfair standards for men, as they are the likely warriors, but any non-violent challenge to militarization would be viewed as feminine and not a viable solution for geopolitical analysis.

In examining the relationship between gender and militarization, it is vital to understand the distinction between state and sovereign powers in order to reveal how violent action is more than a dictate of the state, but a process perpetuated and maintained by society more generally. Elementary understandings of sovereignty are often equated with the authority of a governing body, the state, to rule over a certain territory. Intrinsic to notions of sovereignty are the presumptions of territorial integrity, robust borders and the state as the absolute legislative body. The concept of "effective sovereignty," as developed by John Agnew, explains that "sovereignty is neither inherently territorial nor is it invariably state-based" and "made out of the circulation of power among a range of actors at dispersed sites rather than simply emanating outward from an original and commanding central point such as an abstracted 'state'"(Agnew 2009, 9). It is through an understanding of effective sovereignty I see the establishment of a shared understandings between geopolitical scholars such as John Agnew (2009), Derek Gregory (2010), Kirsch and Flint (2011) who argue in a similar fashion to feminist political geographers such as, Jennifer Hyndman (2001, 2003, 2004), Dowler and Sharp (2001), Staeheli and Kofman (2004), Joanne Sharp (2007), Jennifer Hyndman (2007), Tamar Mayer (2008), Pain and Smith (2008), Jennifer Fluri (2009, 2011), Deborah Dixon and Sallie Marston (2011), that while scale is a social construction, boundaries are also created and maintained by powerful societal forces around the construction of place-based identities. This type of analysis destabilizes concepts such as, "us versus them", "victims vs. perpetrators", "heroes vs. warriors," and so on. Therefore, in this essay I am proposing an examination of militarization as type of gendered sovereignty that is not only fixed at the scale of international hierarchies, but also rooted in embodied place-making practices.

If sovereignty recognizes multiple forms of power, as Agnew suggests, then unlike militarism, militarization is not simply representative of the power of the state and instead demonstrates multiple forms of "social powers, including many from well beyond the state's nominal borders"(Agnew 2009, 28). Most importantly, this type of analysis moves us beyond notions of popular sovereignty that are tied to political boundaries and destabilizes the "presumed internal homogeneity of values/norms/culture that allows the state to act in the name of 'the people'" (Agnew 2009, 106). For this reason we can view the process of militarization, as it relates to sovereignty, as a process that operates at many scales from the global north/ south to that of the individual body. Therefore, feminist scholars argue that gendered bodies become useful political tools to both shore-up the sovereignty of one nation while simultaneously eroding the sovereignty of other nation-states (Tickner 2001; Sjoberg 2006; Oliver 2007).

Cindi Katz presents an insightful example of this approach in her article, "Banal Terrorism, Spatial Fetishism and Everyday Insecurity," in which she discusses how the deployment of the National Guard to Manhattan street corners in the days following the events of September 11, 2001 created a new and militarized urban identity. She focuses on the guard's usage of the camouflage uniform, which in an urban landscape does not accomplish the task of "camouflaging," but, instead, makes the guard stand out in a crowd. As she asks, "Why would dressing for Desert Storm in the midst of New York City reassure residents and visitors of their safety?"(Katz 2006, 349). Katz contends that the militarization of the New York City landscape, via the sudden increase of surveillance cameras and the establishment of check points at the entrances to bridges and tunnels cements the connections between geography and power and these landscape markers of surveillance “are everyday, routinized, barely noticed reminders of terror or the threat of an always already presence of terrorism in our midst” (Katz 2006, 350). To this end, United States sovereignty is strengthened by what Katz maintains as the performance of a “vigorous national identity” and the resulting identities become bifurcated “the military, ‘us’, ‘our boys’” versus the enemy threat (Katz 2006, 350).

Understanding militarization and sovereignty as linked systems allows for a critical analysis that uncovers spaces of everyday violence often overlooked by traditional academic approaches. This is an important area of inquiry for several reasons. First, an understanding of militarization is critical to any society that believes in democratic values, given the process of militarization requires the establishment of a certain group of individuals’ power over another (Enloe 2007). Richelle Bernazzoli and Colin Flint agree that the process of militarization is hegemonic whereby cultural norms are created and diffused by the dominant group and thereby embraced by the masses. They point to Joanne Sharp’s argument against defining hegemony as simple top-down process of the imposition of will by the elite rather she contends that hegemony is maintained through the processes of everyday life (Sharp 2000; cited in Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 398). For this reason, this process is pervasive because it is not an overt political act by a ruling elite; instead it is a form of banal militarism, which “indoctrinates the less powerful sectors of society” (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 398). As a result of the uneven social dynamic inherent to militarization, it is logical to assume that certain groups of people, most specifically those who have historically been disenfranchised by the state due to race, gender, class and sexuality remain vulnerable to further alienation. Deborah Cowen illustrates this point when she questions the meanings behind social citizenship and social obligation as she interrogates the complicated intersection of warfare and welfare. In her thesis of “workfare” Cowen suggests that “welfarist forms of citizenship” are deeply rooted in notions of the “war worker-citizen” with the solider taking center stage as the ultimate citizen worker (Cowen 2008, 255). Cowen challenges academics to think “war through peace and the military through labor and citizenship’ in order to explore the common ways war informs our daily lives (Cowen 2008, 255). As illustrative of her argument Cowen points to the massive contribution of women as worker citizens during the Canadian war effort. She details how “women’s own worker-citizenship was rapidly revoked after the war and their labor reassigned to the domestic sphere” (Cowen 2008, 89). Despite the fact that almost 50,000 women served in the Canadian military during the second World War, “the post-war national project demanded a different kind of service from women, that they get out of the way of working men and get into line working at home” (Cowen 2008 89). For this reason, in the next section of the paper I will explore how the visibility and invisibility of gendered bodies, as Cowen describes above, helps secure static notions of sovereignty.

Gender and Militarization

As Enloe has argued: “a popular symbol of many liberation armies in Asia, Latin America and Africa is the woman with a rifle over one confident shoulder and a baby cuddled in her protective arms” (Enloe 1983, 166). Enloe suggests that women’s visibility as symbols of revolution did not secure women as active agents “post victory” and she indicates that in many cases women put down their rifles to find that little has been altered and the national goals of women remain eclipsed by the newly defined needs of the sovereign as defined by men (Enloe 1983). More recently, feminist scholar Robin Riley argues that women’s bodies are militarized in that they are rendered visible, invisible or hyper-visible depending on the needs of the sovereign.

Riley illustrates how the visibility of women’s bodies serve to support U.S. sovereignty when she highlights the hyper-visual images of Afghan women as helpless victims of the Taliban that aided in the mobilization of the US-led military attack on Afghanistan. She maintains the visibility of US soldier Jessica Lynch’s[4]“rescue” was not only a means of celebrating US military supremacy over Iraq, but also helped to secure a warrior masculinity which was being challenged by the number of women soldiers operating at the frontlines of the war. Furthermore, Riley reminds us of the gendered interdependency of visibility when detailing how the now infamous image of Lynndie England[5] became representative of the torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib. England developed into an iconic image at the center of this controversy while her male superiors remained invisible (Riley 2008).

The mobilization of certain politicized bodies is illustrative of feminist philosopher Kelly Oliver’s argument that global freedom and more specifically women’s liberation are defined in terms of the female body being able “to wear any clothing, and to shop for that clothing” (Oliver 2007, 47). This “freedom” is celebrated in terms of being able to wear “revealing clothes for the eyes of others” but Oliver reminds us that it is always governed by the “market forces of fashion and consumerism”. What may appear to be a “fashion statement” can in some cases also be understood as a mobilizing force to justify military action elsewhere and to reassure Western women of their own freedom at home (Oliver 2007, 47). Oliver suggests Bush’s term “women of cover” becomes inflated and decontexualized in the context of the Western’s woman’s ability to wear or buy what she pleases. She argues,

The rhetoric of liberating women elsewhere conceals women’s oppression here at home while at the same time reassuring us that we are liberated. Talk of liberating ‘women of cover’ from ‘backward traditions’ shores up images of freedom and privilege at home (Oliver 2007, 47).

Oliver warns us that even if she has a platinum credit card with the maximum credit limit, a woman’s freedom to shop is still subject to dress codes governed by class, race, age, ability, profession etc. This raises questions of gender sovereignty, whereby Western nations appear strong and benevolent when gender is constructed in opposition to and juxtaposed against gender-roles in Non-Western states rendering these states as weak and totalitarian (Oliver 2007). Therefore, the concept of gender sovereignty not only questions the militarization of women’s bodies by appearance, it also questions how the juxtaposition of these bodies with those of non-western women can escalate the mobilization of war. This type of feminist geopolitical examination which concentrates on social relationships and webs of power uncovers the sponginess of sovereignty and allows us to view the connections rather than differences between marginalized groups (Staeheli and Kofman 2004; Sharp 2007). As part of this analysis, I will now elaborate on how geographers are disrupting notions of sovereign power as they examine the construction of militarized identities across scale.

Scales of Sovereignty

Militarized spaces not only need to be visualized in terms of power but also understood in terms of resistance to that power. As noted above, critical and feminist scholars argue that traditional notions of scale need to be understood though the interplay of a variety of spatial processes (Herod and Wright 2002). For the remainder of this paper I will examine what I refer to as scales of sovereignty, those scalar units that reinforce sovereignty by way of gender. Two such sovereign scales, which are prominent in the literature of critical geography, are those of the “homeland” and the “sovereign body”.

The Homeland

Feminist geographers have argued that women’s sacrifices for the nation have been marginalized and designated to the home either through maintaining the home front or in the symbolic role as mothers of a nation (McClintock 1991; Radcliffe and Westwood 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997; Dowler 1998, 2002) Mayer 2008). Tamer Mayer elaborates on the connections of masculinity and the homeland: “The sons of the nation fight, and sometimes die to free or defend the homeland, and as their blood is shed the connection to the territorial homeland becomes sacralized”(Mayer 2008, 327). Mayer suggests the male warriors are the sacred heroes of the homeland and the notion of the sacrificial warrior is a very potent symbol for the survival of the nation. The metaphor of the homeland crosses both public and private spaces, which promotes a more nuanced form of military manhood.

Keeping this in mind, Elizabeth Gagen examines how our understanding of the homeland evokes sentiments of the safety of the home and fear of places beyond the nation-state. Gagen examines how understandings of the home were evoked as the United States prepared to enter World War I. This war marked the United States entry into wars fought on foreign soil and Gagen details government programs focused on soldiers’“leave time” when they were training to deploy overseas. Through an examination of the War Camp Community Service (WCCS) she demonstrates how domestic notions of space were militarized in order to create “moral environments that would not only distract soldier from immoral pursuits but to actively shape their morality” (Gagen 2009, 30–31). Through the WCCS’s Home Hospitality program, families would host soldiers who were stationed at near-by training posts. The families would entertain soldiers for evening meals, a trip to the movie theater or take them along with their family on a drive through the local countryside. As Gagen points out this program was a departure from previous training regiments, which rejected a soldier’s attachment to the home as being weak and unmanly. Instead, the WCCS felt it was critical for soldiers to spend holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas in family settings and promote domestic experiences that they then could bring to the frontline with them. It was thought that these memories of home would comfort soldiers when they where shipped-out to foreign places or fighting on enemy lines. This promoted the homefront as a place that needed to be preserved and protected and notions of bravery and heroism had to be recast “in the guise of a more gentle and domesticated soldier” (Gagen 2009, 33).

Jenna Loyd, like Gagen, interrogates the linkages between war and images of the home, however, Loyd focuses her examination on of the United States based antiwar group Another Mother for Peace (AMP). Her analysis links the discourse of health and home and details how the homefront developed during the Cold War was extended into the Vietnam War. She considers how the actions of white suburban women activists, such as organizing boycotts of consumer products produced by companies that also manufactured chemicals such as DDT, destabilized notions of public and private space. In this way, the home became a politicized space to launch an anti-war platform based on the premise that war was not healthy for children. Loyd argues at first glance the banality of the argument is self-evident, however a deeper analysis unearths a discourse of resistance that connected “the war zone of Vietnam with children (sons) of the United States” (Loyd 2009, 404). These antiwar mothers rejected the transnational discourse that their families would be safer by killing families in Vietnam. However she also argues that although the AMP was concerned about the health of Vietnamese children they failed to examine the “social hierarchies among different groups of mothers and children” at home, thereby obscuring “differential vulnerabilities to premature death domestically” (Loyd 2009, 404). In an examination of some of AMP’s antiwar literature, such as a pamphlet displaying a handwritten supermarket list, which listed harmful items for purchase, such as baby food containing salt, alongside chemicals such as DDT and MIRV, Loyd marks the overlap of consumerism with the corporate production of arms to demonstrate how everyday understandings of consumerism were utilized to resist war.

Likewise, Cowen and Gilbert (2008) interrogate the relationship between the image of the family and war when they explore how the concept of the homeland has been reinforced since 9/11. They argue that metaphors constituted from notions of “family” have been invoked to promote various national security initiatives. To this end they examine how a “normative nuclear family” has become a central focus of U.S. politics, with increasing intensity since the War on Terror. They maintain that the trauma of 9/11 has been mapped onto the bodies of women and children. Illustrative of this would be how in the days immediately following the attacks of 9/11 women were portrayed as victims of the attacks, while male police officers and firefighters were presented as the iconic heroes of the attacks (Dowler 2002). As a result the notion of the heteronormative nuclear family has been evoked to cope with that trauma and to mobilize the domestic response. For this reason Cowen and Gilbert (2008), assert the loss of the traditional family and the loss of the nation have been conflated producing a vision of the “neo-liberal” family as (the only) good citizens. This family alleviates the fear of a “culture of dependency” and stands as an icon of neo-liberal responsibility. For Cowen and Gilbert (2008), representations of the independent neoliberal family become a central strategy whereby the lack of a strong family structure would weaken the nation to our enemies. They point to

Jasbir Puar’s research to reveal how notions of the domestic sphere are strategized to create moral differences between the “homeland” and the “other”. Puar argues that since 9/11 the identity of the terrorist is constructed as the breakdown of the family due to the lack of mothering (Puar 2006 cited in Cowen and Gilbert 2008). As the image of the family is classified as conventional for the U.S., and non-existent for the other, Puar contends that the West’s construction of the terrorist is an “Orientalist, middle-class, and nuclear conception of normative familial and gender relations” (Puar 2006 cited in Cowen and Gilbert 2008, 265). Critical to the creation of a sovereign homeland is the creation of gendered bodies, which reinforce the homogenous understanding of the homeland.

Sovereign Bodies

Zillah Eisenstein also points to neo-liberal forces in shaping gender as it relates to militarization. She argues that the presence of women in the military may make the military appear more modern and egalitarian as if women have access to the same opportunities as men. However, Eisenstein warns us not to confuse a more modern military (the presence of women) with notions of democracy or women’s liberation. Consequently, Eisenstein argues that the increase of the number of women in the military is rooted in a militarized stage of global capitalism whereby over 50% of the women enlisted in the United States military are ethnic minorities and the military can be likened to what domestic labor was for black women in the 1950s. Therefore, she continues, the military is a patriarchal institution, built upon racial stereotypes (Eisenstein 2007, 5).

Similarly, Woodward and Winter (2007, 10) suggest the military is simply a mirror for the wider process of the militarization of society in that the “wider social anxieties about female power and autonomy” are more visible in the military, which provides a platform for restricting women from advancement. As Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry argue, “women’s entrance into the spheres of power and violence threatens patriarchy, until those women are dehumanized through sexualization” (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 45–46). This is evident in the United States “risk rule” which calls for gender segregation on the battlefield. One argument for restricting women from combat is that they would be a distraction to male soldiers who would feel the need to either protect or bed them. The experiences of women in the armed services are illustrative of a larger process of gender sovereignty. The bodies of women soldiers are being utilized as weapons of war, or as Eisenstein would argue, sexual decoys, however, this war is not on a battlefield, it is between those who advocate that women should be fully integrated into the armed services and those who want to see women restricted from combat or vacate the military entirely. Without a doubt, the United States government’s risk rules places women in harm’s way. Women are finding themselves in combat situations and they are not receiving adequate training because technically they are non-combatants. However, as has been discussed above, U.S. sovereignty (and that of many other states) is strengthened by the liberal notion that while women serve in our military, we still keep them out of harm’s way (Dowler 2011).

Conclusion

Scholars who study militarization agree that militarization as it relates to gender is a process that extends past the boundaries of military space. Furthermore, as feminist scholars working across a variety of political scales illustrate, militarization takes root in the banal processes of daily life that are essential to the reproduction of sovereignty. Such processes are neither exotic nor novel, but are, rather, so common as to be taken for granted and accepted as “normal” or, even, “natural.” Therefore, the feminist critiques of the naturalization and normalization of power structures exposes the inner-workings of sovereignty and the formation of state power. This scholarship reveals the constant to and fro between daily life, in which gender among other social categories are so obviously at work, and the creation of states, their governance strategies and their claims to legitimate use of violence; spheres which are presented as somehow transcending such mundane concerns. This paper has demonstrated, however, that militarization is as commonplace to a society as baking a cake!

Footnotes

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1

Operation Enduring freedom (OEF) began on Oct 7th, 2001 and is the official name, determined by the United States Government for the war in Afghanistan.

2

Walmart reported that it sold an unprecedented 88,000 flags the day after Sept 11th (Nagel 1998: 4).

3

The United States Patriot Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 26, 2001. The act expands law enforcements surveillance and investigative powers and has been challenged by many civil liberty advocates as a direct threat to democratic rights such as privacy, freedom from torture, fair trial and freedom of speech.

4

Jessica Lynch is a Iraq War Veteran who was injured and captured by the Iraqi forces on March 23rd 2003. Both her capture and rescue by United States Special Operation Forces generated a high level of news coverage depicting her as both a super hero and damsel in distress. Later Lynch charged the U.S government as embellishing her capture as propaganda to disguise the lack of planning and training for U.S. soliders in supposedly non-combat positions.

5

Lynndie England a former United State Army reservist was convicted in the 2005 Army court-marital for the torture and abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. Although there were ten other soldiers who stood trial and were convicted alongside England, her images, such as England standing in front of a pyramid of naked prisoners, were rendered as the iconic images of the political scandal.

Short Biography

Lorraine Dowler is an associate professor of geography and women's studies at Penn State University. Her interests focus in the intersections of gender, militarization and war. She is the author of several publications focusing on issues of gender and war in Northern Ireland. Her current research project is a feminist examination of the critical geopolitics the Cold War, the War on Terror and The New Military. This research project examines how individual women and men were/are viewed as ethical or deviant as their actions were interpreted by way of adaptation or transgression of the national moral landscape. As part of this analysis Dr. Dowler has conducted extensive interviews with women who trained to be astronauts during the NASA Mercury program, contemporary women firefighters and female soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Dr. Dowler has conducted research focused on issues of gender, war and nationalism, in Northern Ireland, China, Cuba and Chad.

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S. Hall (Ed)

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The Work of Representation

pp. 15-64

T. Hall (Ed), (1997) Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, London: SAGE in association with The Open University

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presentation meaning and language

In this chapter we will be concentrating on one of the key processes in the 'cultural circuit' (see du **Gay, Hall et al.,** 1997, and the Introduction to this volume) – the practices of *representation.* The aim of this chapter is to introduce you to this topic, and to explain what it is about and why we give it such importance in cultural studies.

The concept of representation has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture. Representation connects meaning and language to culture. But what exactly do people mean by it? What does representation have to do with culture and meaning? One common-sense usage of the term is as follows: 'Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people.' You may well ask, 'Is that all?' Well, yes and no. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It *does* involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things. But this is a far from simple or straightforward process, as you will soon discover.

How does the concept of representation connect meaning and language to culture? In order to explore this connection further, we will look at a number of different theories about how language is used to represent the world. Here we will be drawing a distinction between three different accounts or theories: the *reflective,* the *intentional* and the *constructionist* approaches to representation. Does language simply reflect a meaning which already exists out there in the world of objects, people and events *(reflective)?* Does language express only what the speaker or writer or painter wants to say, his or her personally intended meaning *(intentional)?* Or is meaning constructed in and through language *[constructionist)?*

You will learn more in a moment about these three approaches.

Most of the chapter will be spent exploring the *constructionist* approach, because it is this perspective which has had the most significant impact on cultural studies in recent years. This chapter chooses to examine two major variants or models of the constructionist approach – the *semiotic* approach, greatly influenced by the great Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the *discursive* approach, associated with the French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault. Later chapters in this book will take up these two theories again, among others, so you will have an opportunity to consolidate your understanding of them, and to apply them to different areas of analysis. Other chapters will introduce theoretical paradigms which apply constructionist approaches in different ways to that of semiotics and Foucault. All, however, put in question the very nature of representation.
We turn to this question first.

g mean resenting things

What does the word **representation** really mean, in this context? What does the process of representation involve? How does representation work?

representation

To put it briefly, representation is the production of meaning through language. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* suggests two relevant meanings for the word:

1 To represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses; as, for example, in the sentence, 'This picture represents the murder of Abel by Cain.'

2 To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for; as in the sentence, 'In Christianity, the cross represents the suffering and crucifixion of Christ.'

The figures in the painting *stand in the place of*, and at the same time, *stand for* the story of Cain and Abel. Likewise, the cross simply consists of two wooden planks nailed together; but in the context of Christian belief and teaching, it takes on, symbolizes or comes to stand for a wider set of meanings about the crucifixion of the Son of God, and this is a concept we can put into words and pictures.

Here is a simple exercise about representation. Look at any familiar object in the room. You will immediately recognize what it is. But how do you *know* what the object is? What does 'recognize' mean?

> Now try to make yourself conscious of what you are doing - observe what is going on as you do it. You recognize what it is because your thought- processes decode your visual perception of the object in terms of a concept of it which you have in your head. This must be so because, if you look away from the object, you can still *think* about it by conjuring it up, as we say, 'in your mind's eye'. Go on -try to follow the process as it happens: There is the object ... and there is the concept in your head which tells you what it is, what your visual image of it *means.*
>
> Now, tell me what it is. Say it aloud: 'It's a lamp' – or a table or a book or the phone or whatever. The concept of the object has passed through your mental representation of it to me *via* the word for it which you have just used. The word stands for or represents the concept, and can be used to reference or designate either a 'real' object in the world or indeed even some imaginary object, like angels dancing on the head of a pin, which no one has ever actually seen.

This is how you give meaning to things through language. This is how you 'make sense of' the world of people, objects and events, and how you are able to express a complex thought about those things to other people, or communicate about them through language in ways which other people are able to understand.

Why do we have to go through this complex process to represent our thoughts? If you put down a glass you are holding and walk out of the room, you can still *think* about the glass, even though it is no longer physically there. Actually, you can't think with a glass. You can only think with *the concept of* the glass. As the linguists are fond of saying, 'Dogs bark. But the concept of "dog" cannot bark or bite.' You can't speak with the actual glass, either. You can only speak with the *word* for glass GLASS which is the linguistic sign which we use in English to refer to objects which you drink water out of. This is where *representation* comes in. Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer to* either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events.

systems of representation

So there are *two* processes, two **systems of representation,** involved. First, there is the 'system' by which all sorts of objects, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or *mental representations* which we carry around in our heads. Without them, we could not interpret the world meaningfully at all. In the first place, then, meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or 'represent' the world, enabling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads.

Before we move on to look at the second 'system of representation', we should observe that what we have just said is a very simple version of a rather complex process. It is simple enough to see how we might form concepts for things we can perceive people or material objects, like chairs, tables and desks. But we also form concepts of rather obscure and abstract things, which we can't in any simple way see, feel or touch. Think, for example, of our concepts of war, or death, or friendship or love. And, as we have remarked, we also form concepts about things we never have seen, and possibly can't or won't ever see, and about people and places we have plainly made up. We may have a clear concept of, say, angels, mermaids, God, the Devil, or of Heaven and Hell, or of Middlemarch (the fictional provincial town in George Eliot's novel), or Elizabeth (the heroine of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice).*

We have called this a *'system* ofrepresentation'. That is because it consists, not of individual concepts, but of different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them. For example, we use the principles of similarity and difference to establish relationships between concepts or to distinguish them from one another. Thus I have an idea that in some respects birds are like planes in the sky, based on the fact that they are similar because they both fly -but I also have an idea that in other respects they are different, because one is part of nature whilst the other is man-made. This mixing and matching of relations between concepts to form complex ideas and thoughts is possible because our concepts are arranged into different classifying systems. In this example, the first is based on a distinction between flying/not flying and the second is based on the distinction between natural/man-made. There are other principles of organization like this at work in all conceptual systems: for example, classifying according to sequence – which concept follows which or causality what causes what and so on. The point here is that we are talking about, not just a random collection of concepts, but concepts organized, arranged and classified into complex relations with one another. That is what our conceptual system actually is like. However, this does not undermine the basic point. Meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world – people, objects and events, real or fictional and the conceptual system, which can operate as *mental representations* of them.

Now it could be the case that the conceptual map which I carry around in my head is totally different from yours, in which case you and I would interpret or make sense of the world in totally different ways. We would be incapable of sharing our thoughts or expressing ideas about the world to each other. In fact, each of us probably does understand and interpret the world in a unique and individual way. However, we are able to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways. That is indeed what it means when we say we 'belong to the same culture'. Because we interpret the world in roughly similar ways, we are able to build up a shared culture of meanings and thus construct a social world which we inhabit together. That is why 'culture' is sometimes defined in terms of 'shared meanings or shared conceptual maps' (see **du** Gay, **Hall et al.,** 1997).

However, a shared conceptual map is not enough. We must also be able to represent or exchange meanings and concepts, and we can only do that when we also have access to a shared language. Language is therefore the second system of representation involved in the overall process of constructing meaning. Our shared conceptual map must be translated into a common language, so that we can correlate our concepts and ideas with certain written words, spoken sounds or visual images. The general term we use for words, sounds or images which carry meaning is *signs*. These signs stand for or represent the concepts and the conceptual relations between them which we carry around in our heads and together they make up the meaning-systems of our culture.

Signs are organized into languages and it is the existence of common languages which enable us to translate our thoughts (concepts) into words, sounds or images, and then to use these, operating as a language, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people. Remember that the term 'language' is being used here in a very broad and inclusive way. The writing system or the spoken system of a particular language are both obviously 'languages'. But so are visual images, whether produced by hand, mechanical, electronic, digital or some other means, when they are used to express meaning. And so are other things which aren't 'lnguistic' in any ordinary sense: the 'language' of facial expressions or of gesture, for example, or the 'language''of fashion, of clothes, or of traffic lights. Even music is a 'language', with complex relations between different sounds and chords, though it is a very special case since it can't easily be used to reference actual things or objects in the world (a point further elaborated in **du Gay,** ed., 1997, and **Mackay,** ed., 1997). Any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning is, from this point of view, 'a language'. It is in this sense that the model of meaning which I have been analysing here is often described as a 'linguistic' one; and that all the theories of meaning which follow this basic model are described as belonging to 'the linguistic turn' in the social sciences and cultural studies.

At the heart of the meaning process in culture, then, are two related 'systems of representation'. The first enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or a .chain of equivalences between things – people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. and our system of concepts, our conceptual maps. The second depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts. The relation between 'things', concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call 'representation'.

Language and representation

Just as people who belong to the same culture must share a broadly similar conceptual map, so they must also share the same way of interpreting the signs of a language, for only in this way can meanings be effectively exchanged between people. But how do we know which concept stands for which thing? Or which word effectively represents which concept? How do I know which sounds or images will carry, through language, the meaning of my concepts and what I want to say with them to you? This may seem relatively simple in the case of visual signs, because the drawing, painting, camera or TV image of a sheep bears a resemblance to the animal with a woolly coat grazing in a field to which I want to refer. Even so, we need to remind ourselves that a drawn or painted or digital version of a sheep is not exactly like a 'real' sheep. For one thing, most images are in two dimensions whereas the 'real' sheep exists in three dimensions.

Visual signs and images, even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted. In order to interpret them, we must have access to the two systems of representation discussed earlier: to a conceptual map which correlates the sheep in the field with the concept of a 'sheep'; and a language system which in visual language, bears some resemblance to the real thing or 'looks like it' in some way. This argument is clearest if we think of a cartoon drawing or an abstract painting of a 'sheep', where we need a very

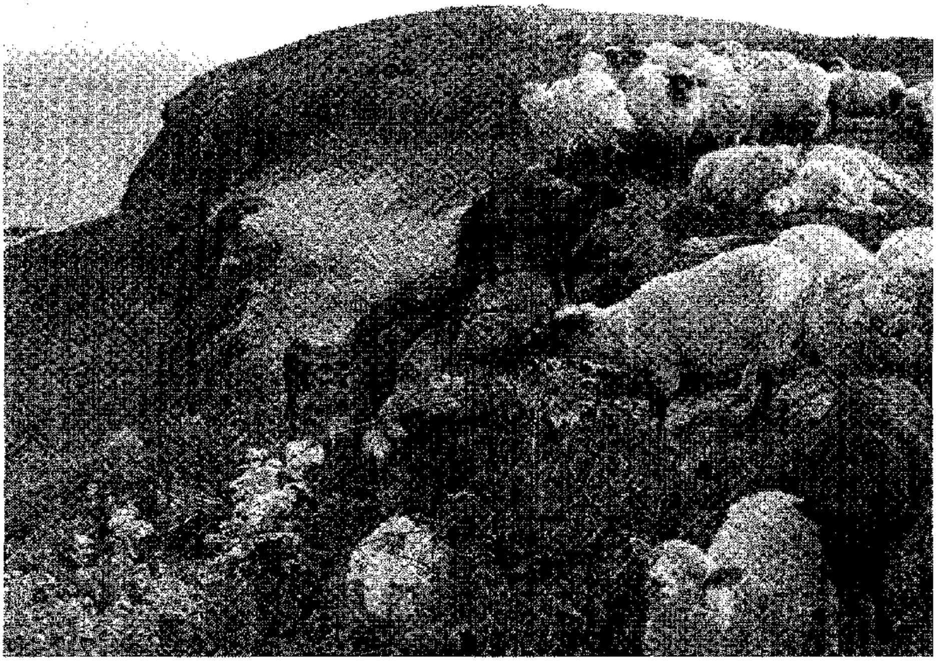


FIGURE 1.1

William Holman Hunt, *Our English* Coasts *('Strayed Sheep'),* 1852.

sophisticated conceptual and shared linguistic system to be certain that we are all 'reading' the in the same way. Even then we may find ourselves wondering whether it really is a picture of a sheep at all. As the relationship between the sign its referent becomes clear-cut, the meaning begins to slip and slide away from us into uncertainty. Meaning is no longer transparently passing from one person to another ...

So, even in the case of visual language, where the relationship between the concept and the sign seems fairly straightforward, the matter is far from simple. It is even more difficult with written or spoken language, where words don't look or sound anything like the things to which they refer. In part, this is because there are different kinds signs. Visual signs are what are called *iconic* signs.
That is, they bear, in their form, a certain resemblance to the object, person or event to which they refer. A photograph of a tree reproduces some of the actual conditions of our visual perception in the visual sign. Written or spoken signs, on the other hand, are what is called *indexicaL*

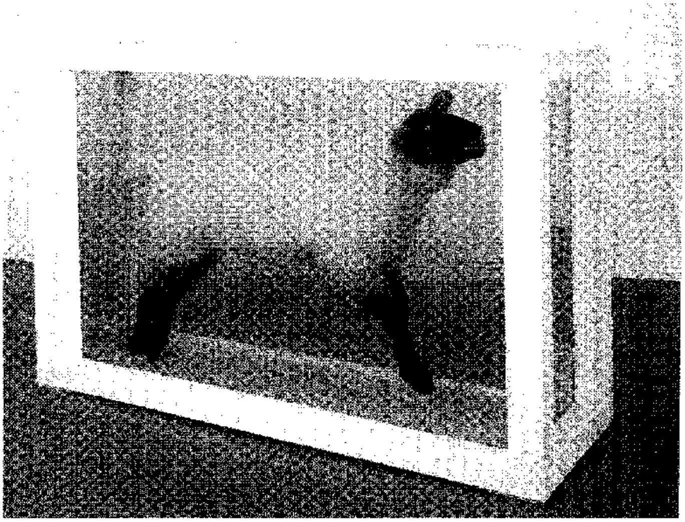


FIGURE 1.2

Q: When is a sheep not a sheep!

A: When it's a work of art.

(Damien Hirst, *Away from* the *Flock*, 1 994).

They bear no obvious relationship at all to the things to which they refer. The letters T,R,E,E, do not look anything like trees in Nature, nor does the word 'tree' in English sound like 'real' trees (if indeed they make any sound at all!). The relationship in these systems of representation between the sign, the concept and the object to which they might be used to refer is entirely *arbitrary*. By 'arbitrary' we mean that in principle any collection of letters or any sound in any order would do the trick equally well. Trees would not mind if we used the word SEERT – 'trees' written backwards – to represent the concept of them. This is clear from the fact that, in French, quite different letters and a quite different sound is used to refer to what, to all appearances, is the same thing – a 'real' tree – and, as far as we can **tell**, to the same concept a large plant that grows in nature. The French and English seem to be using the same concept. But the concept which in English is represented by the word, TREE, is represented in French by the word, ARBRE.

Sharing the codes

The question, then, is: how do people who belong to the same culture, who share the same conceptual map and who speak or write the same language (English) know that the arbitrary combination of letters and sounds that makes up the word, TREE, will stand for or represent the concept 'a large plant that grows in nature'? One possibility would be that the objects in the world themselves embody and fix in some way their 'true' meaning. But it is not at all clear that real trees *know* that they are trees, and even less clear that they know that the word in English which represents the concept of themselves is written TREE whereas in French it is written ARBRE! As far as they are concerned, it could just as well be written COW or VACHE or indeed XYZ. The meaning is *not* in the object or person or thing, nor is it *in* the word. It is we who fix the meaning so firmly that, after a while, it comes to seem natural and inevitable. The meaning is *constructed by the system of representation.* It is constructed and fixed by the *code,* which sets up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system in such a way that, every time we think of a tree, the code tells us to use the English word TREE, or the French word ARBRE. The code tells us that, in our culture -that is, in our conceptual and language codes the concept 'tree' is represented by the letters T,R,E,E, arranged in a certain sequence, just as in Morse code, the sign for V (which in World War II Churchill made 'stand for' or represent 'Victory') is Dot, Dot, Dot, Dash, and in the 'language of traffic lights', Green = Go! and Red Stop!

,,, One way of thinking about 'culture', then, is in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the *codes which govern the relationships of translation between them.* Codes fix the relationships between concepts and signs. They stabilize meaning within different languages and cultures. They tell us which language to use to convey which idea. The reverse is also true. Codes tell us which concepts are being referred to when we hear or read which signs. By arbitrarily fixing the relationships between our conceptual system and our linguistic systems (remember, 'linguistic' in a broad sense), codes make it possible for us to speak and to hear intelligibly, and establish the translatability between our concepts and our languages which enables meaning to pass from speaker to hearer and be effectively communicated within a culture. This translatability is not given by nature or fixed by the gods. It is the result of a set of social conventions. It is fixed socially, fixed in culture. English or French or Hindi speakers have, over time, and without conscious decision or choice, come to an unwritten agreement, a sort of unwritten cultural covenant that, in their various languages, certain signs will stand for or represent certain concepts. This is what children learn, and how they become, not simply biological individuals but cultural subjects. They learn the system and conventions of representation, the codes of their language and culture, which equip them with cultural 'know-how' enabling them to function as culturally competent subjects. Not because such knowledge is imprinted in their genes, but because they learn its conventions and so gradually *become* 'cultured persons' – i.e. members of their culture. They unconsciously internalize the codes which allow them to express certain concepts and ideas through their systems of representation – writing, speech, gesture, visualization, and so on and to interpret ideas which are communicated to them using the same systems.

You may find it easier to understand, now, why meaning, language and representation are such critical elements in the study of culture. To belong to a culture is to belong to roughly the same conceptual and linguistic universe, to know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language can be interpreted to refer to or *reference* the world. To share these things is to see the world from within the same conceptual map and to make sense of it through the same language systems. Early anthropologists of language, like Sapir and Whorf, took this insight to its logical extreme when they argued that we are all, as it were, locked into our cultural perspectives or 'mind-sets', and that language is the best clue we have to that conceptual universe. This observation, when applied to all human cultures, lies at the root of what, today, we may think of as cultural or linguistic *relativism.*

ACTIVITY 2

You might like to think further about this question of how different cultures conceptually classify the world and what implications this has for meaning and representation.

The English make a rather simple distinction between sleet and snow. The Inuit (Eskimos) who have to survive in a very different, more extreme and hostile climate, apparently have many more words for snow and snowy weather. Consider the list of Inuit terms for snow from the Scott Polar Research Institute in Table 1.1. There are many more than in English, making much finer and more complex distinctions. The Inuit have a complex classificatory conceptual system for the weather compared with the English. The novelist Peter Hoeg, for example, writing about Greenland in his novel, *Miss Smilla's Feeling For* Snow- (1994, pp. 5-6), graphically describes 'frazzil ice' which is 'kneaded together into a soapy mash called porridge ice, which gradually forms free-floating plates, pancake ice, which one, cold, noonday hour, on a Sunday, freezes into a single solid sheet'. Such distinctions are too fine and elaborate even for the English who are always talking about the weather! The question, however, is do the Inuit actually experience snow differently from the English? Their language system suggests they conceptualize the weather differently. But how far is our experience actually bounded by our linguistic and conceptual universe?

Table I.I Inuit terms for snow and ice

snow	s	watery —	
	u		
	g		
blowing —	ar		piqtuluk
is snowstorming	-		piqtuluktuq
	w		qanik
	at		qaniktuq
	erl		
-is falling; is	og		
light falling	ge		qaniaraqtuq
	d,		
light — is falling	m		
first layer of -in fall	us		
soft	hy		
			mauya
packed -to make water	1s	into *masak*	aniu
light soft —			aquluraq

pukak masak
masaguqtuaq
maqayak

ice
-- pan, broken
— ice water
melts
flat
glare
piled
rough
shore
—

shorefast
slush
young
to make water candle —

siku
siqumniq
immiugaq
immiuqtuaq
illauyiniq
qaimiq
quasaq
ivunrit
iwuit
tuvaq
quna
sikuliaq

wet	misak
wet	qanikkuk
wet — is falling	qanikkuktuq
drifting along a surface	natiruvik
––is drifting along a surface	natiruviktuaq
— lying on a surface	apun
snowflake	qanik
is being drifted over with —	

One implication of this argument about cultural codes is that, if meaning is the result, not of something fixed out there, in nature, but of our social, cultural and linguistic conventions, then meaning can never be *finally* fixed. We can all 'agree' to allow words to carry somewhat different meanings as we have for example, with the word 'gay', or the use, by young people, of the word 'wicked!' as a term of approval. Of course, there must be *some* fixing of meaning in language, or we would never be able to understand one another. We can't get up one morning and suddenly decide to represent the concept of a 'tree' with the letters or the word VYXZ, and expect people to follow what we are saying. On the other hand, there is no absolute or final fixing of meaning. Social and linguistic conventions do change over time. In the language of modern managerialism, what we used to call 'students', 'clients', 'patients' and 'passengers' have all become 'customers'. Linguistic codes vary significantly between one language and another. Many cultures do not have words for concepts which are normal and widely acceptable to us. Words constantly go out of common usage, and new phrases are coined: think, for example, of the use of 'down-sizing' to represent the process of firms laying people off work. Even when the actual words remain stable, their connotations shift or they acquire a different nuance. The problem is especially acute in translation. For example, does the difference in English between *know* and *understand* correspond exactly to and capture exactly the same conceptual distinction as the French make between *savoir* and *connaitre?* Perhaps; but can we be sure?

The main point is that meaning does not inhere in things, in the world. It is constructed, produced. It is the result of a signifying practice -a practice that *produces* meaning, that *makes things mean.*

Theories of representation

There are broadly speaking three approaches to explaining how representation of meaning through language works. We may call these the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist or constructivist approaches. You might think of each as an attempt to answer the questions, 'where do meanings come from?' and 'how can we tell the "true" meaning of a word or image?'

In the **reflective approach**, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to *reflect* the true meaning as it already exists in the world. As the poet Gertrude Stein once said, 'A rose is a rose is a rose'. In the fourth century BC, the Greeks used the notion of *mimesis* to explain how language, even drawing and painting, mirrored or imitated Nature; they thought of Homer's great poem, *The Iliad*, as 'imitating' a heroic series of events. So the theory which says that language works by simply reflecting or imitating the truth that is already there and fixed in the world, is sometimes called 'mimetic'.

reflective or
mimetic approach

Of course there is a certain obvious truth to mimetic theories of representation and language. As we've pointed out, visual signs do bear some relationship to the shape and texture of the objects which they represent. But, as was also pointed out earlier, a two-dimensional visual image of a *rose* is a sign it should not be confused with the real plant with thorns and blooms growing in the garden. Remember also that there are many words, sounds and images which we fully well understand but which are entirely fictional or fantasy and refer to worlds which are wholly imaginary – including, many people now think, most of *The Iliad!* Of course, I can use the word 'rose' to *refer* to real, actual plants growing in a garden, as we have said before. But this is because I know the code which links the concept with a particular word or image. I cannot *think* or *speak* or *draw* with an actual rose. And if someone says to me that there is no such word as 'rose' for a plant in her culture, the actual plant in the garden cannot resolve the failure of communication between us. Within the conventions of the different language codes we are using, we are both right – and for us to understand each other, one of us must learn the code linking the flower with the word for it in the other's culture.

Intentional approach

The second approach to meaning in representation argues the opposite case. It holds that it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. Words mean what the author intends they should mean. This is the **intentional approach.** Again, there is some point to this argument since we all, as individuals, do use language to convey or communicate things which are special or unique to us, to our way of seeing the world. However, as a general theory of representation through language, the intentional approach is also flawed. We cannot be the sole or unique source of meanings in language, since that would mean that we could express ourselves in entirely private languages. But the essence of language is communication and that, in turn, depends on shared linguistic conventions and shared codes. Language can never be wholly a private game. Our private intended meanings, however personal to us, have to *enter into the rules, codes and conventions of language* to be shared and understood. Language is a social system through and through. This means that our private thoughts have to negotiate with all the other meanings for words or images which have been stored in language which our use of the language system will inevitably trigger into action.

The third approach recognizes this public, social character of constructionist approach

language. It acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Things don't *mean:* we *construct* meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs. Hence it is called the constructivist or **constructionist approach** to meaning in language. According to this approach, we must not confuse the *material* world, where things and people exist, and the *symbolic* practices and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate. Constructivists do not deny the existence of the material world. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others.

Of course, signs may also have a material dimension. Representational systems consist of the actual *sounds* we make with our vocal chords, the *images* we make on light-sensitive paper with cameras, the *marks* we make with paint on canvas, the digital *impulses* we transmit electronically.
Representation is a practice, a kind of 'work', which uses material objects and

effects. But the *meaning* depends, not on the material quality of the sign, but on its *symbolic function.* It is because a particular sound or word *stands for, symbolizes or represents* a concept that it can function, in language, as a sign and convey meaning or, as the constructionists say, signify (sign-i-fy).

The language of traffic lights

The simplest example of this point, which is critical for an understanding of how languages function as representational systems, is the famous traffic lights example. A traffic light is a machine which produces different coloured lights in sequence. The effect of light of different wavelengths on the eye – which is a natural and material phenomenon – produces the sensation of different colours. Now these things certainly do exist in the material world. But it is our culture which breaks the spectrum of light into different colours, distinguishes them from one another and attaches names – Red, Green, Yellow, Blue to them. We use a way of *classifying* the colour spectrum to create colours which are different from one another. We *represent* or symbolize the different colours and classify them according to different colour-concepts. This is the conceptual colour system of our culture. We say 'our culture' because, of course, other cultures may divide the colour spectrum differently. What's more, they certainly use different actual *words* or *letters* to identify different colours: what we call 'red', the French call 'rouge' and so on. This is the linguistic code the one which correlates certain words (signs) with certain colours (concepts), and thus enables us to communicate about colours to other people, using 'the language of coloms'.

But how do we use this representational or symbolic system to regulate the traffic? Colours do not have any 'true' or fixed meaning

in that sense. Red does not mean 'Stop' in nature, any more than Green means 'Go'. In other settings, Red may stand for, symbolize or represent 'Blood' or 'Danger' or 'Communism'; and Green may represent 'Ireland' or 'The Countryside' or 'Environmentalism'. Even these meanings can change. In the 'language of electric plugs', Red used to mean 'the connection with the positive charge' but this was arbitrarily and without explanation changed to Brown! But then for many years the producers of plugs had to attach a slip of paper telling people that the code or convention had changed, otherwise how would they
know? Red and Green work in the language of traffic lights because 'Stop' and 'Go' are the meanings which have been assigned to them in our culture by the code or conventions governing this language, and this code is widely known and almost universally obeyed in our culture and cultures like ours though we can well imagine other cultures which did not possess the code, in which this language would be a complete mystery.

Let us stay with the example for a moment, to explore a little further how, according to the constructionist approach to representation, colours and the 'language of traffic lights' work as a signifying or representational system.
Recall the *two* representational systems we spoke of earlier. First, there is the conceptual map of colours in our culture the way colours are distinguished

from one another, classified and arranged in our mental universe. Secondly, there are the ways words or images are correlated with colours in our language – our linguistic colour-codes. Actually, of course, a *language* of colours consists of more than just the individual words for different points on the colour spectrum. It also depends on how they function in relation to one another -the sorts of things which are governed by grammar and syntax in written or spoken languages, which allow us to express rather complex ideas. In the language of traffic lights, it is the sequence and position of the colours, as well as the colours themselves, which enable them to carry meaning and thus function as signs.

Does it matter which colours we use? No, the constructionists argue. This is because what signifies is not the colours themselves but (a) the fact that they are different and can be distinguished from one another; and (b) the fact that they are organized into a particular sequence – Red followed by Green, with sometimes a warning Amber in between which says, in effect, 'Get ready! Lights about to change.' Constructionists put this point in the following way. What signifies, what carries meaning -they argue – is not each colour in itself nor even the concept or word for it. It is *the difference between Red and Green* which signifies. This is a very important principle, in general, about representation and meaning, and we shall return to it on more than one occasion in the chapters which follow. Think about it in these terms. If you couldn't differentiate between Red and Green, you couldn't use one to mean 'Stop' and the other to mean 'Go'. In the same way, it is only the difference between the letters P and T which enable the word SHEEP to be linked, in the English language code, to the concept of 'the animal with four legs and a woolly coat', and the word SHEET to 'the material we use to cover ourselves in bed at night'.

In principle, any combination of colours like any collection of letters in written language or of sounds in spoken language would do, provided they are sufficiently different not to be confused. Constructionists express this idea by saying that all signs are 'arbitrary'. 'Arbitrary' means that there is no natural relationship between the sign and its meaning or concept. Since Red only means 'Stop' because that is how the code works, in principle any colour would do, including Green. It is the code that fixes the meaning, not the colour itself. This also has wider implications for the theory of representation and meaning in language. It means that signs themselves cannot fix meaning. Instead, meaning depends on *the relation between* a sign and a concept which is fixed by a code. Meaning, the constructionists would say, is 'relational'.

ACTIVITY 3

Why not test this point about the arbitrary nature of the sign and the importance of the code for yourself? Construct a code to govern the movement of traffic using two different colours Yellow and Blue – as in the following:

> When the yellow light is showing, ...
>
> Now add an instruction allowing pedestrians and cyclists only to cross, using Pink.

Provided the code tells us clearly how to read or interpret each colour, and everyone agrees to interpret them in this way, any colour will do. These are just colours, just as the word SHEEP is just a jumble of letters. In French the same animal is referred to using the very different linguistic sign MOUTON. Signs are arbitrary. Their meanings are fixed by codes.

As we said earlier, traffic lights are machines, and colours are the material effect of light-waves on the retina of the eye. But objects – things – can also function as signs, provided they have been assigned a concept and meaning within our cultural and linguistic codes. As signs, they work symbolically they represent concepts, and signify. Their effects, however, are felt in the material and social world. Red and Green function in the language of traffic lights as signs, but they have real material and social effects. They regulate the social behaviour of drivers and, without them, there would be many more traffic accidents at road intersections.

We have come a long way in exploring the nature of representation. It is time to summarize what we have learned about the constructionist approach to representation through language.

Representation is the production of meaning through language. In representation, constructionists argue, we use signs, organized into

languages of different kinds, to communicate meaningfully with others. Languages can use signs to symbolize, stand for or reference objects, people and events in
the so-called 'real' world. But they can also reference imaginary things and fantasy worlds or abstract ideas which are not in any obvious sense part of our material world. There is no simple relationship of reflection, imitation or one-to-one correspondence between language and the real world. The world is not accurately or otherwise reflected in the mirror of language. Language does not work like a mirror. Meaning is produced within language, in and through various representational systems which, for convenience, we call 'languages'. Meaning is produced by the practice, the 'work', of representation. It is constructed through signifying i.e. meaning-producing
practices.

How does this take place? In fact, it depends on two different but related systems of representation. First, the concepts which are formed in the mind function as a system of mental representation which classifies and organizes the world into meaningful categories. If we have a concept for something, we can say we know its 'meaning'. But we cannot communicate this meaning without a second system of representation, a language. Language consists of signs organized into various relationships. But signs can only convey meaning if we possess codes which allow us to translate our concepts into language – and vice versa. These codes are crucial for meaning and representation. They do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions. They are a crucial part of our culture -our shared 'maps of meaning' – which we learn and unconsciously internalize as we become members of our culture. This constructionist approach to language thus introduces the symbolic domain of life, where words and things function as signs, into the very heart of social life itself.

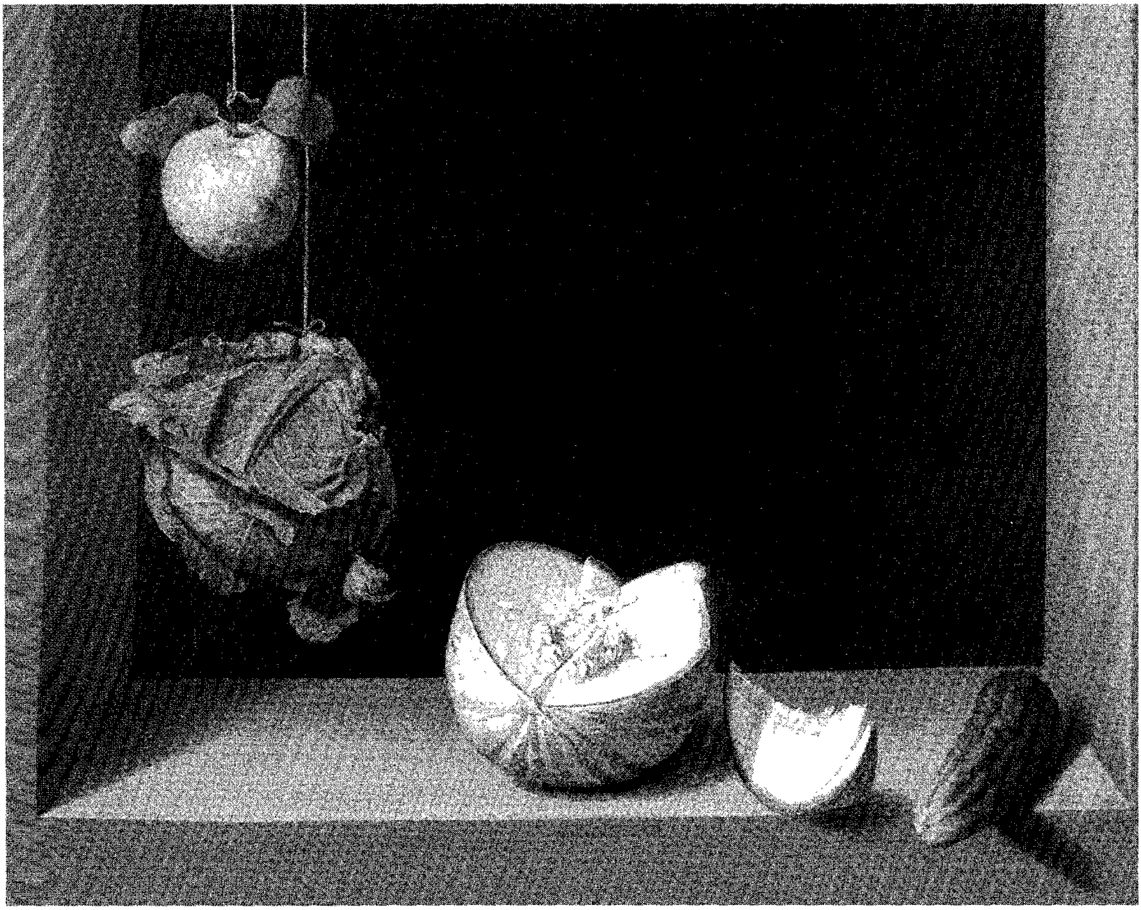
ACTIVITY

All this may seem rather abstract. But we can quickly demonstrate its relevance by an example from painting.

Look at the painting of a still life by the Spanish painter, Juan Sanchez Cotan (1521-1627), entitled *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber* (Figure 1.3). It seems as if the painter has made every effort to use the 'language of painting' accurately to reflect these four objects, to capture or 'imitate nature'. Is this, then, an example of a *reflective* or *mimetic* form of representation – a painting reflecting the 'true meaning' of what already exists in Cotan's kitchen? Or can we find the operation of certain codes,

FIGURE 1.3

Juan Cotan, *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber*, c. 1602.



the language of painting used to produce a certain meaning? Start with the question, what does the painting mean to you? What is it 'saying'? Then go on to ask, how is it saying it -how does representation work in th,is painting?

Write down any thoughts at all that come to you on looking at the painting. What do these objects say to you? What meanings do they trigger off?

Now read the edited extract from an analysis of the still life by the art critic and theorist, Norman Bryson, included as Reading A at the end of this chapter. Don't be concerned, at this stage, if the language seems a little difficult and you don't understand all the terms. Pick out the main points about the way *representation* works in the painting, according to Bryson.

Bryson is by no means the only critic of Cot<:in's painting, and certainly doesn't provide the only 'correct' reading of it. That's not the point. The point of the example is that he helps us to see how, even in a still life,
the 'language of painting' does *not* function simply to reflect or imitate a meaning which is already there in nature, but to *produce meanings.*
The act of painting is a *signifying practice.* Take note, in particular, of what Bryson says about the following points:

1 the way the painting invites you, the viewer, to look -what he calls its 'mode of seeing'; in part, the function of the language is to position you, the viewer, in a certain relation to meaning.

2 the relationship to *food* which is posed by the painting.

3 how, according to Bryson, 'mathematical form' is used by Cotan to *distort* the painting so as to bring out a particular

meaning. Can a distorted meaning in painting be 'true'?

4 the meaning of the difference between 'creatural' and 'geometric' space: the language of painting creates its own kind of space.

If necessary, work through the extract again, picking up these specific points.

Saussure's legacy

The social constructionist view of language and representation which we have been discussing owes a great deal to the work and influence of the Swiss linguist, Saussure, who was born in Geneva in 1857, did much of his work in Paris, and died in 1913. He is known as the 'father of modern linguistics'.

For our purposes, his importance lies, not in his detailed work in linguistics, but in his general view of representation and the way his model of language shaped the *semiotic* approach to the problem of representation in a wide variety of cultural fields. You will recognize much about Saussure's thinking from what we have already said about the *constructionist* approach.

For Saussure, according to Jonathan Culler (1976, p. 19), the production of meaning depends on language: 'Language is a system of signs.' Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, etc. function as signs within language 'only when they serve to express or communicate ideas ... [ToJ communicate ideas, they must be part of a system of conventions ...' (ibid.). Material objects can function as signs and communicate meaning too, as we saw from the 'language of traffic lights' example. In an important move, Saussure analysed the sign i:cto two further elements. There was, he argued, the *form* (the actual word, image, photo, etc.), and there was the *idea or concept* in y-lli-head with which the form was associated. Saussure called thi'.J first element, the signifier, and the second element the corresponding concept it triggered off in your head – the signified. Every time you hear or read or see the *signifier* (e.g. the word or image of a *Walkman,* for example), it correlates with the *signified* (the concept of a portable cassette-player in your head). Both are required to produce meaning but it is the relation between them, fixed by our cultural and linguistic codes, which sustains representation. Thus 'the sign is the union of a form which signifies *(signifier)* ... and an idea signified *(signified).* Though we may speak ... as if they are separate entities, they exist only as components of the sign ... (which is) the central fact of language' (Culler, 1976, p. 19).

Saussure also insisted on what in section 1we called the arbitrary nature of the sign: 'There is no natural or inevitable link between the signifier and the signified' (ibid.). Signs do not possess a fixed or essential meaning. What signifii.es, according to Saussure, is not RED or the essence of 'red-ness', but *the difference between RED* *and GREEN*. Signs, Saussure argued 'are members of a system and are defined in relation to the other members of that system.' For example, it is hard to define the meaning of FATHER except in relation to, and in terms of its difference from, other kinship terms, like MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON and so on.

This marking of difference within language is fundamental to the production of meaning, according to Saussure. Even at a simple level (to repeat an earlier example), we must be able to distinguish, within language, between SHEEP and SHEET, before we can link one of those words to the concept of an animal that produces wool, and the other to the concept of a cloth that covers a bed. The simplest way of marking difference is, of course, by means of a binary opposition -in this example, all the letters are the same except P and T. Similady, the meaning of a concept or word is often defined in relation to its direct opposite as in night/day. Later critics of Saussure were to observe that binaries (e.g. *black/white)* are only one, rather simplistic, way of establishing difference. As well as the stark difference between *black* and *white,* there are also the many other, subtler differences between *black* and *dark grey*, *dark grey* and *light grey*, *grey* and *cream* and *off-white*, *off-white* and

brilliant white, just as there are between *night, dawn, daylight, noon, dusk,* and so on. However, his attention to binary oppositions brought Saussure to the revolutionary proposition that a language consists of signifiers, but in order to produce meaning, the signifiers have to be organized into 'a system of differences'. It is the differences between signifiers which signify.

Furthermore, the relation between the *signifier* and the *signified*, which is fixed by our cultural codes, is not – Saussure argued – permanently fixed. Words shift their meanings. The concepts (signifieds) to which they refer also change, historically, and every shift alters the conceptual map of the culture, leading different cultures, at different historical moments, to classify and think about the world differently. For many centuries, western societies have associated the word BLACK with everything that is dark, evil, forbidding, devilish, dangerous and sinful. And yet, think of how the perception of black people in America in the 1960s changed after the phrase 'Black is Beautiful' became a popular slogan – where the *signifier*, BLACK, was made to signify the exact opposite meaning *(signified)* to its previous associations. In Saussure's terms, 'Language sets up an arbitrary relation between signifiers of its own choosing on the one hand, and signifieds of its own choosing on the other. Not only does each language produce a different set of signifiers, articulating and dividing the continuum of sound (or writing or drawing or photography) in a distinctive way; each language produces a different set of signifieds; it has a distinctive and thus arbitrary way of organizing the world into concepts and categories' (Culler, 1976, p. 23).

The implications of this argument are very far-reaching for a theory of representation and for our understanding of culture. If the relationship between a signifier and its signified is the result of a system of social conventions specific to each society and to specific historical moments – then all meanings a.re produced within history and culture. They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is thus no single, unchanging, universal 'true meaning'. 'Because it is arbitrary, the sign is totally subject to history and the combination at the particular moment of a given signifier and signified is a contingent result of the historical process' (Culler, 1976, p. 36). This opens up meaning and representation, in a radical way, to history and change. It is true that Saussure himself focused exclusively on the state of the language system at one moment of time rather than looking at linguistic change over time. However, for our purposes, the important point is the way this approach to language *unfixes* meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant 'play' or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations.

However, if meaning changes, historically, and is never finally fixed, then it follows that 'taking the meaning' must involve an active process of **interpretation.** Meaning has to be actively 'read' or 'interpreted'.

interpretation

Consequently, there is a necessary and inevitable imprecision about language. The meaning we take, as viewers, readers or audiences, is never exactly the meaning which has been given by the speaker or writer or by other viewers. And since, in order to say something meaningful, we have to 'enter language', where all sorts of older meanings which pre-date us, are already stored from previous eras, we can never cleanse language completely, screening out all the other, hidden meanings which might modify or distort what we want to say. For example, we can't entirely prevent some of the negative connotations of the word BLACK from returning to mind when we read a headline like, 'WEDNESDAY A BLACK DAY ON THE STOCK EXCHANGE', even if this was not intended. There is a constant *sliding of meaning* in all interpretation, a margin – something in excess of what we intend to say in which other meanings overshadow the statement or the text, where other associations are awakened to life, giving what we say a different twist. So interpretation becomes an essential aspect of the process by which meaning is given and taken. The *reader* is as important as the *writer* in the production of meaning. Every signifier given or encoded with meaning has to be meaningfully interpreted or decoded by the receiver (Hall, 1980). Signs which have not been intelligibly received and interpreted are not, in any useful sense, 'meaningful'.

The social part of language

Saussure divided language into two parts. The first consisted of the general rules and codes of the linguistic system, which all its users must share, if it is to be of use as a means of communication. The rules are the principles which we learn when we learn a language and they enable us to use language to say whatever we want. For example, in English, the preferred word order is subject-verb-object ('the cat sat on the mat'), whereas in Latin, the verb usually comes at the end. Saussure called this underlying rule-governed structure of language, which enables us to produce well-formed sentences, the ***langue*** (the language system). The second part consisted of the particular acts of speaking or writing or drawing, which – using the structure and rules of the *langue* – are produced by an actual speaker or writer. He called this ***parole.*** *'La langue* is the system of language, the language as a system of forms, whereas *parole* is actual speech [or writing], the speech acts which are made possible by the language' (Culler, 1976, p. 29).

structuralist

For Saussure, the underlying structure of rules and codes *(langue)* was the social part of language, the part which could be studied with the law-like precision of a science because of its closed, limited nature. It was his preference for studying language at this level of its 'deep structure' which made people call Saussure and his model of language, **structuralist.** The second part of language, the individual speech-act or utterance *(parole),* he regarded as the 'surface' of language. There were an infinite number of such possible utterances. Hence, *parole* inevitably lacked those structural properties – forming a closed and limited set -which would have enabled us to study it 'scientifically'. What made Saussure's model appeal to many later scholars was the fact that the closed, structured character of language at the level of its rules and laws, which, according to Saussure, enabled it to be studied scientifically, was combined with the capacity to be free and unpredictably creative in our actual speech acts. They believed he had offered them, at last, a scientific approach to that least scientific object of inquiry culture.

In separating the social part of language *(langue)* from the individual act of communication *(parole),* Saussure broke with our common-sense notion of how language works. Our common-sense intuition is that language comes from within us – from the individual speaker or writer; that it is this speaking or writing subject who is the author or originator of meaning. This is what
we called, earlier, the *intentional* model of representation. But according to Saussure's schema, each authored statement only becomes possible because the 'author' shares with other language-users the common rules and codes of the language system the *langue* – which allows them to communicate with each other meaningfully. The author decides what she wants to say. But she cannot 'decide' whether or not to use the rules of language, if she wants to be understood. We are born into a language, its codes and its meanings.
Language is therefore, for Saussure, a social phenomenon. It cannot be an individual matter because we cannot make up the rules of language individually, for ourselves. Their source lies in society, in the culture, in our shared cultural codes, in the language system – not in nature or in the individual subject.

We will move on in section 3 to consider how the constructionist approach to representation, and in particular Saussure's linguistic model, was applied to a wider set of cultural objects and practices, and evolved into the *semiotic* method which so influenced the field. First we ought to take account of some of the criticisms levelled at his position.

Critique of Saussure's model

Saussure's great achievement was to force us to focus on language itself, as a social fact; on the process of representation itself; on how language actually works and the role it plays in the production of meaning. In doing so, he saved language from the status of a mere transparent medium between *things* and *meaning*. He showed, instead, that representation was a practice.

However, in his own work, he tended to focus almost exclusively on the two aspects of the sign -*signifier* and *signified*. He gave little or no attention to how this relation between *signifier/signified* could serve the purpose of what earlier we called *reference* – Le. referring us to the world of things, people and events outside language in the 'real' world. Later linguists made a distinction between, say, the meaning of the word BOOK and the use of the word to refer to a *specific* book lying before us on the table. The linguist,

Charles Sanders Pierce, whilst adopting a similar approach to Saussure, paid greater attention to the relationship between signifiers/signifieds and what he called their *referents*. What Saussure called signification really involves *both* meaning and reference, but he focused mainly on the former.

Another problem is that Saussure tended to focus on the *formal* aspects of language – how language actually works. This has the great advantage of making us examine representation as a practice worthy of detailed study in its own right. It forces us to look at language for itself, and not just as an empty, transparent, 'window on the world'. However, Saussure's focus on language may have been too exclusive. The attention to its formal aspects did divert attention away from the more interactive and dialogic features of languagelanguage as it is actually used, as it functions in actual situations, in dialogue between different kinds of speakers. It is thus not surprising that, for Saussure, questions of *power* in language – for example, between speakers of different status and positions – did not arise.

As has often been the case, the 'scientific' dream which lay behind the structuralist impulse of his work, though influential in alerting us to certain aspects of' how language works, proved to be illusory. Language is *not* an object which can be studied with the law-like precision of a science. Later cultural theorists learned from Saussure's 'structuralism' but abandoned its scientific premise. Language remains rulegoverned. But it is not a 'closed' system which can be reduced to its formal elements. Since it is constantly changing, it is by definition *open-ended.* Meaning continues to be produced through language in forms which can never be predicted beforehand and its 'sliding', as we described it above, cannot be halted. Saussure may have been tempted to the former view because, like a good structuralist, he tended to study the state of' the language system at one moment, as if it had stood still, and he could halt the flow of' language-change. Nevertheless it is the case that many of those who have been most influenced by Saussure's radical break with all reflective and intentional models of' representation, have built on his work, not by imitating his scientific and 'structuralist' approach, but by applying his model in a much looser, more open-ended – i.e. 'post- structuralist' -way.

Summary

How far, then, have we come in our discussion of' theories of' *representation?*

We began by contrasting three different approaches. The *reflective* or *mimetic* approach proposed a direct and transparent relationship of imitation or reflection between words (signs) and things. The *intentional* theory reduced representation to the intentions of its author or subject. The *constructionist* theory proposed a complex and mediated relationship between things in the world, our concepts in thought and language. We have focused at greatest length on this approach. The correlations between these levels the material, the conceptual and the signifying are governed by our cultural and linguistic codes and it is this set of' interconnections which produces meaning. We then showed how much this general model of how systems of representation work in the production of' meaning owed to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Here, the key point was the link provided by the codes between the forms of expression used by language (whether speech, writing, drawing, or other types of representation) -which Saussure called the *signifiers* and the mental concepts associated with them -the *signifieds.*

The connection between these two systems of representation produced *signs;* and signs, organized into languages, produced meanings, and could be used to reference objects, people and events in the 'real' world.

3 From language to culture: linguistics to semiotics

Saussure's main contribution was to the study of linguistics in a narrow sense. However, since his death, his theories have been widely deployed, as a foundation for a general approach to language and meaning, providing a model of representation which has been applied to a wide range of cultural objects and practices. Saussure himself foresaw this possibility in his famous lecture-notes, collected posthumously by his students as the *Course in General Linguistics* (1960), where he looked forward to 'A science that studies the life of signs within society ... I shall call it semiology, from the Greek *semeion* "signs" ...' (p. 16). This general approach to the study of signs in culture, and of culture as a sort of 'language', which Saussure foreshadowed, is now generally known by the term **semiotics.**

The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that, since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs; and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amenable to an analysis which basically makes use of Saussure's linguistic concepts (e.g. the signifier/signified and *languel parole* distinctions, his idea of underlying codes and structures, and the arbitrary nature of the"sign). Thus, when in his collection of essays, *Mythologies* (1972), the French critic, Roland Barthes, studied 'The world of wrestling', 'Soap powders and detergents', 'The face of Greta Garbo' or 'The *Blue Guides* to Europe', he brought a *semiotic* approach to bear on 'reading' popular culture, treating these activities and objects as signs, as a language through which meaning is communicated. For example, most of us would think of a wrestling match as a competitive game or sport designed for one wrestler to gain victory over an opponent. Barthes, however, asks, not 'Who won?' but 'What is the meaning of this event?' He treats it as a *text* to be *read*. He 'reads' the exaggerated gestures of wrestlers as a grandiloquent language of what he calls the pure spectacle of excess.

semiotics

FIGURE 1.4

Wrestling as a language of 'excess'.

> You should now read the brief extract from Barthes's 'reading' of 'The world of wrestling', provided as Reading B at the end of this chapter.

In much the same way, the French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, studied the customs, rituals, totemic objects, designs, myths and folk-tales of so-called 'primitive' peoples in Brazil, not by analysing how these things were produced and used in the context of daily life amongst the Amazonian peoples, but in terms of what they were trying to 'say', what messages about the culture they communicated. He analysed their meaning, not by interpreting their content, but by looking at the underlying rules and codes through which such objects or practices produced meaning and, in doing so, he was making a classic Saussurean or structuralist 'move', from the *paroles* of a culture to the underlying structure, its *langue.* To undertake this kind of work, in studying the meaning of a television programme like *Eastenders*, for example, we would have to treat the pictures on the screen as signifiers, and use the code of the television soap opera as a *genre,* to discover how each image on the screen made use of these rules to 'say something' (signifieds) which the viewer could 'read' or interpret within the formal framework of a particular kind of television narrative (see the discussion and analysis of TV soap operas in Chapter 6).

In the semiotic approach, not only words and images but objects themselves can function as signifiers in the production of meaning. Clothes, for example, may have a simple physical function -to cover the body and protect it from the weather. But clothes also double up as signs. They construct a meaning and carry a message. An evening dress may signify 'elegance'; a bow tie and tails, 'formality'; jeans and trainers, 'casual dress'; a certain kind of sweater in the right setting, 'a long, romantic, autumn walk in the wood' (Barthes, 1967).

These signs enable clothes to convey meaning and to function like a language 'the language of fashion'. How do they do this?

ACTIVITY 5

Look at the example of clothes in a magazine fashion spread (Figure 1.5). Apply Saussure's model to analyse what the clothes are 'saying'? How would you decode their message? In particular, which elements are operating as *signifiers* and what concepts -*signifieds* -are you applying to them? Don't just get an overall impression -work it out in detail. How is the 'language of fashion' working in this example?

The clothes themselves are the *signifiers.* The fashion code in western consumer cultures like ours correlates particular kinds or combinations of clothing with certain concepts ('elegance', 'formality', 'casual-ness', 'romance'). These are the *signifieds.* This coding converts the clothes into *signs,* which can then be read as a language. In the language of fashion, the signifiers are arranged in a certain sequence, in certain relations to one another. Relations may be of similarity – certain items 'go together' (e.g. casual shoes with jeans). Differences are also marked no leather belts with evening wear. Some signs actually create meaning by exploiting 'difference': e.g. Doc Marten boots with flowing long skirt. These bits of clothing 'say something' – they convey meaning. Of course, not everybody reads fashion in the same way. There are differences of gender, age, class, 'race'. But all those who share the same fashion code will interpret the signs in roughly the same ways. 'Oh, jeans don't look right for that event. It's a formal occasion -it demands something more elegant.'

GUCCI
denota_or
connotation

You may have noticed that, in this example, we have moved from the very narrow linguistic level from which we drew examples in the first section, to a wider, cultural level. Note, also, that two linked operations are required to complete the representation process by which meaning is produced. First, we need a basic *code* which links a particular piece of material which is cut and sewn in a particular way *(signifier)* to our mental concept ofit *(signified)* say a particular cut of material to our concept of 'a dress' or 'jeans'. (Remember that only some cultures would 'read' the signifier in this way, or indeed possess

level, which links these signs to broader, cultural themes, concepts or meanings

Denotation is the simple, basic, descriptive level, where consensus is wide and most people would agree on the meaning ('dress', 'jeans'). At the second level – *connotation* -these signifiers which we have been able to 'decode' at a simple level by using our conventional conceptual classifications of dress to read their meaning, enter a wider, second kind of code -'the language of fashion' -which connects them to broader themes and meanings, linking them with what, we may call the wider *semantic fields* of our culture: ideas of 'elegance', 'formality', 'casualness' and 'romance'. This second, wider meaning is no longer a descriptive level of obvious interpretation. Here we are beginning to interpret the completed signs in terms of the wider realms of

FIGURE l.S

Advertisement for Gucci, in *Vogue*, September 1995.

social ideology -the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society. This second level of signification, Barthes suggests, is more 'general, global and diffuse ...'. It deals with 'fragments of an ideology... These signifieds have a very close communication with culture, knowledge, history and it is through them, so to speak, that the environmental world [of the culture] invades the system [ofrepresentation]' (Barthes, 1967, pp. 91-2).

Myth today

In his essay 'Myth today', in *Mythologies,* Barthes gives another example which helps us to see exactly how representation is working at this second, broader cultural level. Visiting the barbers' one day, Barthes is shown a copy of the French magazine *Paris Match,* which has on its cover a picture of 'a young Negro in a French uniform saluting with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on the fold of the tricolour' (the French flag) (1972b, p. 116). At the first level, to get any meaning at all, we need to decode each of the signifiers in the image into their appropriate concepts: e.g. a soldier, a uniform, an arm raised, eyes lifted, a French flag. This yields a set of signs with a simple, literal message or meaning: *a black soldier is giving the French flag a salute* (denotation). However, Barthes argues that this image also has a wider, cultural meaning. If we ask, 'What is *Paris Match* telling us by using this picture of a black soldier saluting a French flag?', Barthes suggests that we may come up with the message: *'that France is a great Empire, and that all persons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors '* (connotation) (ibid.).

Whatever you think of the actual 'message' which Barthes finds, for a proper semiotic analysis you must be able to outline precisely the different steps by which this broader meaning has been produced. Barthes argues that here representation takes place through two separate but linked processes. In the first, the signifiers (the elements of the image) and the signifieds (the concepts – soldier, flag and so on) unite to form a sign with a simple denoted message: *a black soldier is giving the French flag a salute.* At the second stage, this completed message or sign is linked to a second set of signifieds

a broad, ideological theme about French colonialism. The first, completed meaning functions as the signifier in the second stage of the representation process, and when linked with a wider theme by a reader, yields a second, more elaborate and ideologically framed message or meaning. Barthes gives this second concept or theme a name – he calls it 'a purposeful mixture of "French imperiality" and "militariness"'. This, he says, adds up to a 'message' about French colonialism and her faithful Negro soldier-sons.

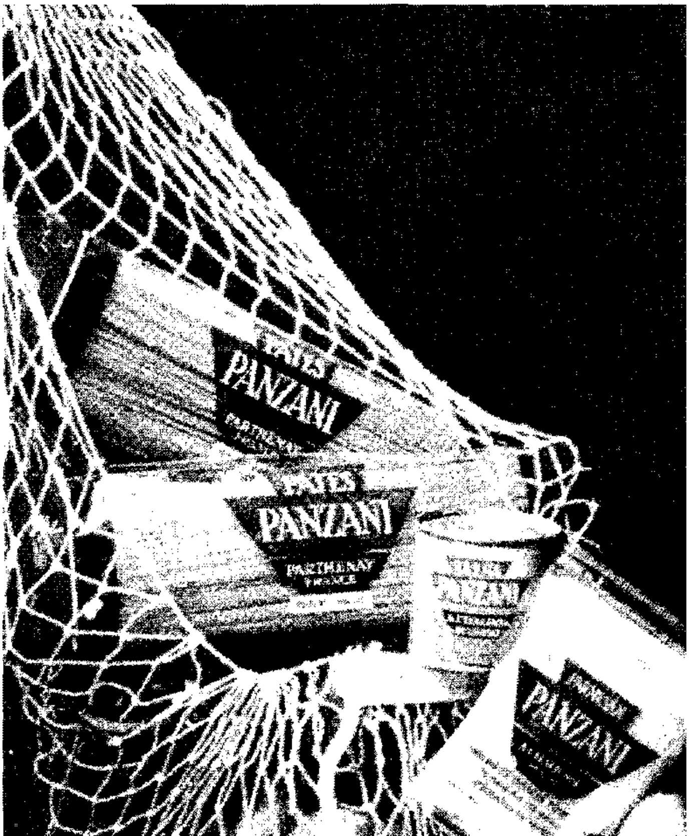
Barthes calls this second level of signification the level of *myth.* In this reading, he adds, 'French imperiality is the very drive behind the myth. The concept reconstitutes a chain of causes and effects, motives and intentions ...

Through the concept ... a whole new history ... is implanted in the myth ... the concept of French imperiality ... is again tied to the totality of the world: to the general history of France, to its colonial adventures, to its present difficulties' (Barthes, 1972b, p. 119).

> Turn to the short extract from 'Myth today' (Reading C at the end of this chapter), and read Barthes's account of how myth functions as a system of representation. Make sure you understand what Barthes means by 'two staggered systems' and by the idea that myth is a 'meta-language' (a second-order language).

For another example of this two-stage process of signification, we can turn now to another of Barthes's famous essays.

> Now, look carefully at the advertisement for *Panzani* products (Figure 1.6) and, with Barthes's analysis in mind, do the following exercise:
>
> 1 What *signifiers* can you identify in the ad?
>
> 2 What do they mean? What are their *signifieds*?
>
> 3 Now, look at the ad as a whole, at the level of 'myth'. What is its wider,

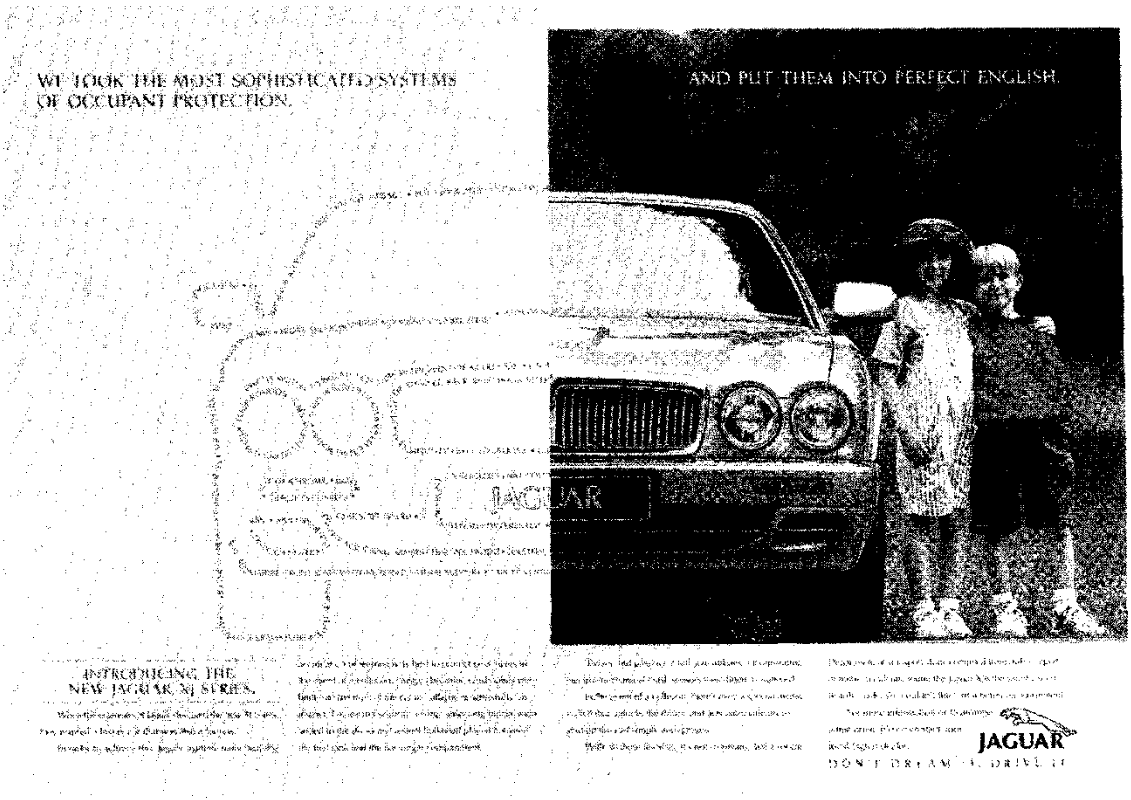


cultural message or theme? Can you construct one?

Now read the second extract from Barthes, in which he offers an interpretation of the *Panzani* ad for spaghetti and vegetables in a string bag as a 'myth' about Italian national culture. The extract from 'Rhetoric of the image', in *Image-Music-Text* (1977), is included as Reading D at the end of this chapter.

FIGURE 1.6

'Italian-ness' and the *Panzani* ad.


WE TOOK THE MOST SOPHISTICATED SYSTEMS
OF OCCUPANT PROTECTION.
AND PUT THEM INTO PERFECT ENGLISH.
JAGUAR
INTRODUCING THE
NEW JAGUAR XJ SERIES.
JAGUAR
DON'T DREAM IT. DRIVE IT.

Barthes suggests that we can read the *Panzani* ad as a 'myth' by linking its completed message *(this is a picture of some packets of pasta, a tin, a sachet, some tomatoes, onions, peppers, a mushroom, all emerging from a half-open string bag)* with the cultural theme or concept of 'Italianicity' (or as we would say, 'Italian-ness'). Then, at the level of the myth or meta-language, the Panzani ad becomes a message about the *essential meaning of Italian-ness as a national culture.* Can commodities really become the signifiers for myths of nationality? Can you think of ads, in magazines or television, which work in the same way, drawing on the myth of 'Englishness'? Or 'Frenchness'? Or 'American-ness'? Or 'Indian-ness'? Try to apply the idea of 'Englishness' to the ad reproduced as Figure 1.7.

Discourse, power and the subject

What the examples above show is that the semiotic approach provides a method for analysing how visual representations convey meaning. Already, in Roland Barthes's work in the 1960s, as we have seen, Saussure's 'linguistic' model is developed through its application to a much wider field of signs and representations (advertising, photography, popular culture, travel, fashion, etc.). Also, there is less concern with how individual words function as signs in language, more about the application of the language model to a much broader set of cultural practices. Saussure held out the promise that the whole domain of meaning could, at last, be systematically mapped. Barthes, too, had a 'method', but his semiotic approach is much more loosely and interpretively applied; and, in his later work (for example, *The Pleasure of the Text,* 1975), he is more concerned with the 'play' of meaning and desire across texts than he is with the attempt to fix meaning by a scientific analysis of language's rules and laws.

Subsequently, as we observed, the project of a 'science of meaning' has appeared increasingly untenable. Meaning and representation seem to belong irrevocably to the interpretative side of the human and cultural sciences, whose subject matter society, culture, the human subject -is not amenable to a positivistic approach (i.e. one which seeks to discover scientific laws about society). Later developments have recognized the necessarily interpretative nature of culture and the fact that interpretations never produce a final moment of absolute truth. Instead, interpretations are always followed by other interpretations, in an endless chain. As the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, put it, writing always leads to more writing.
Difference, he argued, can never be wholly captured within any binary system (Derrida, 1981). So any notion of a *final* meaning is always endlessly put off, deferred. Cultural studies of this interpretative kind, like other qualitative forms of sociological inquiry, are inevitably caught up in this 'c.ircle of meaning'.

In the semiotic approach, representation was understood on the basis of the way words functioned as signs within language. But, for a start, in a culture, meaning often depends on larger units of analysis – narratives, statements, groups of images, whole discourses which operate across a variety of texts, areas of knowledge about a subject which have acquired widespread authority. Semiotics seemed to confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static, system. Subsequent developments became more concerned with representation as a source for the production of social *knowledge* a more open system, connected in more intimate ways with social practices and questions of power. In the semiotic approach, the subject was displaced from the centre of language. Later theorists returned to the question of the subject, or at least to the empty space which Saussure's theory had left; without, of course, putting him/her back in the centre, as the author or source of meaning. Even if language, in some sense, 'spoke us' (as Saussure tended to argue) it was also important that in certain historical moments, some people had more power to.speak about some subjects than others (male doctors about mad female patients in the late nineteenth century, for example, to take one of the key examples developed in the work of Michel Foucault). Models of representation, these critics argued, ought to focus on these broader issues of knowledge and power.

Foucault used the word 'representation' in a narrower sense than we are using it here, but he is considered to have contributed to a novel and significant general approach to the problem of representation. What concerned him was the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning) discourse

through what he called **discourse** (rather than just language). His project, he said, was to analyse 'how human beings understand themselves in our culture' and how our knowledge about 'the social, the embodied individual and shared meanings' comes to be produced in different periods. With its emphasis on cultural understanding and shared meanings, you can see that Foucault's project was still to some degree indebted to Saussure and Barthes (see Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 17) while in other ways departing radically from them. Foucault's work was much more historically grounded, more attentive to historical specificities, than the semiotic approach. As he said, 'relations of power, not relations of meaning' were his main concern.

The particular objects of Foucault's attention were the various disciplines of knowledge in the human and social sciences – what he called 'the subjectifying social sciences'. These had acquired an increasingly prominent and influential role in modern culture and were, in many instances, considered to be the discourses which, like religion in earlier times, could give us the 'truth' about knowledge.

We will return to Foucault's work in some of the subsequent chapters in this book (for example, Chapter 5). Here, we want to introduce Foucault and the *discursive* approach to representation by outlining three of his major ideas:

hfa coni:;ept of *discourse;* the issue of *power and knowledge;* and the question

––––..::::.__

bject. It might be useful, however, to start by giving you a general flavour, in Foucault's graphic (and somewhat over-stated) terms, of how he saw his project differing from that of the semiotic approach to representation. He moved away from an approach like that of Saussure and Barthes, based on 'the domain of signifying structure', towards one based on analysing what he called 'relations of force, strategic developments and tactics':

> Here I believe one's point of reference should not be to the great model of language *(langue)* and signs, but to that of war and battle: The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power not relations of meaning ...
>
> (Foucault, 1980, pp. 114-5)

Rejecting both Hegelian Marxism (what he calls 'the dialectic') and semiotics, Foucault argued that:

> Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradictions, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. 'Dialectic' is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and 'semiology' is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and lethal character by reducing it to the calm Platonic form of language and dialogue.
>
> (ibid.)

From language to discourse

The first point to note, then, is the shift of attention in Foucault from 'language' to 'discourse', He studied not language, but *discourse* as a system of representation. Normally, the term 'discourse' is used as a linguistic concept. It simply means passages of connected writing or speech. Michel Foucault, however, gave it a different meaning. What interested him were the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods. By 'discourse', Foucault meant 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. ... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But ... since all social practices entail *meaning,* and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect' (Hall, 1992, p. 291). It is important to note that the concept of *discourse* in this usage is not purely a 'linguistic' concept. It is about language *and* practice. It attempts to overcome the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice). Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others.. Just as a discourse 'rules in' certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write, or conduct oneself, so also, by definition, it 'rules out', limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it. Discourse, Foucault argued, never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source. The same discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any one time (what Foucault called the *episteme),* will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society. However, whenever these discursive events 'refer to the same object, share the same

discursive formation

style and ... support a strategy ... a common institutional, administrative or political drift and pattern' (Cousins and Hussain, 1984, pp. 84-5), then they are said by Foucault to belong to the same **discursive formation,**

Meaning and meaningful practice is therefore constructed within discourse. Like the semioticians, Foucault was a 'constructionist'. However, unlike them, he was concerned with the tion of knowledge and aning, not t but through discourse. There were therefore similarities, but also substantive differences etween these two versions.

The idea that 'discourse produces the objects of knowledge' and that nothing which is meaningful exists *outside discourse,* is at first sight a disconcerting proposition, which seems to run right against the grain of common-sense thinking. It is worth spending a moment to explore this idea further. Is Foucault saying -as some of his critics have charged -that *nothing exists outside of discourse?* In fact, Foucault does *not* deny that things can have a real, material existence in the world. What he does argue is that *'nothing has any meaning outside of discourse'* (Foucault, 1972). As Laelau and Mouffe put it, 'we use [the term discourse] to emphasize the fact that every social configuration is *meaningful'* (1990, p. 100), The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from.

Turn now to Reading E, by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, a short extract from *New Reflections on the Revolution of our* Time (1990), from which we have just quoted, and read it carefully. What they argue is that physical objects *do* exist, but they have no fixed meaning; they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge *within discourse.* Make sure you follow their argument before reading further.

3 In terms of the discourse about 'building a wall', the distinction between the linguistic part (asking for a brick) and the physical act (putting the brick in place) does not matter. The first is linguistic, the second is physical. But *both* are 'discursive' -meaningful within discourse.

4 The round leather object which you kick is a physical object – a ball. But it only becomes 'a football' within the context of the rules of the game, which are socially constructed.

3 Itis impossible to determine the meaning of an object outside of its context ofuse. A stone thrown in a fight is a different thing ('a projectile') from a stone displayed in a museum ('a piece of sculpture').

This idea that physical things and actions exist, but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse, is at the heart of the *constructionist* theory of meaning and representation. Foucault argues that since we can only have a knowledge of things if they have a meaning, it is discourse – not the things-in-themselves – which produces knowledge. Subjects like 'madness', 'punishment' and 'sexuality' only exist meaningfully *within* the discourses about them. Thus, the study of the discourses of madness, punishment or sexuality would have to include the following elements:

1. statements about 'madness', 'punishment' or 'sexuality' which give us a certain kind of knowledge about these things;
2. the rules which prescribe certain ways of talking about these topics and exclude other ways -which govern what is 'sayable' or 'thinkable' about insanity, punishment or sexuality, at a particular historical moment;
3. 'subjects' who in some ways personify the discourse the madman, the hysterical woman, the criminal, the deviant, the sexually perverse person; with the attributes we would expect these subjects to have, given the way knowledge about the topic was constructed at that time;
4. how this knowledge about the topic acquires authority, a sense qf · embodying the 'truth' about it; constituting the 'truth of the matter', at a historical moment;

7 the practices within institutions for dealing with the subjects – medical treatment for the insane, punishment regimes for the guilty, moral discipline for the sexually deviant whose conduct is being regulated and organized according to those ideas;

8 acknowledgement that a different discourse or *episteme* will arise at a later historical moment, supplanting the existing one, opening up a new *discursive formation* , and producing, in its turn, new conceptions of 'madness' or 'punishment' or 'sexuality', new discourses with the power and authority, the 'truth', to regulate social practices in new ways.

practices

The main point to get hold of here is the way discourse, representation, knowledge and 'truth' are radically *historicized* by Foucault, in contrast to the rather ahistorical tendency in semiotics. Things meant something and were 'true', he argued, *only within a specific historical context.* Foucault did not believe that the same phenomena would be found across different historical periods. He thought that, in each period, discourse produced forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge, which differed radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them.

Thus, for Foucault, for example, mental illness was not an objective fact, which remained the same in all historical periods, and meant the same thing in all cultures. It was only *within* a definite discursive formation that the object, 'madness', could appear at all as a meaningful or intelligible construct. It was 'constituted by all that was said, in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its development, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own' (1972, p. 32). And it was only after a certain definition of 'madness' was put into practice, that the appropriate subject – 'the madman' as current medical and psychiatric knowledge defined 'him' – could appear.

Or, take some other examples of discursive practices from his work. There have always been sexual relations. But 'sexuality', as a specific way of talking about, studying and regulating sexual desire, its secrets and its fantasies, Foucault argued, only appeared in western societies at a particular historical moment (Foucault, 1978). There may always have been what we now call homosexual forms of behaviour. But 'the homosexual' as a specific kind of social subject, was *produced*, and could only make its appearance, within the moral, legal, medical and psychiatric discourses, practices and institutional apparatuses of the late nineteenth century, with their particular theories of sexual perversity (Weeks, 1981, 1985). Similarly, it makes nonsense to talk of the 'hysterical woman' outside of the nineteenth-century view of hysteria as a very widespread female malady. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), Foucault charted how 'in less than half a century, the medical understanding of disease was transformed' from a classical notion that disease existed separate from the body, to the modern idea that disease arose within and could be mapped directly by its course through the human body (McNay, 1994). This discursive shift changed medical practice. It gave greater importance to the doctor's 'gaze' which could now 'read' the course of disease simply by a powerful look at what Foucault called 'the visible body' of the patient – following the 'routes·... laid down in accordance with a now familiar geometry ... the anatomical atlas' (Foucault, 1973, pp. 3-4). This greater knowledge increased the doctor's power of surveillance vis-a-vis the patient.

Knowledge about and practices around *all* these subjects, Foucault argued, were historically and culturally specific. They did not and could not meaningfully exist outside specific discourses, i.e. outside the ways they were represented in discourse, produced in knowledge and regulated by the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of a particular society and time. Far from accepting the trans-historical continuities of which historians are so fond, Foucault believed that more significant were the radical breaks, ruptures and discontinuities between one period and another, between one discursive formation and another.

discou [illegible] power knowledge

In his later work Foucault became even more concerned with how knowledge was put to work through discursive practices in specific institutional settings to regulate the conduct of others: He focused on the relationship between knowledge and power, and how power operated within what he called an institutional *apparatus* and its *technologies* (techniques). Foucault's conception of the *apparatus* of punishment, for example, included a variety of diverse elements, linguistic and non-linguistic – 'discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality, philanthropy, etc. ... The apparatus is thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain co-ordinates of knowledge. ... This is what the apparatus consists in: strategies of relations of forces supporting and supported by types of knowledge' (Foucault, 1980b, pp. 194, 196).

This approach took as one of its key subjects of investigation the relations between knowledge, power and the body in modern society. It saw knowledge as always inextricably enmeshed in relations of power because it was always being applied to the regulation of social conduct in practice (i.e. to particular 'bodies'). This foregrounding of the relation between discourse, knowledge and power marked a significant development in the *constructionist* approach to representation which we have been outlining. It rescued representation from the clutches of a purely formal theory and gave it a historical, practical and 'worldly' context of operation.

You may wonder to what extent this concern with discourse, knowledge and power brought Foucault's interests closer to those of the classical sociological theories of ideology, especially Marxism with its concern to identify the class positions and class interests concealed within particular forms of knowledge. Foucault, indeed, does come closer to addressing some of these questions about ideology than, perhaps, formal semiotics did (though Roland Barthes was also concerned with questions of ideology and myth, as we saw earlier). But Foucault had quite specific and cogent reasons why he rejected the classical Marxist problematic of 'ideology'. Marx had argued that, in every epoch, ideas reflect the economic basis of society, and thus the 'ruling ideas' are those of the ruling class which governs a capitalist economy, and correspond to its dominant interests. Foucault's main argument against the classical Marxist theory of ideology was that it tended to reduce all the relation between knowledge and power to a question of *class* power and *class* interests. Foucault did not deny the existence of classes, but he was strongly opposed to this powerful element of economic or class *reductionism* in the Marxist theory of ideology. Secondly, he argued that Marxism tended to contrast the 'distortions' of bourgeois knowledge, against its own claims to 'truth' -Marxist science. But Foucault did not believe that *any* form of thought could claim an absolute 'truth' of this kind, outside the play of discourse. *All* political and social forms of thought, he believed, were inevitably caught up in the interplay of knowledge and power. So, his work rejects the traditional Marxist question, 'in whose class interest does language, representation and power operate?'

Later theorists, like the Italian, Antonio Gramsci, who was influenced by Marx but rejected class reductionism, advanced a definition of 'ideology' which is considerably closer to Foucault's position, though still too preoccupied with class questions to be acceptable to him. Gramsci's notion was that particular social groups struggle in many different ways, including ideologically, to win the consent of other groups and achieve a kind of ascendancy in both thought and practice over them. This form of power Gramsci called hegemony. Hegemony is never permanent, and is

hegemony

not reducible to economic interests or to a simple class model of society. This has some similarities to Foucault's position, though on some key issues they differ radically. (The question of hegemony is briefly addressed again in Chapter 4.)

What distinguished Foucault's position on discourse, knowledge and power from the Marxist theory of class interests and ideological 'distortion'?
Foucault advanced at least two, radically novel, propositions.

1 *Knowledge, power and truth*

The first concerns the way Foucault conceived the linkage between knowledge and power. Hitherto, we have tended to think that power operates in a direct and brutally repressive fashion, dispensing with polite things like culture and knowledge, though Gramsci certainly broke with that
model of power. Foucault argued that not only is knowledge always a form of power, but power is implicated in the questions of whether and in what circumstances knowledge is to be applied or not. This question of the

power/knowledge

application and *effectiveness* of **power/knowledge** was more important, he thought, than the question of its 'truth'.

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to *make itself true.* All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true'. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practices. Thus, 'There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations' XFoucault, 1977a, p. 27).

According to Foucault, what we think we 'know' in a particular period about, say, crime has a bearing on how we regulate, control and punish criminals.
Knowledge does not operate in a void. It is put to work, through certain technologies and strategies of application, in specific situations, historical contexts and institutional regimes. To study punishment, you must study how the combination of discourse and power – power/knowledge – has produced a certain conception of crime and the criminal, has had certain real effects both for criminal and for the punisher, and how these have been set into practice in certain historically specific prison regimes.

regimes of truth

This led Foucault to speak, not of the 'Truth' of knowledge in the absolute sense – a Truth which remained so, whatever the period, setting, context – but of a discursive formation sustaining a **regime of truth.** Thus, it may or may not be true that single parenting inevitably leads to delinquency and crime. But if everyone believes it to be so, and punishes single parents accordingly, this will have real consequences for both parents and children and will become 'true' in terms of its real effects, even if in some absolute sense it has never been conclusively proven. In the human and social sciences, Foucault argued:

> Truth isn't outside power. ... Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned ... the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.
>
> (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

2 *New conceptions of power*

Secondly, Foucault advanced an altogether novel conception of power. We tend to think of power as always radiating in a single direction – from top to bottom – and coming from a specific source – the sovereign, the state, the ruling class and so on. For Foucault, however, power does not 'function in the form of a chain' - it circulates. It is never monopolized by one centre. It 'is deployed and exercised through a net-like organization' (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). This suggests that we are all, to some degree, caught up in its circulation – oppressors and oppressed. It does not radiate downwards, either from one source or from one place. Power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life – in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics, the economy and the law. What's more, power is not only negative, repressing what it seeks to control. It is also *productive.* It 'doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but ... it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be thought of as a productive network which runs through the whole social body' (Foucault, 1980, p. 119).

The punishment system, for example, produces books, treatises, regulations, new strategies of control and resistance, debates in Parliament, conversations, confessions, legal briefs and appeals, training regimes for prison officers, and so on. The efforts to control sexuality produce a veritable explosion of discourse talk about sex, television and radio programmes, sermons and legislation, novels, stories and magazine features, medical and counselling advice, essays and articles, learned theses and research programmes, as well as new sexual practices (e.g. 'safe' sex) and the pornography industry. Without denying that the state, the law, the sovereign or the dominant class may have positions of dominance, Foucault shifts our attention away from the grand, overall strategies of power, towards the many, localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates – what Foucault calls the 'meticulous rituals' or the 'micro-physics' of power. These power relations 'go right down to the depth of society' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27). They connect the way power is actually working on the ground to the great pyramids of power by what he calls a capillary movement (capillaries being the thin-walled vessels that aid the exchange of oxygen between the blood in our bodies and the surrounding tissues). Not because power at these lower levels merely reflects or 'reproduces, at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures and behaviour, the general form of the law or government' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27) but, on the contrary, because such an approach 'roots [power] in forms of behaviour, bodies and local relations of power which should not at all be seen as a simple projection of the central power' (Foucault, 1980, p. 201).

To what object are the micro-physics of power primarily applied, in Foucault's model? To the body. He places the body at the centre of the struggles between different formations of power/knowledge. The techniques of regulation are applied to the body. Different discursive formations and apparatuses divide, classify and inscribe the body differently in their respective regimes of power and 'truth'. In *Discipline and Punish,* for example, Foucault analyses the very different ways in which the body of the criminal is 'produced' and disciplined in different punishment regimes in France. In earlier periods, punishment was haphazard, prisons were places into which the public could wander and the ultimate punishment was inscribed violently on the body by means of instruments of torture and execution, etc. a practice the essence of which is that it should be public, visible to everyone. The modern form of disciplinary regulation and power, by contrast, is private, individualized; prisoners are shut away from the public and often from one another, though continually under surveillance from the authorities; and punishment is individualized. Here, the body has become the site of a new kind of disciplinary regime.

Of course this 'body' is not simply the natural body which all human beings possess at all times. This body is *produced* within discourse, according to the different discursive formations the state of knowledge about crime and the criminal, what counts as 'true' about how to change or deter criminal behaviour, the specific apparatus and technologies of punishment prevailing at the time. This is a radically historicized conception of the body a sort of surface on which different regimes of power/knowledge write their meanings and effects. It thinks of the body as 'totally imprinted by history and the processes of history's deconstruction of the body' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 63).

Summary: Foucault and representation

Foucault's approach to representation is not easy to summarize. He is concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning through discourse. Foucault does indeed analyse particular texts and representations, as the semioticians did. But he is more inclined to analyse the whole *discursive formation* to which a text or a practice belongs. His concern is with knowledge provided by the human and social sciences, which organizes conduct, understanding, practice and belief, the regulation of bodies as well as whole populations. Although his work is clearly done in the wake of, and profoundly influenced by, the 'turn to language' which marked the *constructionist* approach to representation, his definition of *discourse* is much broader than language, and includes many other elements of practice and institutional regulation which Saussure's approach, with its linguistic focus, excluded. Foucault is always much more historically specific, seeing forms of power/knowledge as always rooted in particular contexts and histories. Above all, for Foucault, the production of knowledge is always crossed with questions of power and the body; and this greatly expands the scope of what is involved in representation.

The major critique levelled against his work is that he tends to absorb too much into 'discourse', and this has the effect of encouraging his followers to neglect the influence of the material, economic and structural factors in the operation of power/knowledge. Some critics also find his rejection of any criterion of 'truth' in the human sciences in favour of the idea of a 'regime of truth' and the will-to-power (the will to make things 'true') vulnerable to the charge of relativism. Nevertheless, there is little doubt about the major impact which his work has had on contemporary theories of representation and meaning.

Charcot and the performance of hysteria

In the following example, we will try to apply Foucault's method to a particular example. Figure 1.8 shows a painting by Andre Brouillet of the famous French psychiatrist and neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-93), lecturing on the subject of female hysteria to students in the lecture theatre of his famous Paris clinic at La Salpetriere.

ACTIVITY

Look at Brouillet's painting (Figure 1.8). What does it reveal as a representation of the study of hysteria?

Brouillet shows a hysterical patient being supported by an assistant and attended by two women. For many years, hysteria had been traditionally identified as a female malady and although Charcot demonstrated conclusively that many hysterical symptoms were to be found in men, and a significant proportion of his patients were diagnosed male hysterics, Elaine Showalter observes that 'for Charcot, too, hysteria remains symbolically, if not medically, a female malady' (1987, p. 148). Charcot was a very humane man who took his patients' suffering seriously and treated them with dignity. He diagnosed hysteria as a genuine ailment rather than a malingerer's excuse (much as has happened, in our time, after many struggles, with other illnesses, like anorexia and ME). This painting represents a regular feature of Charcot's treatment regime, where hysterical female patients displayed before an audience of medical staff and students the symptoms of their malady, ending often with a full hysterical seizure.

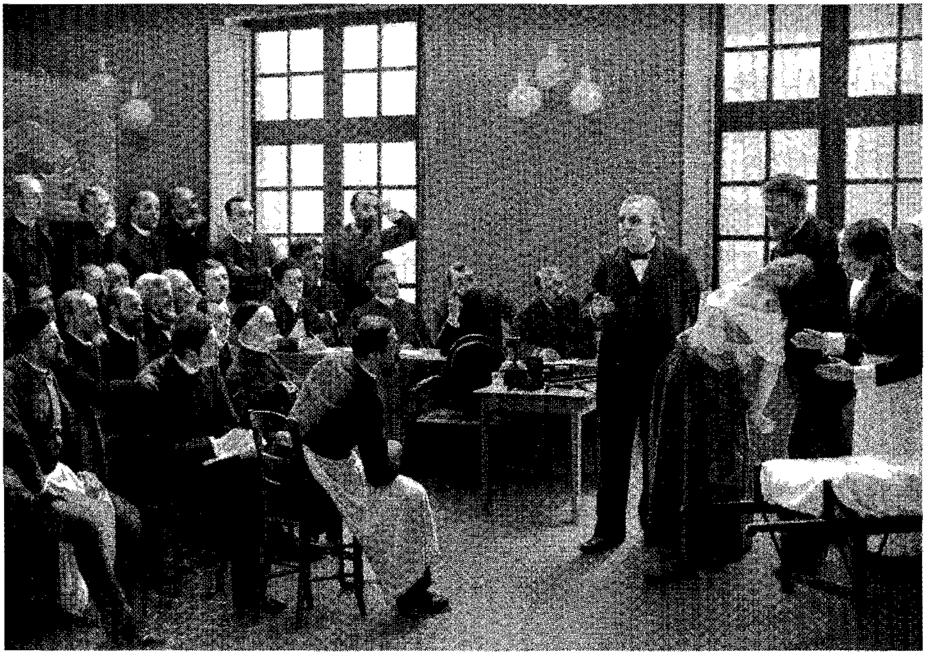


FIGURE 1.8 Andre Brouillet, *A clinical lesson at La Salpetriere (given by Charcot)*, 1887.

The painting could be said to capture and represent, visually, a discursive 'event' the emergence of a new regime of knowledge. Charcot's great distinction, which drew students from far and wide to study with him (including, in 1885, the young Sigmund Freud from Vienna), was his demonstration 'that hysterical symptoms such as paralysis could be produced and relieved by hypnotic suggestion' (Showalter, 1987, p. 148). Here we see the practice of hypnosis being applied in practice.

Indeed, the image seems to capture *two* such moments of knowledge production. Charcot did not pay much attention to what the patints said (though he observed their actions and gestures meticulously). But Freud and

his friend Breuer did. At first, in their work when they returned home, they used Charcot's hypnosis method, which had attracted such wide attention as a novel approach to treatment of hysteria at La Salpetriere. But some years later they treated a young woman called Bertha Pappenheim for hysteria, and she, under the pseudonym 'Anna O', became the first case study written up in Freud and Breuer's path-breaking *Studies in Hysteria* (1974/1895). It was the 'loss of words', her failing grasp of the syntax of her own language (German), the silences and meaningless babble of this brilliantly intellectual, poetic and imaginative but rebellious young woman, which gave Breuer and Freud the first clue that her linguistic disturbance was related to her resentment at her 'place' as dutiful daughter of a decidedly patriarchal father, and thus deeply connected with her illness. After hypnosis, her capacity to speak coherently returned, and she spoke fluently in three other languages, though not in her native German. Through her dialogue with Breuer, and her ability to 'work through' her difficult relationship in relation to language, 'Anna O' gave the first example of the 'talking cure' which, of course, then provided the whole basis for Freud's subsequent development of the psychoanalytic method. So we are looking, in this image, at the 'birth' of two new psychiatric *epistemes:* Charcot's method of hypnosis, and the conditions which later produced psychoanalysis.

The example also has many connections with the question of *representation.* In the picture, the patient is performing or 'representing' with her body the hysterical symptoms from which she is 'suffering'. But these symptoms are also being 're-presented' – in the very different medical language of diagnosis and analysis - to her (his?) audience by the Professor: a relationship which involves *power*. Showalter notes that, in general, 'the representation of female hysteria was a central aspect of Charcot's work' (p.148). Indeed, the clinic was filled with lithographs and paintings. He had his assistants assemble a photographic album of nervous patients, a sort of visual inventory of the various 'types' of hysterical patient. He later employed a professional photographer to take charge of the service. His analysis of the displayed symptoms, which seems to be what is happening in the painting, accompanied the hysterical 'performance'. He did not flinch from the spectacular and theatrical aspects associated with his demonstrations of hypnosis as a treatment regime. Freud thought that 'Every one of his "fascinating lectures"' was 'a little work of art in construction and composition'. Indeed, Freud noted, 'he never appeared greater to his listeners than after he had made the effort, by giving the most detailed account of his train of thought, by the greatest frankness about his doubts and hesitations, to reduce the gulf between teacher and pupil' (Gay, 1988, p. 49).

ACTIVITY 8

Now look carefully at the picture again and, bearing in mind what we have said about Foucault's method of and approach to representation, answer the following questions:

1 Who commands the centre of the picture?

2 Who or what is its 'subject? Are (1) and (2) the same?

3 Can you tell that knowledge is being produced here? How?

4 What do you notice about relations of power in the picture? How are they represented? How does the *form* and *spatial relationships* of the picture represent this?

5 Describe the 'gaze' of the people in the image: who is looking at whom? What does *that* tell us?

6 What do the age and gender of the participants tell us?

11 What message does the patient's body convey?

12 Is there a *sexual* meaning in the image? If so, what?

13 What is the relationship of you, the viewer, to the image?

14 Do you notice anything else about the image which we have missed'?

READING G -

Now read the account of Charcot and La Salpetriere offered by Elaine Showalter in 'The performance of hysteria' from *The Female Malady,* reproduced as Reading F at the end of this chapter. Look carefully at the two photographs of Charcot's hysterical women patients. What do you make of their captions?

Where is 'the subject'?

We have traced the shift in Foucault's work from language to discourse and knowledge, and their relation to questions of power. But where in all this, you might ask, is the subject? Saussure tended to abolish the subject from the question of representation. Language, he argued, speaks us. The subject appears in Saussure's schema as the author of individual speech-acts *[paroles).* But, as we have seen, Saussure did not think that the level of the *paroles* was one at which a 'scientific' analysis of language could be conducted. In one sense, Foucault shares this position. For him, it is *discourse,* not the subject, which produces knowledge. Discourse is enmeshed with power, but it is not necessary to find 'a subject' -the king, the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, the state, etc. – for *power/knowledge* to operate.

On the other hand, Foucault *did* include the subject in his theorizing, though he did not restore the subject to its position as the centre and author of representation. Indeed, as his work developed, he became more and more concerned with questions about 'the subject', and in his very late and unfinished work, he even went so far as to give the subject a certain reflexive awareness of his or her own conduct, though this still stopped short of restoring the subject to his/her full sovereignty.

Foucault was certainly deeply critical of what we might call the traditional conception of the subject. The conventional notion thinks of 'the subject' as an individual who is fully endowed with consciousness; an autonomous and stable entity, the 'core' of the self, and the independent, authentic source of action and meaning. According to this conception, when we hear ourselves speak, we feel we are identical with what has been said. And this identity of the subject with what is said gives him/her a privileged position in relation to meaning. It suggests that, although other people may misunderstand us, *we* always understand ourselves because *we were the source of meaning in the first place.*

However, as we have seen, the shift towards a constructionist conception of language and representation did a great deal to displace the subject from a privileged position in relation to knowledge and meaning. The same is true of Foucault's discursive approach. It is discourse, not the subjects who speak it, which produces knowledge. Subjects may produce particular texts, but they are operating within the limits of the *episteme,* the *discursive formation,* the *regime of truth,* of a particular period and culture. Indeed, this is one of Foucault's most radical propositions: the 'subject' is *produced within discourse.* This subject *of* discourse cannot be outside discourse, because it must be *subjected to* discourse. It must submit to its rules and conventions, to its dispositions of power/knowledge. The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed. But it cannot stand outside power/ knowledge as its source and author. In 'The subject and power' (1982), Foucault writes that 'My objective ... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects ... It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word *subject:* subject to someone else's control and dependence, and tied to his *(sic)* own identity by a conscience and self- knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault, 1982, pp. 208, 212). Making discourse and representation more historical has therefore been matched, in Foucault, by an equally radical historicization of *the subject.* 'One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework' (Foucault, 1980, p. 115).

\\There, then, is 'the subject' in this more discursive approach to meaning, representation and power?

Foucault's 'subject' seems to be produced through discourse in *two* different senses or places. First, the discourse itself produces 'subjects' – figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge which the discourse produces. These subjects have the attributes we would expect as these are defined by the discourse: the madman, the hysterical woman, the homosexual, the individualized criminal, and so on. These figures are specific to specific discursive regimes and historical periods. But the discourse also produces a *place for the subject* (i.e. the reader or viewer, who is also 'subjected to' discourse) from which its particular knowledge and meaning most makes sense. It is not inevitable that all individuals in a particular period will become the subjects of a particular discourse in this sense, and thus the bearers of its power/know ledge. But for them us – to do so, they we – must locate themselves/ourselves in the *position* from which the discourse makes most sense, and thus become its 'subjects' by 'subjecting' ourselves to its meanings, power and regulation. All discourses, then, construct **subject·positions,** from which alone they make sense.

subject-positions

This approach has radical implications for a theory of representation. For it suggests that discourses themselves construct the subject-positions from which they become meaningful and have effects. Individuals may differ as to their social class, gendered, 'racial' and ethnic characteristics (among other factors), but they will not be able to take meaning until they have identified with those positions which the discourse constructs, *subjected* themselves to its rules, and hence become the *subjects of its power/know ledge.* For example, pornography produced for men will only 'work' for women, according to this theory, if in some sense women put themselves in the position of the 'desiring male voyeur' – which is the ideal subject-position which the discourse of male pornography constructs – and look at the models from this 'masculine' discursive position. This may seem, and is, a highly contestable proposition. But let us consider an example which illustrates the argument.

Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1970) opens with a discussion of a painting by the famous Spanish painter, Velasquez, called *Las Meninas.* It has been a topic of considerable scholarly debate and controversy. The reason I am using it here is because, as all the critics agree, the painting itself does raise certain questions about the nature of *representation,* and Foucault himself uses it to talk about these wider issues of the subject. It is these arguments which interest us here, not the question of whether Foucault's is the 'true', correct or even the definitive reading of the painting's meaning. That the Painting has no ed original meaning is, indeed, one of Foucault's most powerful arguments.

The painting is unique in Velasquez' work. It was part of the Spanish court's royal collection and hung in the palace in a room which was subsequently destroyed by fire. It was dated '1656' by Velasquez' successor as court

painter. It was originally called 'The Empress with her Ladies and a Dwarf'; but by the inventory of 1666, it had acquired the title of 'A Portrait of the Infanta of Spain with her Ladies In Waiting and Servants, by the Court Painter and Palace Chamberlain Diego Velasquez'. It was subsequently called *Las Meninas* 'The Maids of Honour'. Some argue that the painting shows Velasquez working on *Las Meninas* itself and was painted with the aid of a mirror ut this now seems unlikely. The most widely held and convincing explanation i's that Velasquez was working on a full-length portrait of the King and Queen, and that it is the royal couple who are reflected in the mirror on the back wall. It is at the couple that the princess and her attendants are looking and on them that the artist's gaze appears to rest as he steps back from his canvas. The reflection artfully includes the royal couple in the picture. This is essentially the account which Foucault accepts.

ACTIVITY 9

Look at the picture carefully, while we summarize Foucault's argument.

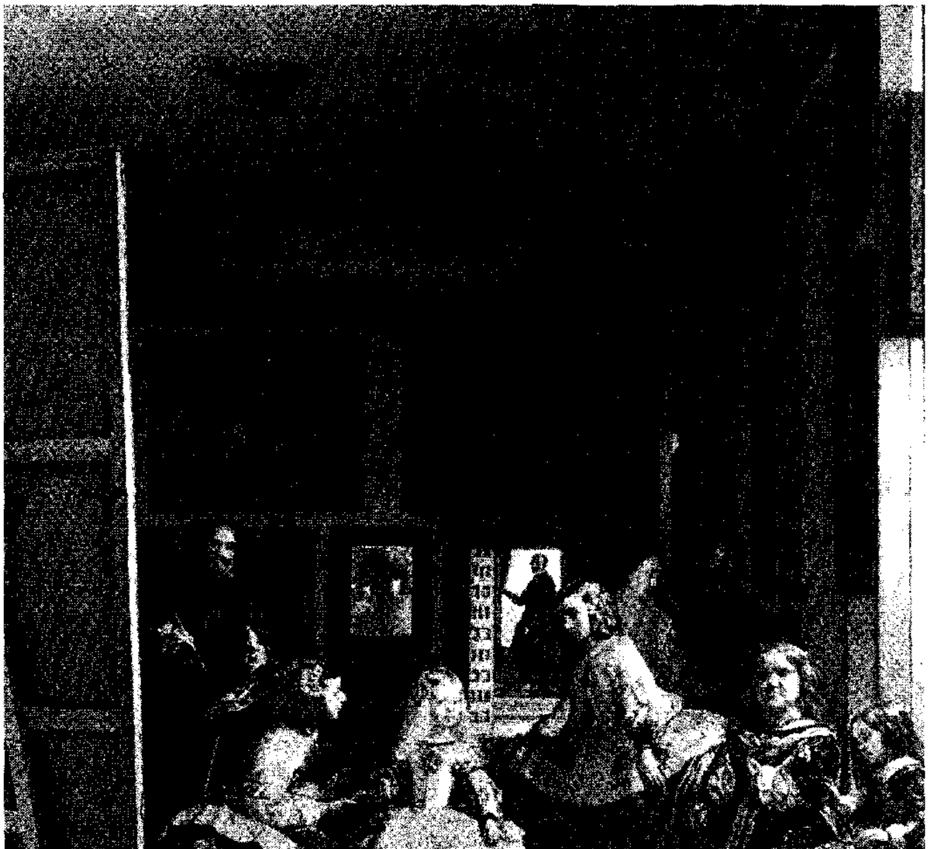


FIGURE 19

Diego Velasquez,

I.tJs Meninas,

1656.

Las Meninas shows the interior of a room perhaps the painter's studio or some other room in the Spanish Royal Palace, the Escorial. The scene, though in its deeper recesses rather dark, is bathed in light from a window on the right. 'We are looking at a picture in which the painter is in turn looking out at us,' says Foucault (1970, p. 4). To the left, looking forwards, is the painter himself, Velasquez. He is in the act of painting and his brush is raised, 'perhaps ... considering whether to add some finishing touch to the canvas' (p. 3). He is looking at his model, who is sitting in the place from which we are looking, but we cannot see who the model is because the canvas on which Velasquez is painting has its back to us, its face resolutely turned away from our gaze. In the centre of the painting stands what tradition recognizes as the little princess, the Infanta Maragarita, who has come to watch the proceedings. She is the centre of the picture we are looking at, but she is not the 'subject' of Velasquez' canvas. The Infanta has with her an 'entourage of duennas, maids of honour, courtiers and dwarfs' and her dog (p. 9). The courtiers stand behind, towards the back on the right. Her maids of honour stand on either side of her, framing her. To the right at the front are two dwarfs, one a famous court jester. The eyes of many of these figures, like that of the painter himself, are looking out towards the front of the picture at the sitters.

Who are they the figures at whom everyone is looking but whom we cannot look at and whose portraits on the canvas we are forbidden to see? In fact, though at first we think we cannot see them, the picture tells us who they are because, behind the Infanta's head and a little to the left of the centre of the picture, surrounded by a heavy wooden frame, is a mirror; and in the mirror – at last – are reflected the sitters, who are in fact seated *in the position from which we are looking:* 'a reflection that shows us quite simply what is lacking in everyone's gaze' (p. 15). The figures reflected in the mirror are, in fact, the King, Philip IV, and his wife, Mariana. Beside the mirror, to the right of it, in the back wall, is another 'frame', but this is not a mirror reflecting forwards; it is a doorway leading *backwards* out of the room. On the stair, his feet placed on different steps, 'a man stands out in full-length silhouette'. He has just entered or is just leaving the scene and is looking at it from behind, observing what is going on in it but 'content to surprise those within without being seen himself' (p. 10).

The subject of/in representation

Who or what is *the subject* of this painting? In his comments, Foucault uses *Las Meninas* to make some general points about his theory of representation and specifically aboutthe role of the subject:

1 'Foucault reads the painting in terms of representation and the subject' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 20). As well as being a painting which shows us (represents) a scene in which a portrait of the King and Queen of Spain is being painted, it is also a painting which *tells us something about how representation and the subject work.* It produces its own kind of knowledge.

Representation and the subject are the painting's underlying message -what it is about, its sub-text

2 Clearly, representation here is *not* about a 'true' reflection or imitation of reality. Of course, the people in the painting may 'look like' the actual people in the Spanish court. But the discourse of painting in the picture is doing a great deal more than simply trying to mirror accurately what exists.

3 Everything in a sense is *visible* in the painting. And yet, what it is 'about' – its meaning – depends on how we 'read' it. *It is as much constructed around what you can't see as what you can.* You can't see what is being painted on the canvas, though this seems to be the point of the whole exercise. You can't see what everyone is looking at, which is the sitters, unless we assume it is a reflection of them in the mirror. They are both in and not in the picture. Or rather, they are present through a kind of substitution. We cannot see them because they are not directly represented: but their 'absence' is represented - *mirrored* through their reflection in the mirror at the back. The meaning of the picture is produced, Foucault argues, through this complex inter-play between *presence* (what you see, the visible) and *absence* (what you can't see, what has displaced it within the frame). Representation works as much through what is *not* shown, as through what is.

4 In fact, a number of substitutions or displacements seem to be going on here. For example, the 'subject' and centre of the painting we are looking at seems to be the Infanta. But the 'subject' or centre is also, of course, the sitters – the King and Queen whom we can't see but whom the others are looking at. You can tell this from the fact that the mirror on the wall in which the King and Queen are reflected is also almost exactly at the centre of the field of vision of the picture. So the Infanta and the Royal Couple, in a sense, share the place of the centre as the principal 'subjects' of the painting. It all depends on where you are looking from – in towards the scene from where you, the spectator, is sitting or outwards from the scene, from the position of the people in the picture. If you accept Foucault's argument, then there are *two* subjects to the painting and *two* centres. And the composition of the

picture -its discourse – forces us to oscillate between these two 'subjects' without ever finally deciding which one to identify with. Representation in the painting seems firm and clear – everything in place. But our vision, the way we *look* at the picture, oscillates between two centres, two subjects, two positions oflooking, two meanings. Far from being finally resolved into some absolute truth which is *the* meaning of the picture, the discourse of the painting quite deliberately keeps us in this state of suspended attention, in this oscillating process of looking. Its meaning is always in the process of emerging, yet any final meaning is constantly deferred.

5 Yon can tell a great deal about how the picture works as a discourse, and what it means, by following the orchestration of *looking* – who is looking at what or whom. *Our* look – the eyes of the person looking at the picture, the spectator – follows the relationships of looking as represented in the picture.

We know the figure of the Infanta is important because her attendants are looking at her. But we know that someone even more important is sitting in front of the scene whom we can't see, because many figures -the Infanta, the jester, the painter himself - are looking at them! So the spectator (who is also 'subjected' to the discourse of the painting) is doing two kinds of looking. Looking at the scene from the position outside, in front of, the picture. And at the same time, looking out of the scene, by *identifying with* the looking being done by the figures in the painting. Projecting ourselves into the subjects of the painting help us as spectators to see, to sense' of it. We take up the positions indicated by the discourse, identify with them, subject ourselves to its meanings, and become its 'subjects'.

9 It is critical for Foucault's argument that the painting does not have a completed meaning. It only means something in relation to the spectator who is looking at it. The spectator completes the meaning of the picture. Meaning is therefore constructed in the dialogue between the painting and the spectator. Velasquez, of course, could not know who would subsequently occupy the position of the spectator. Nevertheless, the whole 'scene' of the painting had to be laid out in relation to that ideal point in front of the painting from which *any* spectator must look if the painting is to make sense. The spectator, we might say, is painted into position in front of the picture. In this sense, the discourse produces a *subject-position* for the spectator-subject. For the painting to work, the spectator, whoever he or she may be, must first 'subject' himself/herself to the painting's discourse and, in this way, become the painting's ideal viewer, the producer of its meanings -its 'subject'. This is what is meant by saying that the discourse constructs the spectator as a subject -by which we mean that it constructs a place for the subject-spectator who is looking at and making sense of it.

10 Representation therefore occurs from at least three positions in the painting. First of all there is us, the spectator, whose 'look' puts together and unifies the different elements and relationships in the picture into an overall meaning. This subject must be there for the painting to make sense, but he/she is not represented in the painting.

Then there is the painter who painted the scene. He is 'present' in two places at once, since he must at one time have been standing where we are now sitting,
in order to paint the scene, but he has then put himself into (represented himself in) the picture, looking back towards that point of view where we, the spectator, have taken his place. We may also say that the scene makes sense and is pulled together in relation to the court figure standing on the stair at the back, since he too surveys it all but – like us and like the painter -from somewhat outside it.

11 Finally, consider the mirror on the back wall. If it were a 'real' mirror, it should now be representing or reflecting *us*, since we are standing in that position in front of the scene to which everyone is looking and from which everything makes sense. But it does not mirror us, it shows *in our place* the King and Queen of Spain. Somehow the discourse of the painting positions us

in the place of the Sovereign! You can imagine what fun Foucault had with this substitution.

Foucault argues that it is clear from the way the discourse of representation works in the painting that it *must* be looked at and made sense of from that one subject-position in front of it from which we, the spectators, are looking. This is also the point-of-view from which a camera would have to be positioned in order to film the scene. And, lo and behold, the person whom Velasquez chooses to 'represent' sitting in this position is The Sovereign – 'master of all he surveys' -who is both the 'subject of' the painting (what it is about) and the 'subject in' the painting – the one whom the discourse sets in place, but who, simultaneously, makes sense of it and understands it all by a look of supreme mastery.

We started with a fairly simple definition of representation. Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning. Already, this definition carries the important premise that things – objects, people, events, in the world – do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It.is us – in society, within human cultures – who make things mean, who signify. Meanings, consequently, will always change, from one culture or period to another. There is no guarantee that every object in one culture will have an equivalent meaning in another, precisely because cultures differ, sometimes radically, from one another in their codes the ways they carve up, classify and assign meaning to the world. So one important idea about representation is the acceptance of a degree of *cultural relativism* between one culture and another, a certain lack of equivalence, and hence the need for *translation* as we move from the mind-set or conceptual universe of one culture or another.

We call this the *constructionist* approach to representation, contrasting it with both the *reflective* and the *intentional* approaches. Now, if culture is a process, a practice, how does it work? In the *constructionist perspective,* representation involves making meaning by forging links between three different orders of things: what we might broadly call the world of things, people, events and experiences; the conceptual world – the mental concepts we carry around in our heads; and the signs, arranged into languages, which 'stand for' or communicate these concepts. Now, if you have to make a link between systems which are not the same, and fix these at least for a time so that other people know what, in one system, corresponds to what in another system, then there must be something which allows us to translate between them – telling us what word to use for what concept, and so on. Hence the notion of *codes.*

Producing meaning depends on the practice of interpretation, and interpretation is sustained by us actively using the code *encoding,* putting things into the code -and by the person at the other end interpreting or *decoding* the meaning (Hall, 1980). But note, that, because meanings are always changing and slipping, codes operate more like social conventions than like fixed laws or unbreakable rules. As meanings shift and slide, so inevitably the codes of a culture imperceptibly change. The great advantage of the concepts and classifications of the culture which we carry around with us in our heads is that they enable us to *think* about things, whether they are there, present, or not; indeed, whether they ever existed or not. There are concepts for our fantasies, desires and imaginings as well as for so-called 'real' objects in the material world. And the advantage of language is that
our thoughts about the world need not remain exclusive to us, and silent. We can translate them into language, make them 'speak', through the use of signs which stand for them – and thus talk, write, communicate about them to others.

Gradually, then, we complexified what we meant by representation. It came to be less and less the straightforward thing we assumed it to be at first – which is why we need *theories* to explain it. We looked at two versions of constructionism – that which concentrated on how *language* and *signification* (the use of signs in language) works to produce *meanings,* which after Saussure and Barthes we called *semiotics;* and that, following Foucault, which concentrated on how *discourse* and *discursive practices* produce knowledge. I won't run through the finer points in these two approaches again, since you can go back to them in the main body of the chapter and refresh your memory. In semiotics, you will recall the importance of signifier/ signified, *languelparole* and 'myth', and how the marking of difference and binary oppositions are crucial for meaning. In the *discursive* approach, you will recall discursive formations, power/knowledge, the idea of a 'regime of truth', the way discourse also produces the subject and defines the *subject- positions* from which knowledge proceeds and indeed, the return of questions about 'the subject' to the field ofrepresentation. In several examples, we tried to get you to work with these theories and to apply them. There will be further debate about them in subsequent chapters.

Notice that the chapter does *not* argue that the *discursive* approach overturned everything in the *semiotic* approach. Theoretical development does not usually proceed in this linear way. There was much to learn from Saussure and Barthes, and we are still discovering ways of fruitfully applying their insights – without necessarily swallowing everything they said. We offered you some critical thoughts on the subject. There is a great deal to learn from Foucault and the *discursive* approach, but by no means everything it claims is correct and the theory is open to, and has attracted, many criticisms. Again, in later chapters, as we encounter further developments in the theory of representation, and see the strengths and weaknesses of these positions applied in practice, we will come to appreciate more fully that we are only at the beginning of the exciting task of exploring this process of meaning construction, which is at the heart of culture, to its full depths. What we have offered here is, we hope, a relatively clear account of a set of complex, and as yet tentative, ideas in an unfinished project.

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GI414 Week 1: Theorising gender and social policy

‘There are no key readings in Week 1, but please pick 2-4 articles you have not read before from the following:’

- A separate document with these articles will be available on the LSE website shortly.

GI424 Week One: Introduction to GI424 and the Field of Gender Studies (Sadie Wearing) 27/09/2017

This introductory lecture will introduce you to the course and will map out some of the ways in which the field of gender studies has emerged and the preoccupations and conversations amongst gender scholars which animate the course. Preparation for the first session involves acquainting yourself with the course outline and finding your way around the virtual and physical spaces of the LSE. Helpful introductory readings are included here, though they may not be directly referenced this week in the lecture and seminar.

Key Reading

Kathy Ferguson (2017) 'Feminist Theory Today' Annual Review of Political Science 2017 20:269-86 – this article provides a general entry point and overview of some key questions

Abstract

- Feminist theory is not only about women; it is about the world, engaged through critical intersectional perspectives. Despite many significant differences, most feminist theory is reliably suspicious of dualistic thinking, generally oriented toward fluid processes of emergence rather than static entities in one-way relationships, and committed to being a political as well as an intellectual enterprise. It is rooted in and responsible to movements for equality, freedom, and justice. Three important contemporary questions within feminist theory concern (*a*) subjectivity, narrative, and materiality; (*b*) global neoliberal geopolitics; and (*c*) global ecologies. Feminist theorists employ the tools of intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and the intertwinings of scholarship and activism to address these questions. While we labor to contribute to our academic fields, our primary responsibility is to contribute to positive social change.

Keywords

- feminism, neoliberalism, ecology, intersectionality, narrative, materiality

INTRODUCTION

- Feminist theory today is a sprawling, productive, diverse intellectual and political assemblage. It grows through imaginative interdisciplinary work and critical political engagements. Feminist theory is not only about women, although it is that; it is about the world, engaged through critical intersectional perspectives. It is, as Mohanty (2003, pp. 5, 122) has remarked, a "deeply collective" practice reflecting a shared "politics of engagement.” Many of feminist theorists’ greatest achievements as well as our fiercest arguments result from and reflect intense political passions over the best ways to understand and improve the lives of women and also of men, children, all species, the planet. In my view, feminist theory flourishes best through scholarly practices that cast a capacious net across fields, think interrelationally about power and resistance, and seek alliances with others who are both critical of prevailing conditions and imaginative about collective possibilities for freedom, justice, and joy.

- Ideally, this article would engage all those with whom I am learning, yet it is impossible to bring them all in. To make my task possible, I have limited myself, with a few exceptions, to feminist writings published from the last decade of the twentieth century (when the period sometimes called the third wave emerged) to 2016. Although much of the work I consider treats global topics, it is mostly written by scholars in the United States or England. All of it appeared in English, either originally or in translation.
- It is perhaps obvious, but still important to say, that this compilation and commentary could have been done in many different ways. My interventions, like all interventions, are themselves theoretical acts: I am not simply describing an activity called feminist theory, which is happening elsewhere, but I am participating in that activity by engaging it. I have not, for example, featured several major debates within feminism, such as those surrounding sex work (is it a form of exploitation or a legitimate area of work?) or reproductive technologies (do they enhance women's rights or license states to devalue the most vulnerable colors, genders and disabilities among us?). I have indirectly engaged other debates—such as those regarding the persistence of racism, orientalism, or settler colonialism in feminism—by implicitly accepting the legitimacy of the critiques and exploring feminism's best efforts to transcend those limitations. In other words, I have largely tried to identify and build on some of our best accomplishments.
- This article is laid out in threes. I first sketch three common starting points, that is, areas of broad agreement among feminist theorists: opposition to dualistic thinking, embracing of process thinking, and commitment to changing as well as studying the world. Then I explore three irreplaceable analytic tools: intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and the intertwinings of scholarship and activism. I see these tools as fundamental to sound feminist thinking in that they provide the implicit orientation toward inquiry that facilitates nondualistic, processual, change-oriented theories. Last, I reflect on three large questions that unavoidably compel feminist theorists today: subjectivity and its discontents, global neoliberal geopolitics, and global ecologies. These big questions address contemporary public crises, are thoroughly intersectional in their operations, and require ruthless interdisciplinary critique.
- The centrality of intersectionality to my approach pushes certain older themes in feminist theory to the background. By pressing on feminism to theorize encounters with nonhuman worlds, intersectionality challenges the limits of humanist feminism. Debates over sameness and difference have been largely displaced because comparisons of women to men have given way to more subtle distinctions among fractured subject positions. Analyses of veiling or female genital mutilation are still important, but, pushed intersectionally, categories like “culture” (as in “it's part of their culture”) give way to more nuanced inquiry into complex assemblages on contested terrain.
- Although my approach may downplay feminist theory's often passionate disagreements, I hope it can inspire us with a selective account of what we have done together. With apologies to those I appear to neglect, let us begin.

STARTING POINTS

- Despite the enormous variety within feminist thought, a few basic starting points are widely shared. First, feminist theory is reliably suspicious of dualistic thinking: Any effort to divide the complex world into two dichotomous, opposing variables (such as reason and emotion, mind and body, or male and female) inevitably simplifies a complex field and posits clear-cut boundaries rather than porous and overlapping relations. Dualistic thinking also generates hierarchies, as one factor in the stand-off achieves dominance over the other, naturalizing prevailing power relationships and making them more difficult to challenge. Second, feminist thinking is generally oriented toward fluid processes of emergence rather than static entities in one-way cause-and-effect relationships. Because patriarchal thinking has confidently attributed fixed and universal essences to women, what Beauvoir (2011 [1949], p. 12) called "the myth of the Eternal Feminine," feminist theory has generally followed Beauvoir's insight that we are not born, but rather we become, women. Like hierarchies, essentialism tends to naturalize familiar power arrangements by attributing them to timeless essences rather than historical processes. Process thinking, in contrast, asks how things come to be, requiring that we historicize our thinking and recognize dynamic and changing relationships rather than static entities. Third, feminist theory is a political as well as an intellectual enterprise. It is rooted in and responsible to movements for equality, freedom, and justice. In summary, although there are many disputes about what these ideas mean and how best to pursue them, in general, feminist theory pursues "both/and" rather than "either/or" thinking; focuses on becomings rather than beings; and works to change, as well as to understand, the world.

TOOLS FOR FEMINIST THEORY

- Feminist theorists do our best thinking when we conceive of the world intersectionally and interdisciplinarily and when we cultivate theory/practice feedback loops to keep ourselves in critical conversations with political projects and struggles. These tools, or "analytic sensibilities" (Cho et al. 2013, p. 795), orient us toward our subject matter and do important feminist work. Intersectionality is the umbrella concept in the sense that it usually entails both interdisciplinary work and activist commitments (Hancock 2016); however, I am bringing interdisciplinarity and theory/practice linkages to the fore as distinct thinking practices to make sure they are fully attended. Transnational thinking could also be identified as a separate tool for feminist theory because it takes apart the often vague unity of the "global" and instead looks at specific "connectivities" (Grewal 2005, p. 22) crossing national borders. I have, instead, folded transnational thinking into the other three tools because it shares central qualities of each.
- To get the most out of these tools, we need to release them from linear or additive frames and instead see them as interactive processes. Intersectionality in particular sometimes lends itself to an unfortunate traffic metaphor, wherein intersections are discrete points where lines cross. The cover art of several recent books on intersectionality tells this story. One cover represents intersectionality as a series of pick-up sticks, creating a colorful but static grid of lines and points of intersection. Another offers a series of diverse, partially overlapping circles; a third portrays contiguous circles and squares; a fourth offers colorful, partially overlapping blocks; a fifth represents intersectionality as a matrix of railroad tracks; a sixth portrays an outside corner of a cabin, where old wooden logs are stacked, alternating, at right angles to each other, to attach one wall to another. These pictures do not do justice to the ideas inside the books. Instead, I suggest water metaphors to represent many distinct flows of meaning that intermix and interact, though they do not entirely dissolve into one another. Cho et al. (2013, p. 795) usefully represent intersectional sensibilities "as conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing,

always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power." My idea for intersectional cover art would be a sprawling marshland fed by many different sources, which themselves shift and pulse within larger mobile systems of tides and currents (for a feminist analysis of marshland, see Bartsch et al. 2001). In marshland, fresh, salt, and brackish waters are simultaneously identifiable and interactive, contiguous and concurrent; land and water shade off into each other.

- I suggest that we can usefully extend these images of porous boundaries and fluid processes to frame all three feminist tools. Intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and theory/practice feedback loops are all best understood not as a sequence of distinct units or moments we then add together, but as always already folded into one another while still retaining distinctness. Flows can be interrupted or redirected; they can be sluggish and unreliable; but they lend themselves to processual, multi-directional thinking.

Intersectionality

- Intersectionality is one of feminist theory's greatest accomplishments. A perpetually open and relentlessly critical approach to power, intersectional thinking cultivates, as May (2015, p. xi) remarks, forms of "resistant knowledge." Although Crenshaw (1989), Collins (1990), and others are usually credited with founding intersectionality theory in the 1980s, it has a vigorous radical history extending back to the nineteenth century in the writings of black women (Hancock 2016) and of anarchists (Ferguson 2011).
- In my view, sustained intersectional thinking makes four significant contributions to feminist theory. First, intersectionality is a crucial tool to avoid either/or thinking, what May calls "single axis" categories of analysis. At its best, intersectionality replaces additive thinking with fully interrelational thinking; intersectionality facilitates "a matrix orientation (wherein lived identities are treated as interlaced and systems of oppression as enmeshed and mutually reinforcing)" (May 2015, p. ix). Intersectional sensibilities pluralize our thinking and our understanding of ourselves as thinking subjects. May (2015, p. 53) continues, "Intersectionality's attention to multiplicity is key to its invitation to intervene in historical memory and to *un*learn prevailing social imaginaries." Intersectional thinking nurtures not just analysis but an "ethic of radical interrelatedness" in which differences are subjects of both curiosity and respect (Keating 2009, pp. 88–91).
- Second, intersectionality is permanently open and thus remarkably fertile for generating new thinking. It is often used to analyze multiple, emergent subject positions. The "embarrassed etc." that Butler (1990, p. 143) notes at the end of our lists of social divisions—gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, language, disability, age… etc.—can, if thought of intersectionally, become an invitation to imagine always open and mobile subjectivities. New identities emerge when political circumstances enable beings to become political subjects—children, for example, or transgender persons, or political prisoners. Hence, the identity work of intersectional thinking is permanently unfinished. Intersectionality also does its work on institutions and social structures, such as the prison/industrial complex (Davis 1998), international organizations (Yuval-Davis 2009), government policies (Caldwell 2009), and global human rights work (Collins & Bilge 2016, pp. 93–98). May (2015, pp. 9–10) characterizes intersectional thinking as "multiscale"; that is, it "draws on multiple sites of knowing, from the micropolitical scale of lived experience and personal reflection to the macropolitical scale of structural, political, philosophical, and representational inequities." Intersectional thinking invites us to push on the vectors of power that most elude us and to be surprised at their collaborations.
- Recently, some feminist theorists have usefully folded assemblage theory into intersectionality. Building on Deleuze & Guattari (1987), feminist assemblage theory

conceives the world as networks within networks of active, mobile, multiple practices and functionalities. Lykke (2011, p. 212) sees an intersectional flavor in Deleuze & Guattari's discussion of horizontal flows, linkages, and disruptions in rhizomatic deterritorializations: “Intersectionality appears as a ‘shifter’ that, in a positive sense, may facilitate the opening up of new analytical and political questions and generate a productive impetus to identify more interfering power differentials, normativities and identity markers than the ones that presented themselves to the analyst as the first ‘evident’ focus.” Tamboukou (2016, pp. 175–76) uses assemblage's entanglements and intra-actions to analyze nineteenth-century French women workers’ conditions in the garment industry, “where abrupt changes and ruptures coexist with surprising and unexpected continuities…. [T]ogether they create an assemblage of women workers’ radical cultural practices in the formations of modernity….” Puar (2007, p. xxvii) claims to be rejecting intersectionality for assemblage theory, yet I think she underestimates intersectionality's capacities. She finds even a queer intersectionality too dependent on “identity-based narratives of queerness,” and turns to assemblage theory as a better alternative. However, in my view, Puar (2007, p. 215) ties intersectional thinking too tightly to identity, and in turn unnecessarily ties identity to “a capture that proposes what one is by masking its retrospective ordering and thus its ontogenetic dimension—what one was—through the guise of an illusory futurity: what one is and will continue to be.” Both these moves are hotly contested within intersectional work: Intersectionality does not refer exclusively to identities, and identities are not necessarily static. Meanwhile, Puar's own wild weaving of global whiteness, national heteronormativities and homonormativities, and empire-now-proud-to-speak-its-name is a paradigmatic example of creative intersectionality, broadly construed.

- Third, intersectional sensibilities are best cultivated in thick research contexts offering substantial empirical, historical, and/or cultural evidence to consider. Beltran (2016) comments on the demanding attention intersectional thinking requires toward particular practices and histories: “You can't do this work without thinking collectively about how all these practices work.” Not “mushy diversity,” she remarks, but intricate “specificity” requires patient and sustained scholarly and political attention. Similarly, transnational feminists Alexander & Mohanty (1997, p. xix, italics in original) focus on specific histories and politics; they are nurturing “a way of thinking about women in similar contexts across the world, in *different* geographical spaces, rather than as *all* women across the world.”
- Last, intersectional thinking requires willingness to listen to unfamiliar insights with what Keating (2009, p. 92) calls “raw openness.” For example, an important direction for contemporary feminist intersectionality is indigeneity. Indigenous thinking is a necessary component of feminist analyses of colonialism (Goeman 2013). The specificity of native histories of sovereignty with prior claims to land and water positions indigenous people in unique relations to states and markets (Silva 2004). Trying to understand colonialism without the voices and histories of indigenous people is akin to trying to understand patriarchy without the voices and histories of women (Simpson 2014). Jaimes Guerrero (1997, p. 102) emphasizes the need for a (probably) uncomfortable encounter between civil rights–based feminism and native feminists’ claims for sovereignty, which she outlines as “self-determination and self-sufficiency traditionally predicated on reciprocity rather than individual ownership.” For feminist theory to be robustly intersectional, it is not enough for theorists to read, speak with, or “reach out to” indigenous feminists, although each of those moves is important; nonindigenous feminists must go farther and encounter the rich, emergent literature and conversations of indigenous lifeworlds and their relation to colonized worlds (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 2013). As Alexander (2002, p. 91) has commented regarding the creation of a voice for women of color, we need to “become fluent in each other's histories.” Hall (2008, p. 279) explains that it is not just the content of memory and history that is at

stake, but the ontological, temporal intertwining of indigenous histories with indigenous futures: "[I]n Hawaiian metaphorical terms, we face forward toward the past; it does not lie behind us. Far from being inherently regressive, a call to reclaim tradition can open new/old ways of being." Seeing indigenous sovereignty arguments through a state-centric lens misses, as Smith & Kauanui (2008, p. 243) indicate, "alternative constructions of land through the Native literary imagination that in turn [provide] alternative understandings of indigenous nationhood beyond the constraints of state recognition." Intersectional sensibilities invite us into a necessary process of critical engagement, not to appropriate but to learn.

Interdisciplinarity

- Interdisciplinary inquiry can be thought of as intersectionality at the level of the academy. Critical interdisciplinary thinking is a necessary methodological expression of intersectionality, since crossing borders between conventional fields of knowledge is both a kind of intersecting and a precondition for successfully studying intersections.
- Feminist theorists have compelling empirical, historical, geographical, political, philosophical, and artistic reasons for their cross-disciplinary travels. In her wide-ranging global overview of women in politics, Hawkesworth (2012, p. 2) notes that staying within a single discipline is inadequate for empirical reasons; "multiple intellectual fields" are necessary to "develop an inclusive account of politics." Puar (2007, p. xvi) pursues interdisciplinary opportunities for rebellion; she names her creative intellectual and political wanderings an "unhomed interdisciplinarity." "By not playing by the disciplinary rules," she can offer "alternative and submerged geographies" (Puar 2007, p. xvi). Frost (2016, p. 4) brings physics and chemistry to political theory to trouble "our conceptual habits and our philosophical vocabulary and grammar." Abu-Lughod (2013, pp. 9, 17), who writes about Muslim women to subvert "the common Western story of the hapless Muslim woman oppressed by her culture," acknowledges the aesthetic attraction of cross-disciplinary writing: "I am more drawn to the detail and empathy of the novelist than to the bold strokes of the polemicist." Like Tuana (2008, see below), Grewal (2005, p. 33) insists on interdisciplinarity as a necessary response to our questions: "It was only by combining a postcolonial perspective with textual literary analysis, social and cultural theory, and feminist and ethnic studies approaches that I could begin to engage with the questions in which I was interested." Although most social scientists would agree that the methods we use must follow from the questions we ask, feminist theorists often go farther to insist that multiple and diverse types of sources, modes of inquiry, and practices of writing are required by feminist curiosities. Grewal (2005, p. 34) urges us to recognize "a messier world, where writing, researching, objects, and subjects of research refuse to remain neatly within the boundaries that discipline them," both because the world is messier than disciplinary separations allow and because feminist questions, well-pursued, mess with disciplinary order.
- As Braidotti (2013, p. 155) has noted, many of our most creative interventions come from those extradisciplinary, experimental programs called "studies"—media, women's, ethnic, science, animal, labor, etc.—where discipline-defying work can find a home. Yet, because many journals, funding agencies, university administrations, and state legislatures remain tied to conventional disciplines, interdisciplinary initiatives are often unavailable, underfunded, or difficult to sustain. All the more reason for feminist theorists and our fellow travelers to push our departments and universities to embrace and defend hybrid projects. Just as transnational feminism is not simply the sum of adding nations together, but a radically cross-national approach, so interdisciplinary feminism is not simply an adding of fields but an intermeshing of inquiries. We need to disrupt disciplinary boundaries, connect across knowledges and methods, and bring contrasting paradigms to bear on one another.

Theory/Practice Feedback Loops

- Feminist theory is a change-oriented scholarly practice; challenging oppression and working toward justice are not separate applications of a theory made elsewhere but constitutive elements of theory making. Yet, the contours of our critiques and visions are not pregiven within our theories; instead, feminist activism and feminist theorizing give rise to one another. May (2015, p. xi) argues that the political energies in intersectional theory are historically founded in intimate relations between scholars and activists: "Intersectionality is a form of resistant knowledge developed to unsettle conventional mindsets, challenge oppressive power, think through the full architecture of structural inequalities and asymmetrical life opportunities, and seek a more just world. It has been forged in the context of struggles for social justice as a means to challenge dominance, foster critical imaginaries, and craft collective models for change."
- Thinking about the relation between theory and practice benefits from an intersectional push. The conventions of social science would call on something like a case study approach, where a theory is spelled out and then applied to a real-world example to test the adequacy of the theory. There is an implicit hierarchy in this approach: The theory is the main thing, the important thing, the place where all the intellectual action takes place; the case is the secondary thing, the inert thing that waits to be interpreted. Theories are applied to data like cookie-cutters to waiting dough.
- Feminist theory cultivates a different engagement. Data or practices act as equal partners with theory, equally lively and productive. Rather than imposing theory on data, we strive to stage encounters between our analyses and our examples, and we invite each to enhance or contest the other. Instead of books that are long on abstract analysis, with a perfunctory final chapter on some example or expression, we cultivate full-blown conversations among elements.
- An example of rich feminist theory/practice interaction is the collection edited by Butler et al. (2016). The authors posit vulnerability not as the opposite of resistance (as weakness might be to strength) but as a constituent aspect of political agency. They look at a variety of sites of political struggle—including the material and semiotic practices of creating barricades in Gezi Park, the transnational cultivation of a politics of grief by Women in Black, and the simultaneous victimization and resistance of Kurdish guerrilla fighters—to stage encounters between sites of agency and the agentic practices those sites enable. They suggest a politics of resistance in which oppressed or endangered people turn their vulnerability toward shared capacities to act.
- Interdisciplinary, transnational feminist scholarship often analyzes a political phenomenon by engaging the resistance or rebellion that is immanent within it. Lorey (2015) studies precaritization (the process by which peoples' lives are rendered precarious through impoverishment, denial of basic services, and inadequate, episodic access to work) through the radical public research practices of *Precarias a la deriva*, a group of feminist activists in Madrid. Through their exchanges on the street, the activists develop a sense of what is common: "Developed in encounters with others, in exchanges with them, both the multiplicity and the singularities of existence manifest themselves in common notions" (Lorey 2015, pp. 92–93). Precarias (2010) developed notions of a "care community" and a "care strike" (the latter is not the refusal to do care labor but the public presentation of that labor). The group collects testimonies, conducts workshops, creates digital media, makes public space, and forges alliances, all through urban drifting, shared desire for "breaking the logic of individual maximization," and a quiet conviction that "one thing leads to another" (Precarias 2010). Das Gupta (2014) studies immigration and deportation policies in the United States by working closely with activist communities to develop policy in conjunction

with, not simply about, protestors. Similarly, the organization of women of color, INCITE! (2016), approaches violence against women of color from the perspective of activists working to end the violence. Research is simultaneously movement building. Activism is not a footnote to "the problem" but the lens with which to view the network of violences in capitalist-colonial-militaristic-reproductive-police practices. The preeminent feminist theory journal *Signs* has recently taken a fresh step by introducing a new Feminist Public Intellectuals Project, including interviews and conversations among scholars and activists on popular feminist writings and contemporary controversies (Walters 2016). These are only a few of many examples of horizontal activist–scholar encounters. Unlike political science or political theory as a whole, feminist theory is engaged in imagining better worlds because we are responsible to political movements and communities working to create those worlds.

THREE BIG QUESTIONS

- I focus here on three interrelated topics, of necessity indicating only a few of the hundreds of thinkers whose work contributes to these debates: (*a*) subjectivity, narrative, and materiality; (*b*) the gendered politics of neoliberal states and economies; and (*c*) feminist ecological analysis. These questions address urgent theoretical debates and public issues through intersectional, interdisciplinary, scholar/activist modes of inquiry and intervention.

Subjectivity, Narrative, and Materiality

- How do we understand subjectivity and agency? What is the relation between narrative (telling our stories) and materiality (attending to the non-narrative) in feminist theory?
- Narrativity, or story telling, is crucial for creating women's voice or any subaltern point of view. In fact, a common early way of distinguishing types of feminism was by the subject position of their creators—lesbian, black, Chicana, working class, third world—exemplifying the importance of identity for voice. Creating or articulating voice engages the two questions raised by Foucault (1990): "Who can speak?" and "What can be said?" Many feminists follow Beauvoir's (2011 [1949], p. 162) pithy observation that "men define the world from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth." Defining a masculine point of view requires imagining a different one to serve as the grounds of contrast. The creation of a voice for women, or for particular groups of women, entails articulating the world from those women's points of view, identifying the locations from which they speak, and generating both a critique of prevailing conditions and a vision of a better world. Women who inhabit particular identity categories, such as transgender, working class, or African-American, as well as women who have been subject to certain victimizations, such as rape or trafficking, tell their stories in order to challenge the dominant gender, class, or racial imaginaries and to contest the dominant narratives. These stories become the ground for analysis as well as for calls for respect and justice.
- Many feminist theorists do their work by theorizing from such stories. Lazreg (1988, p. 98) and many other feminists from the global south have long insisted that feminist theorists need to develop an intersubjective relationality with women who have been silenced, or whose stories are underheard, so that everyone can speak and be heard rather than reduced to stereotypes. We need to cultivate the capacity for understanding others' worlds in their terms. "Isn't the whole point," Lazreg (1988, p. 102) appeals, "to have a voice?" For example, calling on Hannah Arendt's understanding of stories as the implicit grounds of thinking, Tamboukou (2016) analyzes the stories of Parisienne seamstresses

during the early nineteenth century. Her book *Sewing, Fighting and Writing* (2016, p. 29) links specific stories with the capacity to theorize: “By evading the abstraction of universal principles, qualities or categories, stories throw light on a wide range of historical, sociocultural and political structures; they ground abstractions, flesh out ideas and thus create a milieu of critical understanding.”

- Yet stories often assume the very starting point that feminist thinkers need to contest: the life parameters of the speaking subject. Scott (1991) points out that experience is both a needed and a problematic grounding of our thinking because what can count as one's experience is embedded in an implicit account of the sensible, of what can “make sense.” Are stories something that we discover? That is, are they already implicitly present in the experience of potential speakers? Or are stories something that we create, assembling coherencies out of many possible fields of meaning? The distinction between finding meaningful accounts and making those accounts situates stories differently; in both cases they can serve as an Arendtian ground of theory, but “found stories” suggest an epistemology of revealing what was hidden, while “made stories” imply an epistemology of constituting what did not yet exist.
- Feminists telling women's stories have labored to bring women into the realm of the human, of those with a voice, sometimes at the cost of hiding the problematic category of “human” or the hidden assumptions about what it can mean to “speak.” Hemmings (2011) points out that feminist theorists recur with dismaying predictability to a familiar set of narratives of progress, loss, and return, to the point that it begins to sound as if we all agreed to write the same first paragraph to all our essays. Feminist materialists have questioned the priority of narrative and pushed on these “textual replays” (Hemmings 2011, p. 192) by problematizing the parameters of subjectivity as well as the processes of knowing and speaking. Once the relation between human and other-than-human becomes nonobvious, feminists ask, with Barad (2007, p. 64) how “matter matters.” Materialist feminists address this problem by shifting attention away from narrative and toward the technologies, divisions of labor, objects, and events that produce the specific productive arrangements out of which voices can emerge.
- Some feminist materialists (sometimes called “old materialists”) follow Marxist leanings. For example, Fraser (2013, p. 241) draws on Habermas and others to articulate a socialist feminism that rethinks care labor as a public good and “forge[s] a principled new alliance with social protection.” Weeks (2011) looks to traditions of autonomous Marxism to rethink the place of work within our lives; in her analysis, class is a productive and emergent set of practices, “a process of becoming classed” (p. 19). She focuses not on the stories workers tell but on the social system and disciplinary apparatus of work. Her project is both to challenge the devaluation of labor within capitalist societies and to contest the tyranny of moralistic equations of work with virtue. She asks: How do we seek justice in the workplace while still contesting the framework that creates and legitimates work in the first place?
- In contrast, those called “new materialists” tend to focus on materiality as thingness, an engagement creating cross-species connections and displacing old ontological orders that placed the human at the top of a great chain of being. In Barad's (2007) terms, these feminist materialists attend to intra-actions—relations between emergent components of existence in which engagements of matter and meaning are effects of intra-actions rather than stable causes or clear effects. For many new materialists, “matter” refers to things coming to matter, that is, both commanding our attention and emerging as embodied in physical arrangements. While the old materialists debate the possibilities of humanly liberated work, or human liberation from work, new materialists enlarge the world of agents or actants who need to be taken into account because they have the capacity to affect and be affected. For example, Frost (2016, p. 26) stages an encounter between quantum physics, organic chemistry, and

political theory to rethink the common dualism between matter and energy, asking us to theorize matter as “energy under a particular form of constraint” and boundaries as porous distinctions between “zones of activity.” Wilson (2015, p. 9) similarly challenges the nature/culture division in the name of an interrelated contingency, “a nature/culture entanglement that is almost impossible to articulate” because distinct categories rather than imbricated processes are more readily available tools for thinking. Different compositions of the turn away from exclusively human subjectivity and toward greater-than-human engagements include affect theory, speculative realism, animal studies, and many others. Though distinct in significant ways, this turn toward “newly emergent realism[s]” (Sheldon 2015, p. 193) shifts agency toward what Alaimo (2008, p. 238) calls “trans-corporeality.” Humans, and all creatures, are radically resituated “within complex systems and are interlaced with their ‘environment,’ which is never a background, but instead, the ground of their being that they, in turn, affect and transform” (Alaimo 2008, p. 246).

- There are abiding tensions within these debates (see Wingrove 2016), yet the positions are not mutually exclusive. To create feminist theory, women need to tell their stories, yet stories are always selective and vulnerable to commodification and cooptation. To challenge oppressive power relations, we have to develop our voices. But who are “we”? For identity-oriented feminisms, the enemy has been essentialism, sometimes to the point that it becomes difficult to speak of biology at all, lest we reinvoke patriarchal “biology is destiny” bromides. We have become, Wilson (2015, p. 1) humorously alleges, “instinctively antibiological.” Yet, articulating a voice requires attention to bodies and locations that are unavoidably material.
- Some feminist thinkers bring accounts of narrativity and materiality together, suggesting that what we “find” is not a clear story waiting to be told but an emergent process of making, that the finding is part of the making and vice versa. Similarly, materialisms that expand humanism to include women's laboring bodies and labor practices can be linked with materialisms that deconstruct humanism to forge relations with other-than-human entities (Ferguson 2014, pp. 405–9). Subjectivity does not have to be limited to the human; but generally voices require speaking subjects or at least some form of communicative practice, thus returning us to Foucault's pregnant questions, “Who can speak?” and “What can be said?”

Neoliberal States and Economies

- How does feminism engage neoliberal states and global economies? Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, feminists have questioned and debated their relation to states and economic orders. Early typologies categorized feminisms by ideological parentage—liberal, socialist, Marxist, anarchist—a strategy that privileges feminisms’ relation to governments and economies (Jaggar 1983). A second and related distinction within feminism has been based on types of political action: reforming (working toward equal citizenship and power within the existing institutions) versus transforming (working to fundamentally alter the political arrangements by challenging them from the outside and creating an alternative political practice). These distinctions are fuzzy and complicated, but in general, liberal feminism adopts a reform strategy whereas socialist and anarchist feminisms seek transformation; at the same time, many radicals recognize the need to coordinate radical change with needed reforms (Weeks 2011).
- In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, earlier questions resurface within the context of neoliberal states, economies, and cultures. Feminists continue to ask how sex, gender, race, class, and other vectors of power and difference are imbricated within global capitalism and state formations. How does feminism contest and/or cooperate with the

hegemonic arrangements of capital, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and racism? But neoliberalism is not just classical liberalism revisited; it is a denser and more damaging concentration and dispersion of global corporate and state power.

- Feminist theorizing of neoliberalism and its attendant oppressions takes many turns. Generally speaking, neoliberalism refers to an amorphous global political/economic/cultural system, a nexus among states, economies, and public moralities, where state power is used to deregulate markets, regulate protests, protect wealth, deplete social services, bust unions, privatize public goods, monetize everything, scapegoat migrants and refugees, and humiliate and criminalize the poor while praising "self-sufficiency" and scorning "dependency." Brown (2015, p. 30) explains that neoliberalism is more than state and economic institutions; it is "an order of normative reason… a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life."
- The independent individual maximizing his human capital in neoliberal models is implicitly a male, white, affluent individual, someone with the class and cultural capital to appear to make his own way and the invisible domestic back-up to provide the needed care labor. Neoliberalism amplifies the gendered division of labor of earlier capitalist forms: the life costs of diminishing public services fall most heavily on women, who typically do the unpaid or low-paid work of attending to the needs of others. The institutionalized job insecurity attendant to outsourcing, contract work, and part-time work falls most heavily on women, who in the United States earn on average about 80% of men's earnings (Brown 2015, p. 106) even though they graduate from college and participate in the paid labor force in record numbers. The neoliberal organization of domestic labor, child care, elder care, factory work, fast food work, agricultural work, and sex work mobilize precariously placed women, men, and children in the global south into exploitative and insecure labor chains. Butler (2015, p. 14) explains that as a set of cultural values, neoliberalism is the perfect "catch-22," making unavailable the very way of life it demands: "Neoliberal rationality demands self-sufficiency as a moral ideal at the same time that neoliberal forms of power work to destroy that very possibility at an economic level, establishing every member of the population as potentially or actually precarious, even using the ever-present threat of precarity to justify its heightened regulation of public space and its deregulation of market expansion." Yet structures and processes of power are not monolithic; they are uneven and contradictory, providing openings for political action. The self-sufficiency that we never fully achieve is perhaps the unwilling partner of the relationships of community and care on which we depend. Many feminists struggle to reorganize care relationships, reframe care as a public good, and make care labor more democratic and more just (Tronto 2013).
- Feminist theorists have hotly contested neoliberalism in nearly all of its parameters. In 1981 it was possible for Eisenstein (1981) to argue for a radical future for liberal feminism because she could articulate internal tensions within liberalism's rich history that feminism could use to grow. I cannot see any comparable radical future for neoliberal (non)feminism because neoliberalism lacks such productive openings. Advocating a radical renegotiation of the relation between care labor, markets, and democracy, Tronto (2013, p. 170) sums up most feminists' critiques of neoliberalism: "We have got things backwards now." Neoliberal states are typically strong states with regard to militaries, police, securitization, and transfer of resources from ordinary people to the very rich, yet they are weak states with regard to daily human needs, welfare safety nets, health, education, and environmental protections. Neoliberal frames of understanding take for granted existing global, national, regional, and local imbalances of power, which are the heritage of war, exploitation, and empire, making it difficult to reframe our thinking in more egalitarian ways. Vulnerable populations, including women, immigrants, refugees, sexual and racial minorities, and religious outsiders are available, disposable targets. In her cleverly titled book, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*,

Abu-Lughod (2013, p. 223) demonstrates the "no win" scenario for Muslim women: Neoliberalism implicitly frames Muslim women as acted-upon, as "subjects known only by deficits in their rights," so western governments can justify wars on Muslim societies as acts of rescue. Sampaio makes a similar thought-move in *Terrorizing Latina/o Immigrants* (2015, p. 7): She reinflects the word "terrorize" to show the neoliberal state's double move in making Latinas/os into "perpetual foreigners" and "potential terrorists" while amplifying state power and using it to terrorize immigrants' lives. Puri (2016, p. 10) similarly argues that struggles over the governing of homosexuality in postliberalized India participate in producing the parameters of legitimate and illegitimate sexuality while simultaneously "breathing life into the state." These theoretical moves operate at the level of the frame, setting up the horizon of inquiry so that it doubles back on itself: framing Muslim women so they can only be silent, pathetic victims; framing Latinas and Latinos as dangerous and alien; framing homosexuality so that state regulation is naturalized as inevitable and legitimate. Neoliberalism erodes the requirements of democratic participation in many ways. Some subjects are disqualified as incapable, dangerous, or sick, while others are robbed of their longing for and capacity for collective self-governing. In both situations, the pursuit of equality and justice as public practices and the insistence on democratic self-invention as a practice for communities to govern themselves erode.

- Global neoliberalism in the twenty-first century rests on the legacy of earlier colonialisms. Some feminists concentrate on excavating the transnational sexual and racial heritage of empires. For example, Saraswati (2013) analyzes historical shifts in the composition of whiteness in women's standards of beauty as empires and occupations came and went in Indonesia. Stoller (2002) charts changes in expectations of sexual and domestic intimacy as European expansion mixed with local economies. Others have brought queer theory more vigorously into global feminist analysis. Puar (2007, p. xi) makes queer theory her partner in exploring "connections among sexuality, race, gender, nation, class, and ethnicity in relation to the tactics, strategies, and logistics of war machines." Her take on the emergence of subjectivity examines states' racialized production of the queer subjects they need: some for inclusion as "proper homosexual subjects" (p. 28) through human rights legislation, consumerism, marriage, and markets; others for exclusion through management of "perverse populations" (p. xiii) and the production of "the sexually pathological terrorist figure" (Puar 2007, p. 21). Puar coins the term homonationalism to analyze the various couplings of queer bodies with national bodies: for Americans, "our gays" (provided they are appropriately monogamous, self supporting, and market oriented) are not so bad, but "their gays" (in Arab or Muslim societies) are sick, irrational, and dangerous.
- Another way that feminist scholarship comes to terms with neoliberalism is in examining the feminization of poverty and transnational labor circuits. Parreñas (2001) analyzes the commodification of Filipinas within global chains of care labor and the simultaneous burden of long-distance parenting. Other feminists are developing the idea of precaritization as a way of talking about the global distribution of inequality, as well as the order-making process that produces insecurity and exploitation while creating fearful subjects who can be managed through their insecurity. Relationships, people, and other living things are precaritized—rendered precarious—via instruments of governance, processes of capital accumulation, and demands of subjectivization. At the same time, like the oppressive distribution of care labor, the burdens of precarious lives are unpredictable and may sometimes subvert the order producing them to become a base for political activism (Butler 2015, Lorey 2015).
- The early twenty-first century sees women wielding political power in increasing numbers (Hawkesworth 2012, p. 1). The neoliberal downside to this success is that it often comes with demands for "women's advancement" in corporate and state institutions, with no

critique of those institutions. Unlike liberal feminism, which both takes direction from the liberal tradition and critiques its incomplete application to women, neoliberal (non)feminism does not actually see, much less critique, neoliberalism. Rather, it assumes the neoliberal worldview, neglects structural analyses of capitalism or the state, and makes gender equality the proper accomplishment of individual women who find the right "balance" of work and family as they climb corporate or governmental ladders. Market rationality + national self-satisfaction + imperial reach = a degraded version of feminism in which women face individual problems, which they overcome with self-discipline and time management, rather than public issues requiring collective redress. In the United States, as Rottenberg (2014, p. 420) rightly concludes, "Each woman's success becomes a feminist success, which is then attributed to the USA's enlightened political order, as well as to its moral and political superiority." Neoliberalism has reduced its version of feminism to fussing about a glass ceiling for corporate women, urging women to "lean in" and find ways to more efficiently manage their lives while maximizing their portfolio value. Mohanty (2003, p. 6) calls it "protocapitalist feminism." It readily becomes stuck to superficial assumptions of American exceptionalism and national superiority. Feminism's "dangerous liaison with neo-liberalism" (Fraser 2013, p. 15) employs a kind of reverse intersectionality, in which membership in the dominant classes, colors, sexualities, religions, and nations functions without critical comment, so that only individual women's gender disadvantages mar the political horizon. Neoliberal feminism is no feminism at all.

Feminism and Global Ecologies

- Feminist theorizing of environmental change has its roots in an older eco-feminism (Griffin 1978, Merchant 1980) that has often, sometimes prematurely, been dismissed as unforgivably essentialist. Those writers anticipated the explosion of the category of the human, the blurring of boundaries among kinds of life, and the global role of our species in planetary destruction. Feminist ecological thinking overlaps considerably with the critical literature on neoliberalism because global capitalism's commodification and destruction of living environments are part and parcel of its rapacious global reach. For example, Nagel (2016) analyzes the differential impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, including women and the poor. The contributors to Colfer et al. (2016) chart specific sites of environmental destruction as well as women's role in local and global conservation practices.
- Feminist ecological literature also shares considerable terrain with the reflections of the new materialists and their fellow travelers, since a significant challenge to the constitution of subjectivity and agency is in the ecological deconstruction of the category of human. In fact, contemporary criticisms of the category "human" are parallel to historical criticisms of the category "man"—both come apart under feminist scrutiny, discrediting their coherence and challenging their predominance. Similarly, nationalist arguments for American exceptionalism, with their corresponding justifications of empire and war, are parallel to anti-ecological arguments for human exceptionalism: Both hold one group of creatures and their worlds apart from and above others, creating global crises (Bennett 2010). Radical rethinking of states, subjects, and species is necessary, as Frost (2016, p. 1) argues, to reconstitute "a politically useful category of the human that theorists can mobilize to address the political crises of the day." Our intertwinement with other life and with nonorganic entities is undeniable, so holding ourselves above other life and other things seems arrogant at best and self-destructive at worst; yet we need to be able to address ourselves in some way in order to take action. We need to rethink ourselves to find "resources for cogent, creative, and robust engagement with the difficult question of how we should transform the ways we live" (Frost 2016, p. 3).

- A great deal of feminist ecological thinking returns us to identity debates, but on a planetary plane. Humans must learn to think of ourselves differently in order to create a less destructive environmental politics; but without a different politics to reorder our relations to the physical world, it is difficult to reinvent ourselves. Radical ecological theorists propose a variety of different languages for thinking about our relationality to other creatures, nonliving objects, and the planet: "transcorporeality" and "viscous porosity" (Alaimo 2008), "naturecultures" and "material-semiotic actors" (Haraway 1988, 2008), biocultural creatures (Frost 2016), and geo-centric beings (Braidotti 2013). Frost's (2016, p. 3) cross-disciplinary inquiries aim to contribute to a new self-understanding for humans as "creatures who are embedded in various ecologies and networks of relations and who can integrate their acknowledgment of their embodiment, animality, physicality, dependence, and vulnerability into their self-conception and their orientation toward and modes of being in the world." This process has already begun: "If nonhumans are already active coparticipants in forging social ties," Disch (2016, p. 626) argues, then they are already contributing to our agendas and shaping our engagements. Much as Abu-Lughod (2013) and others bring women from the global south into feminist conversations as speakers and actors, feminist ecologists "recast nonhumans from mute (and potentially injured) objects in need of human advocates to mediators of environmentally responsible action in their own right" (Disch 2016, p. 626). Our understanding of human subjects would shift if we began to understand ourselves as geo-centric (Braidotti 2013, p. 81). "We need to visualize the subject as a transversal entity encompassing the human, our genetic neighbours the animals and the earth as a whole, and to do so within an understandable language" (Braidotti 2013, p. 82).
- Feminist ecological theorists have proposed a variety of strategies to arrive at "a conception of the human that can be theoretically serviceable and politically generative" (Frost 2016, p. 3). Witnessing the pain of others and experiencing the agency of the extrahuman is one route. Hurricane Katrina, the Category Five hurricane that hit New Orleans on August 29, 2005, provided such an opportunity. The hurricane itself defied simple distinctions between natural and social phenomena, since it is impossible to untangle them. Low-pressure areas, warm ocean waters, deforestation, rising levels of carbon dioxide… there is no bright line to be found between human-induced and natural. The city itself, Tuana (2008, p. 195) notes, is "a complex material-semiotic interaction." The levees, built over two centuries by the Army Corp of Engineers, both acted on the river and were acted on by the river. They transformed geological and hydrological conditions, as did the indigenous people before them who also actively shaped the land (Tuana 2008, p. 195). Rich sources of shellfish, subsequent debris mounds, changing distributions of plants, animals, land, water—there is no pure origin or untouched beginning from which a story of deviation can be told. Levees and shell middens are actants as well as recipients in processes. Tuana (2008, p. 196) concludes that interdisciplinary thinking has become a political responsibility: "Our epistemic practices must thus be attuned to this manifold agency and emergent interplay, which means we cannot be epistemically responsible and divide the humanities from the sciences, or the study of culture from the study of nature."
- Another practice by which to stretch our selves into nonhuman worlds is to enter the lifeworld of a companion species. There is more joy and love here, less sublime danger than found in a drowning city, but still no simple boundaries or straightforward guidelines. Haraway (2008, p. 16) is a virtuoso at provoking relationships with companion species who are "training each other in acts of communication we barely understand." She advocates curiosity, respect, affection, and willingness "to [meet] the gaze of living, diverse animals" (Haraway 2008, p. 21). She extends the politics of care to dogs: "Caring means becoming subject to the unsettling obligation of curiosity, which requires knowing more at the end of the day than at the beginning" (Haraway 2008, p. 36). Frost (2016, p. 4) aims for a similar

affective association when she calls us creatures; we are not the same as all other creatures, but our “human creatureliness” requires us to attend to our habitats as a condition of living. Ecological feminists such as Haraway and Frost are not willing to give up on the human—they want us to see what our careless, rapacious destructiveness is doing to ourselves and others. They think we are capable of interspecies cobecoming, not to mention cultivating greater kinship with objects, and joy may well be a more potent motive than fear. We need to get rid of human exceptionalism, just as we need to jettison American exceptionalism, but hold onto our responsibility for the crises we have created.

- One route toward confronting both human and American exceptionalism entails the analyses and activism of Pacific Islanders on the front line of global environmental destruction. The erasure of their islands through sea-level rise is not a future threat. They are drowning now. Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner writes of the “1.5 to stay alive campaign” in response to the evident “consensus” among climate change scientists that a two-degree rise in the world's temperature is the allowable amount to avoid catastrophe. But, she writes, “while the rest of the world might be safe at 2°, the *Marshall Islands and all low-lying atolls will be under water*” (Jetnil-Kijiner 2015b, italics in original). Her poem “2 Degrees” challenges readers to rethink the exceptions they are willing to make: “Seems small/like 0.5°/shouldn't matter/like 0.5°/are just crumbs/like the Marshall Islands/must look/on a map/just crumbs you dust off the table, wipe/your hands clean” (Jetnil-Kijiner 2015a). Jetnil-Kijiner's poetry echoes the powerful legacy of Lorde (1984, p. 37), who wrote that “poetry is not a luxury” because “poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought.” The urgency of Jetnil-Kijiner's words and images demands a new thinking of relations within our species as well as between us and oceans, putting pressure on the “we” that is implicit in Foucault's queries, “Who can speak?” and “What can be said?”

CONCLUSION

- Feminist theory's main goal, in my view, is not to create a distinctive academic subfield and distinguish it from others. Our main goal is to trouble power relations, imagine better worlds, and work to achieve them. Although the academic world is an important workplace for many of us, we are not trying primarily to change our academic fields; we are trying to change the world.
- I think we come the closest to accomplishing that goal when we approach theoretical work in a generous and open manner, looking at tensions and contradictions as invitations to think further together. We can direct our passions toward doing our finest critical thinking and articulating our most compelling political visions. A feminist spirit of openness and commitment, combined with an ironic appreciation of paradoxes and difficulties, may be our best companion. Haraway (2016) invites readers to recognize the daunting odds of our climate struggles but nonetheless to “stay with the trouble.” Hemmings (2011, p. 226) suggests we recognize and “stay with the limits,” refusing simple resolutions in the name of continuing engagements. The Crunk Feminist Collective (**http://www.crunkfeministcollective.com/about/**) encourages us to seize “percussive moments” where we can develop “the kind of productive dissonance that occurs as we work at the edges of the disciplines, on the margins of social life, and in the vexed spaces between academic and nonacademic communities.” Morrison (1993) offers us the sustenance of “earned optimism” in which the very processes and practices of struggles are grounds for hope.

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GI425 Week 1 Introduction – women and war; concepts (gender, peace, security, mainstreaming) (CC) (AS) (26/09/2017)

This week introduces key concepts and policy issues that are referred to throughout the course including women, gender, gender mainstreaming, peace and (in)securities. The lecture explores some of the ideas and theories, which underpin a gendered analysis of women's role in, and experiences of conflict, war and insecurity and the promotion, establishment, and maintenance of peace.

Key Readings:

Chinkin C. and Kaldor, M. (2013) ‘Gender and New Wars’, Journal of International Affairs, 67(1), pp.167-187.

GENDER AND NEW WARS

Christine Chinkin and Mary Kaldor

War plays an important role in the construction of gender, or the social roles of men and women. This article analyzes the gendered experience of what Kaldor calls "new wars." It shows that new wars are largely fought by men in the name of a political identity that usually has a significant gender dimension. They use tactics that involve deliberate attacks on civilians, including systematic rape as a weapon of war, and are financed by predatory economic activities that tend to affect women more than men. The article describes the ways in which laws relating to gendered violence have been strengthened since the 1990s, arguing that implementation has been very weak. The article concludes that the construction of masculinity in new wars, in contrast to the heroic warrior of "old wars," is much more contradictory and insecure. On the one hand, extreme gender differences can only be secured through continued violence; on the other hand, the very contradictory and insecure character of masculinity offers a potential for alternatives. By looking at new wars through a gender lens, it is possible to identify policy options that might be more likely to contribute to a sustained peace. These include support for civil society, which tends to involve a preponderance of women, implementation of law at local and international levels, and greater participation of women in all aspects of peacemaking, including peacekeeping and law enforcement.

War is a predominantly male activity. It is fought largely by men, and statistics suggest that young men of military age are most likely to be killed in war, whether as combatants or as civilians.' This cannot be explained in terms of the biological differences between men and women. Women are capable of being effective soldiers; they can and do join fighting forces, and women get killed in battle as well as in attacks on civilians. Instead, the significance of the predominance of men engaging in warfare lies in the way that gender is constructed in war.

In referring to gender, we mean "a set of cultural institutions and practices that constitute the norms and standards of masculinity and femininity."[2] Although individual men and women may not necessarily conform to these stereotypes, masculinity is largely associated with physical strength, action, hardness, and aggression, in contrast to the association between femininity and passivity, empathy, caring, and emotion. In many spheres of life, such as those pertaining to political and military leadership, traits associated with masculinity are valued.^ But in according greater value to the traits of masculinity, the traits of femininity are correspondingly undervalued, which may lead to discrimination and even genderbased violence against those associated with feminine

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c _ and extols the value or traits associated with mascutne

traits or linity."* indeed, as Steans has noted, "militarists use the

masculinity, the myth of war's manliness to define soldierly behaviour

o f ^^^ ^^ reward soldiers."^ Soldiers are deemed "heroes,"

and this gives rise to the dichotomy between the

are images of the "protector" (male) and the "protected"

correspondingly (female). Such images are used to legitimize recourse

undervalued ^° conflict, thus raising public acceptance of the vio-

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, -^ , marily young men to injury and death. These images

t o QlSCriminaLlOn ^ISQ disguise both the multiple active roles women

andevengender - play, and the actuality of gender-based violence during

hased violence conflict. The terms "protected" and "victim" used to

1 describe women imply weakness and subordination,

o which, in turn, perpetuate women's lack of empowerassociated

Wltn ment in peacetime situations and mask the reality of

feminine traits. women's experience of violence and insecurity.

Our argument is that there are specific differences

in the way gender is constructed in different types of wars. In particular, we

suggest that "new wars," as described by Kaldor, can be interpreted as a mechanism

for rolling back any gains women may have made in recent decades." If war

is critical for the construction of gender difference, then greater gender equality,

especially among international peacebuilding agencies, may offer a way to achieve

sustainable peace. By investigating the distinctive gendered nature of new wars, it should be possible to identify new approaches and policies aimed at transforming violent situations." In doing so, we pay particular attention to the specifics of gendered violence, which occurs in all wars but takes different forms. An implication of our analysis suggests that the kind of masculinity constructed in new wars is deeply contradictory or ambiguous, and consequently, new possibilities for change may come out of this ambiguity.

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Gender and New Wars

In the first section, we outline the different ways that men and women experience new wars in contrast to "old wars," and draw some conclusions about the construction of gender relations. The second section briefly describes the evolution of international law that deals with gender relations in war, drawing upon Chinkin's work on feminist approaches to international law.^ Lastly, the concluding section discusses the implications of a gendered analysis for alternative approaches aimed at reducing violence in general. , .-. , -i^.V"

THE GENDERED EXPERIENCE OF NEW WARS

Men and women tend to experience war differently, particularly in the ways men and women are susceptible to and experience violence as a result of their sex or gender.' These experiences also vary according to different types of war.

Many terms have been used to conceptualize contemporary conflict: wars among the people, wars of the third kind, hybrid wars, privatized wars, or postmodern wars.'° For the purpose of this article, the term used is "new wars." The term "new wars" is used to distinguish contemporary political violence from the predominant "old war" conception that tends to underlie both scholarly analysis and policymaking. The concept of "old wars" is drawn from the experience of twentieth century wars in Europe. "New wars" are not necessarily empirically new, although it would be odd if there were not some new characteristics. Rather, they are different from the stylized conception of old wars; the point of developing an analysis of new wars is to draw attention to the problem of retained "old war" thinking on the part of scholars, policymakers, and legal advisers. Indeed, "old wars" may only exist insofar as they are an idealized conception of war that is contrasted with the analysis of new wars. For example, the international legal regime pertaining to conflict, otherwise known as international humanitarian law or the "laws of war," is based on a perception of old wars. •

By and large, new wars refer to conflicts currently taking place in different parts of the world. The generalizations that we make about new wars do not necessarily apply in all types of contemporary violence. Various forms of international military intervention, including the use of force for counter-terror operations, for example, are outside the scope of this article. Nevertheless, we do touch on some of these forms, as "old war" thinking on the part of those engaged in military activities often ends up exacerbating "new war" tendencies, as was the case in Iraq and Afghanistan."

New wars have a different logic from old wars, stemming from differences in the type of actors, the goals, the tactics, and the forms of finance. In particular, old wars tend to be extreme in the sense of maximizing and totalizing violence, while new wars tend to be persistent and more difficult to end. In what follows, we outline those differences, drawing out the specific ways in which they affect the differing experiences of men and women, and what this means for the construction of gender relations.

Actors

Old wars were fought by uniformed regular armed forces, who were subject to national military codes. In contrast, the participants of new wars are networks of state and non-state actors. They include remnants of regular armed forces, paramilitary groups, warlords, jihadists, mercenaries, private security contractors, and criminal groups. For example, in Syria today, the anti-government forces include brigades formed from defecting regular soldiers, civilians, jihadists drawn from all over the world, the Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, Kurdish brigades, and gangs whose numbers have been augmented by criminals released from jail by the Assad regime.'2 Collaborating with regular forces on the government side is the militia Shabiha, as well as non-state groups from abroad, most notably Hezbollah.

As in old wars, the fighters are predominantly male, with media reports depicting the leaders of such networks in ways that exemplify the construction of the physical and representational aspects of wartime masculinity. Kaldor has previously described how the Serbian paramilitary leader Zeljko Raznatovic, better known as "Arkan," epitomized this concept of masculinity during the Bosnian War. A notorious figure in the criminal underworld, he led the fan club of Belgrade's Red Star soccer team, from which he recruited members of his paramilitary group known as the "Tigers." According to the United Nations Commission of Experts established by the United Nations Security Council to investigate war crimes in the Bosnian War, the Tigers' hair was "cut short, and they wore black woollen caps, black gloves cut off mid-finger, and black badges on the upper arm."'^ Similarly, the Commission reported that members of a Croatian group called the "Wolves" wore "crew-cuts, black jump-suits, sunglasses and sometimes masks."'* As befits the tendency to hunt in "packs," the various paramilitary groups called themselves names such as "Tigers," "Wolves," or "White Eagles."'^

In both old and new wars there are, of course, examples of female participation. For instance, reportedly 8 percent of the Soviet armed forces were women at the peak of the Second World War; some reports estimate that women made up approximately one-third of fighters in the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, while women fighters were famed among Nicaraguan Sandinista guerrillas.'^ Currently, there is widespread reporting of female fighters in Syria, especially in the Kurdish areas." During the Bosnian War, there were reports of at least two women's brigades on the Serbian side—one formed in Glina in December 1991, led by a Serbian woman called Dusica Nikolic, and one formed in 1993 called the "Maidens of Kosovo"—as well as women fighters on the Croat and Bosnian sides.'^

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Gender and New Wars

The women were mythologized in local media, portrayed variously as "modernday Amazons," "patriots," and "warriors," thereby sending a message of shame to men who had not volunteered to fight.''^ Nikolic is reported to have described men sitting in cafes in Belgrade as "not real Serbs.""^" At the same time, enemy women soldiers were portrayed as monsters—that is, as not conforming to the feminine images of "real" women.2' . ., ;;

Goals

New wars are largely fought in the name of identity— A+fVvQco-mö ^íVL T^ne same ethnic, religious, or tribal—rather than for ideological or geopolitical goals. That is to say, the expressed goal of tim^e, enemy new wars is exclusive: access to the state for those identi- WOmen fied with a particular label. Religious wars can be about Asrprf ideas, such as the imposition of Sharia law, or about

A : u .u u. 1 • r • > as monsters—

identity, such as the right to exclusive political power for Muslims or Orthodox Christians. The religious wars tnat IS, aS nOt

of seventeenth century Europe between Protestants and COnforminP tO

Catholics were ideological, dealing with the break-up of fVip fpmininp

the Church's power and the role of individuals; by con- _ ^^ ., „

es or real

trast, the war in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1998 was

about the identity and the rights of different religious

communities to political power. Neither in Northern

Ireland nor in the former Yugoslavia could individuals change allegiance by converting

from one religion to another, as these were ascribed identities. Such was

also the case for Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi. ' ' '•

War is an important mechanism through which identities are constructed and

"fixed," through the imposition of a binary "us" and "them."^^ Even if previously

they thought of themselves as Yugoslav or Rwandan, people began to self-identify

as Muslim or Tutsi because these were the identities that caused them to be targeted

by those claiming opposing identities (Serbs and Croats in Bosnia; Hutus

in Rwanda) during the violence. As several writers have observed, the identities

constructed in war, whether ethnic, religious, or tribal, tend to be closely linked to

gender. Eor example, as Julie Mertus has put it: . ,

There is no gender identity prior to the performance in which it is expressed. '

. . . Similarly, there is no national identity prior to the performance in which

it is expressed. Performances of gender and performances of national identity

intertwine: the boundaries of each shape the corners of the other.^^

In the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the various national and religious identities (Serb, Croat, Muslim, and Kosovar Albanian) all had significant gender dimensions. Typically the nation was characterized as the mother, and the political leader, almost always a man, was characterized as the father.2" Ethnic nationalism was associated with a warrior mythology and a history based on battles lost or won. Moreover, national identities were imposed on both men and women as their primary identities. Being a woman was subsumed under a particular national identity, and attempts to express commonality with other women across national identity lines could be regarded as disloyalty.^^

Another common—and gendered—theme in national discourses is the emphasis on demographics. Among certain nationalist circles in Serbia in the early 1990s, there was much talk of a declining birth rate. In particular, Serbs were said to be subjected to a "genocide" in Kosovo because of a dramatic decline in the proportion of Serbs in the overall population of Kosovo. This was both because Serbs were leaving the province for economic reasons and it was claimed that they faced "ideological and institutional discrimination," and also because Serbs had a much lower birth rate than Albanians.^"^ A famous memorandum published by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1986 claimed that Serbs were subjected to "physical, political, legal, and cultural genocide" in Kosovo.2" The Serbian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the National Statistical Agency all exhorted women to have more babies, and a new antiabortion law was passed in 1993.^^ As Papic puts it, "ethnic nationalism is based on a politics of specific gender identity/difference in which women are simultaneously mythologized as the Nation's deepest "essence" and instrumentalized as its producer."^'^ In Croatia, various conservative organizations were established, among them the Croatian Population Movement and the Institute for the Protection of Motherhood, Family and Children, which called for women to have more children and opposed abortion.^"

At the same time, feminists and gays were vilified in the press. Pavlovic writes:

Sexism and homophobia are correlates of this national chauvinism. . . . In such a climate, any fluidity of identity becomes impossible: you must be a Croat before all else or you will find yourself excluded. By a strange logic of reversal, feminists are accused of rape and homosexuals are transformed into Serbian aggressors.^'

The same kind of association between gender construction and identity construction is found in new wars involving religious identities, although of course, religious and national identities are often intertwined. Fundamentalist religious movements, whether Muslim or Christian, tend to be associated with Armageddon tendencies, relating to the idea of a final battle espousing deeply conservative atti-

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tudes towards gender, as we know from the examples of the Taliban in Afghanistan or the Christian right in the United States.^^

Means

In old wars, battle—the clash between opposing military forces—was the decisive encounter. The goals of the war were to be achieved through the military capture of territory. In new wars, by contrast, battles

are rare, and the main violence is directed towards '~VV\ P> irl A

civilians. The goals are to be achieved through the

political control of territory. Violence represents a form SuggeSLo LildL

of control based on fear, and a way to expel or kill those in n eW WarS iS a

who disagree or have a different identity. . SVStPTTIÎîtic Diirt

Statistics suggest that men of military age tend to ^^ , r

of the strategy of

be targeted first in attacks on civilians, although large oy

numbers of women, children, and old men are killed, pOlltlCai

as well. For example, the Research and Documentation g^ "taCtic o f

Center in Sarajevo estimated that the total number

of people killed during the war in Bosnia was 97,207,

of which 34,581 were civilians. Some 9,901 women were estimated to have been

killed; in other words, nearly 90 percent of all deaths, and over 60 percent of

civilian deaths, were men.^^ Civilian women are the main victims of extreme

sexual violence, but not the only victims, as there are plenty of examples of homosexual

rape and mutilation.^"* The evidence suggests that rape in new wars is a

systematic part of the strategy of political control, a "tactic of war."^^ In Bosnia

and Herzegovina, for example, reports by human rights NGOs and international

agencies exposed the systematic pattern of sexual violence, including the establishment

of rape camps. The UN Commission of Experts, which investigated human

rights violations in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war, cited a report from the

Slovenian newspaper Delo in which a plan by the Yugoslav National Army reportedly

called for mass rape as an instrument of psychological warfare.^^ According to

the article, the plan stated that an "[ajnalysis of the Muslim's behaviour showed

their morale, desire for battle, and will could be crushed most easily by raping

women, especially minors and even children . . ."^^

According to the Croatian writer, Slavenka Drakulic:

What seems to be unprecedented about the rapes of Muslim women in Bosnia

(and, to a lesser extent, Croatian women too) is that there is a clear political

purpose behind the practice. The rapes in Bosnia are not only a standard . .

tactic of war, they are an organized and systematic attempt to cleanse (to

move, resettle, exile) the Muslim population from certain territories...The eyewitness
accounts and reports state that women are raped everywhere and at
all times, and victims are of all ages, from 6 to 80. They are also deliberately
impregnated in great numbers... held captive and released only after abortion
becomes impossible. This is so they will give birth to little Chetniks [Serb
paramilitaries],' the women are told.^^ - ., -•-••'. ' ' • ' •

A similar pattern can be observed in other new
Sexual violence has wars, in Rwanda, gender crimes were evident in the
nervasivP genocide in 1994; Tutsis and moderate Hutus—that
£• n is to say Hutus who did not support the genocide—
or all w a r s ^^^e mutilated and killed, and women were also
,
throughout history. sexually mutilated and raped.^" In its jurisprudence.
In some old wars it ^^^ international Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
has been deliberate "^ f'^ 7°"^ "! " ; " " " Z ^^Tl
sys t emat i c , no t and Punishment or the Crime of Genocide, which defines genocide as an act when "committed with
just a side effect of intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, etha
danP'erOUS male nical, racial, or religious group."'*" Sexual violence of
. . a systematic character has also been widespread in
activity. ^Yye Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).-" Recent
reports coming out of Syria suggest a similar pattern
that includes detention in rape camps. While rape has been committed by both
government and rebel forces, there does appear to be a systematic use of rape to
empty areas controlled by or sympathetic to the rebels.*^

Sexual violence has been a pervasive feature of all wars throughout history.

In some old wars, it has been deliberate and systematic, not just a side effect of a dangerous male activity. For instance, the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, of which Chinkin was a member, found that the Japanese "comfort stations," where women were forced to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers in the 1930s and 1940s, were a state-institutionalized phenomenon.*^ The women were "recruited" through various means, including deception, coercion, and brutal force, from all areas where Japanese authority held sway, either as a colonial power (Korea and Taiwan) or through military occupation.'*'' As the Tribunal describes.

> Procuring and securing women for these stations was an integral part of the war strategy, admittedly intended to deter open rape in occupied territory, limit anti-Japanese resistance among the local populace, avoid international disgrace and protect the Japanese soldiers from venereal disease.""

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Although the trauma and suffering is no different, the nature of the instrumentalization in new wars is very different. There is little concern about opprobrium, security leaks, or the spread of venereal disease. The rapes are deliberately public, and are meant to instill fear in local populations as part of a plan to destroy or control local communities.

There are, of course, other types of gendered violence that can be found in contemporary wars, in addition to the use of systematic rape as a military tactic. The Special Court for Sierra Leone concluded that: .

> Women and girls...were often abducted in circumstances of extreme violence, compelled to move along with the fighting forces from place to place, and coerced to perform a variety of conjugal duties including regular sexual intercourse, forced domestic labour such as cleaning and cooking for the "husband",

endure forced pregnancy, and to care for and bring up children of the "marriage."""

The treatment of child soldiers is also gendered in new wars. Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito of the International Criminal Court (ICC) presented a dissenting opinion about the absence of any reference to sexual violence in the case against Thomas Lubanga in the DRC: • '

Sexual violence and enslavement are the main crimes committed against girls and their illegal recruitment is often intended for that purpose (nevertheless they also often participate in direct combat). . . . It is discriminatory to exclude sexual violence which shows a clear gender differential impact from being a bodyguard or porter which is mainly a task given to young boys."'

In other words, women and girls' socially assigned caring roles make them vulnerable to targeted attack, including sexual violence, in a range of situations.

Forms of Finance

Old wars were financed by taxation and were typically associated with a war economy that was centralizing, autarchic, and totalizing, involving all citizens. In particular, during the two world wars, women were drawn into the labor force in large numbers. New wars are almost exactly the opposite. Taxation is low, so the warring factions have to find other ways to finance their activities. New war economies are decentralized and open to the global economy. Participation in military activity tends to be low, and unemployment tends to be high. The ways in which the warring groups finance their activities are usually directly related to violence. These methods of financing include: looting and pillaging; setting up checkpoints where assets such as televisions, cows, and foreign currency are "exchanged" for

necessities; "taxation" of humanitarian aid; financial support from the diaspora;

kidnapping and hostage-taking; and various kinds of criminal activity, especially stealing and smuggling valuable commodities such as oil, diamonds, drugs, and humans. Typically, women are harder hit by these activities, both directly—such as through human trafficking or the growth of the sex industry, which is associated with many new wars—and indirectly, through the various ways by which the aforementioned forms of resource extraction affect their daily lives.

Taken together, these various aspects of new wars explain the tendency for their longevity. Both for political reasons—the need to underpin identity politics—and for economic reasons—the need to maintain access to resources—the various warring parties acquire a vested interest in continued violence. What gets established is a predatory set of social relations that are difficult to contain in time and space. They are disseminated through identity politics, especially through refugees and internally displaced persons. Likewise, they spread through transnational criminalized networks, which are the vectors of various types of illicit activity. They are difficult to end because neither side has an interest in winning; rather, they may benefit from the perpetuation of violence. Thus, new wars can be described as a kind of mutual enterprise, in contrast to our conception of old wars as a contest of wills.

When peace agreements are negotiated by the international community, the participants, typically leaders of the warring factions, are those with a vested interest in sustaining violence and entrenching their positions of power. This is why peace agreements do not necessarily end the violence, particularly in regards to criminality and gender-based violence. Even where women have participated in the fighting, they are rarely involved in peace processes, and thus are excluded from positions of power in post-conflict societies.*^ This is why the distinction between conflict and post-conflict, and the distinctions between political, criminal, and gender-based violence, are blurred in new wars.

Moreover, international agencies are often drawn into the predatory political economy or the mutual enterprise. In a distortion of the roles of "protector" and "protected," the greater deployment of UN and regional peacekeeping forces since the end of the Cold War has been marred by allegations of sexual exploitation and violence against women and girls."*' The impunity caused by the immunity of peacekeepers from local jurisdictions, coupled with the lack of disciplinary action by the troop-contributing state, has undermined the legitimacy of the missions and led to the assertion of a zero tolerance policy.^" The possession of small arms and weapons by law enforcement officers can become another source of insecurity.^' Likewise, peacekeepers have been involved in smuggling activities, especially human trafficking. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, Western forces have

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relied heavily on private security contractors who have also engaged in predatory and abusive behavior."

In combination, all these factors—the predominance of male participation, the constructed links between national and gender identity, the differential forms of violence against men and women, and the predatory social relationships that tend to affect women more than men—contribute to the construction of extreme gender inequalities. As in all wars, the predominance

of men, as fighters and as "martyrs," is an essential ^ , T*!-«

, . , . , . r • ^ r r J- ne extrenie

basis for the construction of a particular rorm of ..^

masculinity. Raped and murdered women do not . . geilQer

die as heroines, as Kesic points out.^^ All the same, inequalities

there is a difference between the heroic warrior of . ;. aççnriiïtpd ^A/ith old wars—^who is supposed to only fight other heroic warriors and to act in honorable and chivalric ways, thereby keeping the actuality of gender-based vio- Oniy be lence out of sight—and the new warrior who deliber- thrOUffh ately engages in excessive violence against civilians, including women. . _ . • -

In her study of Russian servicemen fighting in the Chechen wars, Maya Eichler suggests that in the Chechen wars, the ideal of the heroic warrior of the Second World War and the Cold War was severely challenged.^"

On the one hand, many soldiers were unwilling to fight, especially in the first Chechen war; the idea of killing people "like us" caused distress among soldiers, and led to high levels of draft evasion.^^ On the other hand, soldiers were portrayed as using excessive violence, and many experienced post-traumatic stress and marginalization in society after the wars.^* One can argue that what she calls the "contradictions of militarized masculinity" is characteristic of new wars.^^ The low participation in new wars, the systematic application of deliberate gendered violence against civilians, and the difficulty of sustaining exclusive identities because of the link between gender and national or religious identities in a world of open communication, all contribute to a masculinity that is ambiguous, insecure, and violent.

One implication is that persistent violence can be explained in gender, political, and economic terms. The extreme gender inequalities associated with new wars can only be sustained through continued violence, precisely because the masculinity associated with "new wars" is so ambiguous and insecure. The other implication is that the very insecurity of the masculinities constructed in new wars opens up possibilities for alternatives, as we explain in the conclusion.

GENDER AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Human rights are based on an assumption of universalism; according to Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."^^ Accordingly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that "All people are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law."^' However, it has become accepted in human rights law that in order to achieve substantive equality—that is, real equal enjoyment of rights, equal opportunities, and choices, and not merely legal guarantees of rights—it may be necessary to redress structural and social disadvantage, and to accord differential treatment to some groups. Such differential treatment is not wrongful discrimination. One such group consists of people who are discriminated against and are targets of violence because of their sex or gender. Discrimination on the grounds of sex was prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations, the UDHR, the ICCPR, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).^" In response to the reality that "despite these various instruments, extensive discrimination against women continues to exist," the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) condemns discrimination against women on the basis of sex.*'" Currently, 187 states are party to CEDAW. Since 1979, there has been a greater understanding by international organs and legal regimes as to how social constructions, not only of biological sex, but also of gender—"the social meanings given to biological sex differences"—impact the "distribution of resources, wealth, work, decision-making and political power...within the family as well as public life...Thus, gender is a social stratifier...[which] helps us understand the...unequal structure of power that underlies the relationship between the sexes."*"^ In 2010, in further support of this understanding, CEDAW affirmed "that the Convention covers gender-based discrimination against women.""^

Since the 1990s, at least partly in response to the excesses of new wars, there has been greater recognition of the gendered experience of violence and the need to seek ways to address it, at least more formally. Gendered violence does not just happen to women, or to men, but is motivated specifically by "factors concerned with gender."^" Accordingly, international human rights law recognizes violence against women as "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.""^ States must exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish such violence. Through a range of provisions, international humanitarian law also prescribes gender-based violence committed during armed conflict and forbids attacks on personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.*"^ The jurisdiction of the ad hoc inter-

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national criminal tribunals and the International Criminal Court (ICC) defines crimes of sexual violence, such as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and any other form of sexual violence, as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Some prosecutions have been successfully pursued with respect to such violence against both women and men, although there are also cases where charges have not been brought despite significant testimony of sexual and gendered violence."'

The number of cases prosecuted at the ^ . . ,

international or national level remains Institutional low. The low reporting rate, fear, gender alsO reSultS in

stereotypes, and myths about sexual vio- [^i caSeS of gender-related

lence all inhibit access to justice and con- kÜlings of WOmen, aS a

tribute to a climate of impunity. (Jther '^

significant obstacles to preventing, inves- laCK Ot reSpeCt tOr tne rUle

tigating, and prosecuting the killings of laW, COrrUption, and

of women include the failure of police p^^j- administration of

intervention, a lack of implementation of . . -,

r , , justice are the norm.

security measures for women, repeated)

attacks on law-enforcement officials and • - f; ' ;.:

women's rights advocates, and inaccessible

detention locations in areas under the control of insurgents and other illegally

armed groups. Institutional weakness also results in impunity in cases of genderrelated

killings of women, as a lack of respect for the rule of law, corruption, and

poor administration of justice are the norm.^*^ Despite the widely accepted definition

of trafficking as a transnational organized crime in the Palermo Protocol,

there remain many legal and practical obstacles to its successful prosecution.^^

The Security Council thematic program relating to women, peace, and security

has recast gendered violence as a threat to international peace and security,

thereby implicitly linking it to human security.™ The groundbreaking first resolution.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, is based upon

four pillars—prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery—which

are similar to the three pillars underpinning the much-publicized concept of the

Responsibility to Protect (RTP).*'" However, there remains a disconnect between,

and compartmentalization of, the relevant legal regimes. UNSCR 1325 and RTP

are not necessarily understood as complementary and mutually reinforcing, especially
with respect to prevention and participation in all stages of peace and security
processes. Despite its constant repetition and the reiteration by the Secretary- ,
General that "Sexual violence, when used in conflict as a method or tactic of
warfare, must be recognized in provisions for security arrangements," UNSCR
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1325 is not implemented, and few ceasefires or peace agreements make any reference
to conflict-related sexual violence."2 UNSCR 1888 added institutional bodies,
notably the authorization of a special representative of the Secretary-General "to
provide coherent and strategic leadership" across UN agencies seeking a coordi-
\ ~ nated approach to sexual violence in armed conimpUnity
for fiict.73 Building on the earlier resolutions, UNSCR
perpetrators and. '960 introduces new compliance processes into the
theinvisibilitV ^ women, peace, and security agenda. This involves
f . . monitoring, reporting, and analysis to ensure "the
Or survivors is íi u i o ^
wx oLAi V A vv^xo 10 a systematic gathering of timely, accurate, reliable and
continuing reality objective data" and the naming and shaming of indiin
Pender-based viduals that are "credibly suspected of committing or
rrimp«; being responsible for patterns of rape... in...armed
conflict."^* However, the latter can only be effective if
real shame is incurred by those committing such acts,
as well as denunciation through their prosecution. A willingness to resort to sanctions
against perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflict was first expressed
in UNSCR 1820; in UNSCR 1960, the Security Council expressed its intention to

include rape and sexual violence as criteria in adopting or renewing sanctions in situations of armed conflict. Compliance with Article 5 of CEDAW, which requires State Parties to modify cultural attitudes and practices to eliminate harmful gendered practices and stereotypes, is also key to addressing discrimination against women and hence enhancing their security.'^^

Impunity for perpetrators and the invisibility of survivors is a continuing reality of gender-based crimes. This leads to the normalization of violence in nonconflict situations, and thus ensures its continuation in both conflict and nonconflict situations: , •

Impunity for violence against women compounds the effects of such violence as a mechanism of control. When the State fails to hold the perpetrators accountable, impunity not only intensifies the subordination and powedessness of the targets of violence, but also sends a message to society that male violence against women is both acceptable and inevitable. As a result, patterns of violent behaviour are normalized.'"

This is also seen in the high incidence of domestic violence throughout armed conflict, which continues post-conflict." It is apparent that attitudes have not changed in accordance with CEDAW Article 5.

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CONCLUSION r , •,. • :

New wars include massive violations of human rights. By targeting civilians, participants in new wars also violate a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law—that of distinction between combatants (legitimate targets in conflict) and civilians (who must not be targeted). Likewise, participants in new wars also violate domestic law by engaging in predatory economic and criminal activities. One counter-trend to the description of new wars given above is the upsurge in civil society, often involving a preponderance of women in a continuation of their "caring" roles that is frequently associated with new wars. This was the case in Bosnia and is currently the case in Syria."^ Civil society engages in humanitarian activities, providing basic necessities, trying to maintain services like schools and health clinics, helping the victims of sexual violence, reaching out across communities, and trying to stop violence by working on proposals for peace. This rise in civil society activity is associated with what Kaldor calls "islands of civility," areas like Tuzla in Bosnia or some areas of Syria, where people try to keep out of the fighting and maintain multicultural harmony.^' Eurthermore, local civil society groups often link to international civil society groups or NGOs and put forward proposals to the international community. Indeed, it is through civil society advocacy that many of the new elements of international law relating to gender have been introduced. It was women's NGOs, for example, often linked to local civil society groups, that lobbied for the inclusion of sexual violence as a war crime in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the

In this essay we have argued that all wars involve the construction of gender stereotypes, and that the gender stereotypes constructed in "new wars" are different from those constructed in "old wars." The implication of this argument is that by challenging the construction of masculinity in war, it is possible to challenge war itself. This also means challenging constructions of femininity in war. Eor example, women are often falsely designated as "peacemakers." This is evident in UNSCR 1325, which offers no basis for its reaffirmation of "the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building," thereby creating the assumption that this is somehow a "natural" role for women.^' This both discounts the reality of women as combatants and supporters of conflict and undermines women's agency throughout and after conflict. Women are placed in a dovible bind: if they are "natural" peacemakers, their efforts in this respect are not credited, while they are simultaneously excluded from formal peacemaking processes.^^ It also deflects attention from the realities of women's peacemaking activities—working for peace can be dangerous, and those doing so should be accorded special attention by international policymakers.^^ Instead, they are often

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ignored.

International efforts to address the various aspects of new wars should explicitly take gender into account, particularly regarding the specific gendered character of new wars. Efforts might be undertaken in the following policy areas:

Civil society: Civil society involvement makes possible policies that are relevant to the lived reality of new wars. It should include civil society groups in discussions of how to respond to violence within their particular locale as well as more generally. The involvement of civil society in peace negotiations should be mandatory, and adequate support should be provided for "islands of civility" through international guarantees of locally arranged cease-fires. The latter is akin to the Bosnian safe haven concept, but would have to be much more effective—including committing adequate and appropriate human and financial resources for robust protection, demilitarization, and policing, along with support for local political and judicial processes.^*

Peacekeeping: Traditional peacekeeping operations are about separating the sides, largely composed of men, or holding cease-fires. This is in contrast to fighting war, which involves men taking sides largely against other men. Both therefore reinforce traditional concepts of masculinity. Peacekeeping needs to be reoriented towards protection of both sexes and law enforcement. A step in this direction is

UNSCR 2098, which mandated an "Intervention Brigade" in the DRC that was under direct command of the MONUSCO Force Commander, with the responsibility of neutralizing armed groups . . .and the objective of contributing to reducing the threat posed by armed groups to state authority and civilian security in eastern DRC and to make space for stabilization activities.^^

International Law: International humanitarian and human rights law must be implemented, and there must be an end to impunity for crimes against humanity, including gender-based crimes.

Rule of Law: Efforts should be undertaken to reestablish rule of law and legitimate political authority at local levels through alliances with civil society, so as to provide the conditions for everyday security, legitimate forms of employment and exchange for both men and women, and the provision of public services.

Participation and Gender Equality: Above all, much greater participation of women is needed in all international roles, in peacekeeping, law enforcement, and at all levels of peace negotiations. This does not assume or affirm that women are peacemakers, as per the previously discussed gender stereotype; rather, it is a way to counter the gender stereotyping that is constructed in war, and by doing so, to reduce the benefits that the warring parties gain from violence. Women's agency should be recognized as a force for change, and should be taken seriously as a

matter of equality and practicality.

These suggestions are indicative of the kind of approach that could be developed if new wars are viewed through a gender lens. What we have tried to show is that new wars are gendered in extreme ways, and that the implementation of international norms is critical if we are to begin to address the problems that arise from new wars. Perhaps the most hopeful aspect of our argument is the illegitimacy of new wars in an increasingly open and globalized world, and concomitantly, the precarious character of the masculinity associated with new wars. ^

NOTES

' Jenny Pearce, "Bringing violence 'back home': Gender socialisation and the transmission of violence

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^ Jill Steans, Gí»ícrfl;iíí/«tenuiiw/ifl/7íe/flíw«s (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 92. . .

^ Rebecca J. Cookand Simone Cusack, Gertder Stereotyping: Transnational Legal Perspectives (Philadelphia:

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* See, e.g. Steans; Joshua Goldstein, War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jean Bethke Elshtain, Women and War (New York:

Basic Books, 1987).

5 Steans, 93 . . , • "• - ' . •• ' -

^ See Mary Kaldor, New and Old Wars: Organised Violenee in a Global Era, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity

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^ Ibid. • . K • , ••^'

^ See Hilary Charlesworth and Christine Chinkin, The Boundaries of International Law: A Feminist

Analysis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

^ Richard Jolly and Deepayan Basu Ray, "The Human Security Eramework and National Human

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Report Paper, United Nations Development Programme, New York: 2006), 5.

'" See Erhard Eppler, Vom Gewaltmärkte zum Gewaltmarkt? (Erankfurt: Suhrkmamp, 2001); Rupert

Smith, Ttie Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005);

Erank G. Hoffman, Gonßict in the 21st Gentury: Tlie Rise of Hybrid Wars (Arlington: Potomac Institute

for Policy Studies, 2007); Chris Hables Gray, Postmodern War-: Tire New Polities of Gonßict (New York:

The Guiiford Press, 1997).

" See Kaldor (2012), Chapter 7. The interventions in these two countries were conceived in classic

"old war" terms, and the aim was defeat of a state. However, the interventions sped up the collapse

of the state, and the interveners were faced with an escalating mixture of criminality, human rights

violations, sectarianism, and Islamic extremism that is characteristic of "new war" situations.

'^ See Mary Kaldor, "A Humanitarian Strategy Eocused on Syrian Civilians," in The Syrian Dilemma,

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2013).

'•^ UN, "Einal Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council

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"Iron Lady." But she became more extreme when taking on a male role. A highly educated woman,

she was a genetic biologist and a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Sarajevo, and had

spent time in the United States as a Fulbright scholar. During the war in Bosnia, she said of Muslims:

"It was genetically deformed material that embraced Islam. And now, of course, with each successive generation it simply becomes concentrated. It gets worse and worse. It simply expresses itself and

dictates their style of thinking, which is rooted in their genes. And through the centuries, the genes

degraded further." Biljana Plavsic, Svet, Novi Sad, September 1993, cited and translated by Slobodan

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This is largely explained in socioeconomic terms. Most Albanians were poor and rurally based,

while Serbs tended to live in cities and have higher incomes. Albanians living and working in towns

had similar birth rates as Serbs. See International Independent Gommission on Kosovo, The Kosovo

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33 Mirsad Tokaca, Bosanska knjiga mrtvih-Ljudski gubiei u Bosni i Hercegovini 1991-1995 (Sarajevo: Istrazivacko dokumentacioni centar, 2012). These numbers, which only included directly traceable casualties, are considerably lower than the numbers provided and widely cited at the time by the Bosnian Ministry of Information. For a discussion of' the numbers, see Mary Kaldor, "In Defence of New Wars," Stability: International Journal of Security and Development 2, no. 1, art. 4, http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.at.

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Gender, Militarism, and Peace-Building: Projects of the Postconflict Moment Mary H. Moran Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York 13346; email: mmoran@colgate.edu Annu. Rev. Anthropol. 2010.39:261-74 First published online as a Review in Advance on June 21, 2010 The Annual Review of Anthropology is online at anthro.annualreviews.org This article's doi: 10.1146/annurev-anthro-091908-164406 Copyright ? 2010 by Annual Reviews. All rights reserved 0084-6570/10/1021-0261$20.00 Key Words war, violence, humanitarian intervention, postconflict societies Abstract Scholars have argued for decades about the relationship between biolog ical sex and organized violence, but feminist analysts across numerous disciplines have documented the range and variety of gendered roles in times of war. In recent years, research has brought new understanding of the rapidity with which ideas about masculinity and femininity can change in times of war and the role of militarization in constructing and enforcing the meaning of manhood and womanhood. In the post-Cold War period, "new wars" (Kaldor 1999) have mobilized gender in multi ple ways, and peace-building is often managed by external humanitarian organizations. A strange disconnect exists between the massive body of scholarly research on gender, militarism, and peace-building and on the-ground practices in postconflict societies, where essentialized ideas of men as perpetrators of violence and women as victims continue to guide much program design. 261This content downloaded from 158.143.233.108 on Mon, 18 Sep 2017 14:36:53 UTCAll use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

INTRODUCTION For anthropologists and other scholars grap pling with the relationship between gender, militarism, and peace-building, the dispersal of materials across disciplines and genres can present a formidable challenge. Although mas sive, interdisciplinary academic and policy lit eratures exist in the separate areas of mili tarism and peace-building (and their cognates, including violence, terror, peace-keeping, and postconflict rebuilding), a significant portion ignores the question of gender and simply as sumes that these processes are experienced in similar ways by all humans. Paris's influen tial book At War's End: Building Peace After Conflict (2004), for example, contains no in dex entries for "women," "men," or "gender" and presents detailed case studies in a clas sical international relations continuum to ex plore the impact of different types of peace treaties on the desired outcome of a conflict free society. A recent argument for rethinking the conventional wisdom with regard to stan dard practices for implementing democratic reform and reconciliation among formerly con testing parties likewise avoids gendered lan guage, referring only to disembodied "belliger ents" and "key leaders" (Wolpe & McDonald 2008). Feminist writers, on the other hand, have often addressed the role of violence in main taining gender inequality. The threat or use of physical force that is glorified and institution alized in formal, state-based militaries can also be deployed in neighborhoods, households, and bedrooms, resulting in the systematic subor dination of women (Elshtain 1987; Rear don 1985). Attempts to read these different litera tures side by side suggest that it is apparently still common for political theorists and policy makers to exclude a gender perspective from their analyses; however, since the 1990s a se ries of United Nations conventions and changes in international law have made it more diffi cult to ignore. United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in October of 2000, calls for the "increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict" (United Nations 2000). The resolution was itself a product of both the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the "Windhoek Dec laration" (also known as the "Namibia Plan of Action"), a document emanating from a semi nar organized by the Lessons Learned Unit of the UN Department of Peace Keeping Oper ations, which called for a "gender mainstrearn ing" approach at all levels of conflict interven tion and peace support (United Nations Secur. Counc. 2001). International criminal tribunals established by the security council to investigate and prosecute war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone have pushed the legal definitions of gender-based violence and rape into the categories of crimes against humanity, leading to the emergence of new bodies of international law. An emerging body of critical legal scholarship is beginning to question the universalist assumptions built into transitional justice mechanisms and other strategies that seek to empower women, but too many postconflict reform projects continue to be grounded in static, overly simplified, or locally inappropriate notions of gender. In this review, I trace the points of articulation and disconnect between disparate literatures while pointing out the consequences of naturalizing either femininity or masculinity. The UN, the World Bank, and other multinational organizations regularly employ gender specialists, who are sometimes anthropologists, in their fact-finding and program-development process, and the ever-growing humanitarian and nongovernmental organization (NGO) communities are particularly sensitive to questions of gender inclusiveness. Two points become clear in any initial survey of the literature, however: {a) With some notable exceptions, the term gender is still commonly used as synonym for "women" and, (b) although most analysts of gender explicitly position themselves as feminists, a wide variety of theoretical positions and disciplinary perspectives are represented in the body of work on this topic. The literature is further divided into scholarly studies and policy recommendations, rapid assessment reports, and guidebooks for gender mainstreaming practices in such post conflict projects as the demobilization of armed combatants, male and female, trauma counseling, and the retraining of both former fighters and civilians for economic development in the postwar period. Other peace-building projects with explicit gender components include transitional justice measures such as legal code reform, constitutional and governance restructuring, truth and reconciliation commissions, land tenure reform, and performances of "traditional" modes of conflict resolution. Given the space limitations of this article, I address the scholarly literature only, although the reader will find many references to broader sources of information in the references of these works. MILITARY MEN, PACIFIST WOMEN? The overall literature on gender, militarism, and peace has been shaped for close to 50 years by debates about the relationship between these terms; initially, innate biological differences were offered as an explanation for the near universal participation of men as warriors and women as victims and/or peace activists. Within anthropology and other disciplines, debates centered on the question of whether warfare was an inevitable outcome of male biology and was therefore impossible to eradicate from human life. Goldstein (2001) has exhaustively reviewed the cross-cultural evidence from anthropology, psychology, primate studies, and human biology and concluded that "minor biological differences" in combination with "cultural molding of tough, brave men who feminize their enemies to encode domination" (p. 406) best explain men's near monopoly on organized

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violence, although neither factor is sufficient alone (see also Gusterson 2007). The impact of feminist theories in a number of academic fields, defining gender as fluid, vari able, and multiple systems of femininities and masculinities, made possible a new formulation of the relationship. We know now that times of extreme violence, upheaval, and disruption are also times of profound change for gender ideologies and for relations between men and women. Rather than institutionalizing static, biologically determined patterns of behavior, militarization can promote rapid shifts in the way men and women behave toward each other, the work they do, and what they expect of each other and of themselves. Intimately connected with the process of organizing human and material resources into permanent, legitimate institutions concerned with armed force, militarism requires men and women to consider how their supposedly natural talents and abilities may be put to the service of a larger cause. In contemporary nation-states, milita rization often encourages a new and explicit conceptualization of citizenship that may in volve highly gendered notions of membership, contribution, and sacrifice. Feminist political scientist Cynthia Enloe, among others, has noted that neither brave soldiers nor patriotic mothers and widows are born; they are pro duced through gendered processes that require the deployment and mobilization of material and symbolic resources (1983, 1989, 1993). In some times and places, these processes reinforce and naturalize gender inequality, but they can also have the opposite effect. Anthropologists, with their long-standing con structionist view that genders are historically and geographically variable, have been slow to apply these theoretical insights to questions of militarization as a process, perhaps because, as Gusterson (2007) suggests, they have only recently begun to consider the discipline's own positioning in the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century militarization (p. 156; see also di Leonardo 1985). Feminist scholars in fields such as philos ophy, religion, political science, and interna tional relations as well as anthropology began questioning the stark characterization of men as warriors and women as peacemakers in the early 1980s and have continued to do so in the face of enduring representations of these stereotypes in journalism and popular media (Cancian & www.annuahrviews.org Gerider, Militarism, and Peace-Building 263This content downloaded from 158.143.233.108 on Mon, 18 Sep 2017 14:36:53 UTCAll use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Gibson 1990; Cockburn 1998, 2002, 2007; Cooke & Woollacott 1993; Elshtain 1987; Elshtain & Tobias 1990; Enloe 1983, 1989, 1993; Fraser & Jeffery 1993; Harris & King 1989; Hatty 2000; Jacobs et al. 2000; Lorentzen & Turpin 1998; Macdonald et al. 1998; Meintjes et al. 2001; Melman 1998; Reardon 1985, 1993; Ruddick 1983, 1989; Tickner 1992; Turshen & Twagiramariya 1998; Vickers 1993; Zalewski & Parpart 1998). A series of related topics have been addressed in this literature, including the differing ex periences of men and women during wartime; differential rates of representation by sex among casualties and in refugee communities; the targeting of women for particular kinds of violence, usually rape or sexual mutilation; the consequences of men's military mobilization for domestic violence, including marital rape and spousal abuse; women's economic well being, access to land, jobs, and other resources; and the impact of national military spending on the provision of state services. The growing literature on masculinity, particularly its militarized varients (Bowker 1998; Braudy 2003; Connell 1987, 1995, 2000; Gill 1997; Gillis 1989; Gutman 1997; Helman 1999; Highgate 2003; Kwon 2001; Moon 2005; Moran 1995; Peterson 1992; Wicks 1996), has contributed to the analysis of war and peace as gendered processes. Inspired by Anderson's work on nationalism (1991), studies of contemporary forms of citizenship closely linked to military service showed that these were foundational to hegemonic masculinities subordinating most women and some men. The highly influential body of work by Enloe (1983, 1989, 1993, 2000, 2004, 2007) connected the incorporation of women into national armies, the global distribution of American military bases, world economic restructuring, and prostitution and sex trafficking, among other topics, to shifts in gender ideologies on a global scale. Responses to Enloe's ideas formed the basis of an early collection on militarism, gender, and nationalism in anthropology (Sutton 1995) and paved the way for other anthropological studies of militarism and gender (Lutz 2001, 2009; Nordstom 1997, 2004; Sunindyo 1998). From this body of research, militarism came to be seen as a process affecting all societies worldwide, regardless of whether they were actively engaged in war at any given time. NEW WARS, NEW QUESTIONS As local conflicts spread across the globe in the post-Cold War period of the 1990s, American anthropologists who had been able to ignore the militarization of their own nation-state were confronted by what Kaldor has termed "new wars" breaking out in their traditional field locations in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere (Gusterson 2007, Kaldor 1999). The gender regimes of an increasing number of places were suddenly and demonstrably being transformed by processes of militarization; but rather than the state sponsored, industrially driven pattern that had characterized the west in the first half of the twentieth century, these new wars were more likely to involve nonstate actors and directed much of their violence at civilian populations. Women were no longer confined to the home front or even to the rear positions but instead were incorporated much more directly into the violence as both victims and perpetrators. As far back as the 1960s and 1970s, some Marxist feminists had speculated about revolutionary mobilization as a liberating process for women, one that would grant them full citizenship for their service in militarized state-making and would force their male counterparts to accept them as full equals. As outcomes of anticolonial and identity-inspired wars of liberation became clear, however, these hopes were largely disappointed (Afshar & Eade 2004, Altinay 2004, Bernal 2000, Conover & Sapiro 1993, El-Bushra 2004, Feinman 2000, Gautam et al. 2001, Goldman 1982, Hauge 2007, Jalusic 1999, Kumar 2001, Lomsky-Feer & Ben-Ari 1999, Luciak 2001, Lyons 2002, Makley 2007, Mama 1998, Manchandra 2001, Milles 2000, Molyneux 1985, Montoya et al. 2002, Moser & Clark 2001, Narikkar 2005, Pankhurst 2008b,

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Shayne 2004, Tetreault 1994, Turshen 2002, Unger 2000, Utas 2005). Similar discussion swirled around the question of opening combat roles to women in the highly technologized militaries of the United States and other developed countries. Innovations in weapons design, resulting in smaller and lighter yet more lethal small arms, largely obviated the older discourses about whether women were biologically unsuited for combat. As these weapons flooded into the "new war" sites of Asia, Africa, and Latin American, the phenomenon of the "child soldier" became a focus of much research (Kaldor 1999, Rosen 2007). At the same time, a different literature focused on women's antiwar efforts, no longer assuming these were natural expressions of essential female nature but rather responses to the differentially devastating impact of the new wars on civilians. There had already been a vigorous debate about the relationship between motherhood and peace-building, some of which reprised the older naturalizing arguments but more importantly raised the issue of "moral maternity" (Ruddick 1989) as a basis for women's solidarity and organizing. Feminists recognized the strategic value of such moral claims but worried that they played into the essentialized femininities that had long been excluded from the male realm of politics. Women's grassroots movements for peace, sometimes crossing class and sectional lines, were credited in some instances with almost phenomenal success, not always accurately. Some of these movements undeniably led to new forms of agency and empowerment as women invoked moral positions as peacemakers in the face of seemingly intractable conflict (African Women Peace Support Group 2004; Amiri 2005; Anderlini 2007; Bouta et al. 2005; Castillo 1997; Clifton & Gell 2001; Cockburn 1998, 2007; Dolgopol 2006; Durham & Gurd 2005; Fitzgerald 2002; Gardner & El Bushra 2004; Giles & Hyndman 2004; Haq 2007; Harris & King 1989; Hunt 2004,2005; Jacoby 2005; Jok 1999; Korac 2006; Manchandra 2001; Mason 2005; Marshall 2000; Mendez 2005; Moghadam 2001, 2005; Moola 2006; Moran & Pitcher 2004; Nakaya 2004; Pankhurst 2004; Povey 2004; Powers 2006; Rabrenovic & Roskas 2001; Ramet 1999; Rehn & Sirleaf2002; Sharoni 1995; Zalewski & Parpart 1998). Careful attention to the different strategies used by women activists in diverse times and places has cast doubt on any single cause theory of how conflicts are resolved and lasting peace is achieved. Amid the tragedy and terror came a growing realization that the gains in organizational capacity and personal empowerment achieved by some women peace activists were difficult to sustain in the postconflict period. Furthermore, not all women had access to the limited number of leadership positions, even when these were transformed into electoral victories during peace time. It remains unclear just how empowering the experience of participating in peace demonstrations can be for ordinary women, although some individuals might translate these activities into personal decisions that improve their lives and relationships. For the most part, women's visible roles in advocating for peace were often confined to street protests and other unofficial sites, whereas the conference rooms where treaties were negotiated remained male-only enclaves and post war governmental positions went largely to the well-connected (Abdela 2004; African Women Peace Support Group 2004; Coles 2007; Corrin 2004; Frazier 2002; Mertus 1999, 2000; Porter et al. 1999; Rajasingham-Senanayake 2001). It was in this context, as well as in the aftermath of embarrassing reports about the sexual exploitation of displaced and refugee women by UN peace-keeping troops and civilian employees, that UN Resolution 1325 was passed. In effect, the resolution posits that the postwar moment represents a brief window of time in which wartime gains can be consolidated. THE AFTERMATH In the context of postwar peacekeeping by multinational organizations, new questions arose: Could militarized male troops adapt their behavior and expectations to peace-keeping wwir.annualreviews.org Gender, Militarism, and Peace-Building 265

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missions? Would the presence of female soldiers among the foreign troops create new models for empowering local women, often presumed to have been historically oppressed? What possibilities for reconfiguring gender relations did the aftermath of violent conflict offer (Breines et al. 2000, Carey 2001, Cock 1994, Cockburn 2002, DeGroot 2001, Highgate & Henry 2004, Karame 2001, Koyama & Myrtiren 2007, Mackay 2004, Mazurana et al. 2005, Meintjes et al. 2001, Merry 2006, Olsson & Tryggestad 2001, Pankhurst 2008b, Skjelbaek 2001, Stiehm 2001, Terry 2002, Whitworth 2004, Williams 2001). With increasing intervention from both multinational and nonstate entities in these local conflicts, external actors worked to ensure that the more positive gender transformations of wartime, like women's new access to a public voice, could be continued in the peace-time context. Although terrible for those who had to experience it, extreme violence was believed to have the paradoxical effect of opening opportunities for more progressive, egalitarian gender relations in places that had previously been highly patriarchal. The moral claims of women who had acted as peace-makers as well as a general sense that men had failed to sustain reasonable governments created the context for legislative reforms, including gender quotas for elected representation at the national level (Bauer & Britton 2006, Tripp et al. 2009). But even as some postconflict societies, such as Uganda and Rwanda, registered enormous electoral gains for women parliamentary candidates and Liberians elected the first female president on the African continent, other analysts noted the significant backlash occurring for ordinary women. Rape and other forms of gendered violence have actually been seen to increase in the postconflict moment, over wartime levels, and attempts at legal reform often founder on limited institutional and human capacity to staff courts and retrain police, as well as on a lack of political will from successor governments (Pankhurst 2008b, Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, Turshen 2001, Vayrynen 2004). Where militarization had been seen as the source of women's problems, the "return to peace" sometimes included a "retraditionalization" or reassertion of prewar patriarchy (Turshen 2001). Although the academics cited above have frequently been critical of the postwar reconstruction efforts of multinational institutions and NGOs, many practitioners in the humanitarian community remain fiercely committed to the idea of the postwar moment as a time when gender can be radically reconstructed. The gender mainstreaming called for in UN Resolution 1325 has generated a series of gender projects that are now included in the standard package of postconflict programming. These projects include attention to the disarming and demobilization of both male and female com batants, the training of foreign peacekeepers in their responsibilities regarding the sexual exploitation of local populations, the provision of extensive medical and psychosocial services to victims of sexual violence, and attempts to provide training in marketable skills and small business development to displaced civilians and excombatants. Some of these programs founder on unexamined gender assumptions, as when men are offered training in auto me chanics and women are presented with classes in dress making or cloth dying, often in places where few people can afford either cars or new clothing (Utas 2003). Other peace-building projects, such as transitional justice and gov ernance reform programs, as well as a host of democracy promotion and classical economic development programs, may not be explicitly about gender, yet their underlying assumptions about both the beneficiaries of the proposed changes and the sources of resistance reflect naturalized ideas of men and women. Imple mentation of these gender initiatives, even when funded by donations from the United States, European Union, or UN, is commonly contracted to private NGOs and humanitarian groups. Their activities have become a vibrant new area of ethnographic investigation by anthropologists (Abramowitz 2009; Abusharaf 2006; Anderson 1999; Boesten 2008; Burnet 2008; Coulter 2006; Crew & Harrison 1998; Fuest 2007,2008; Hemmet 2007; Macrae 2001; 2 66 MoranThis content downloaded from 158.143.233.108 on Mon, 18 Sep 2017 14:36:53 UTCAll use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Rose 2000; Rosen 2007; Shaw 2007; Snajdr 2007; Summerfield 1999; Tate 2007; Terry 2002; Weissman & Terry 2004; Unvin 1998). The idea that militarization and war cre ate new opportunities for women has not al ways been supported by the evidence, as men tioned above. Why, then, should agents on the ground, both local activists and representatives of international organizations, persist in seeing at least some postwar situations as containing limitless possibilities and blank slate opportu nities, assuming that gender as well as other relations of power have been erased and pro gressive outsiders can guide the survivors to a new, neoliberal paradise? Extreme violence might well lead people who have experienced it to be open to new ideas, but many who advo cate this position tend to naturalize and essen tialize violence as an outgrowth of male aggres sion, held in check by "good" social institutions (see Pankhurst 2008b, pp. 293-313). Having seen the horrors unleashed by undemocratic, or overly militarized, or nonliberal regimes, citi zens are expected to demand social and cultural controls over men as a group, in the form of women's civil and legal rights, enhanced rape laws, and new codes of domestic relations, not only for their own sake but as a check on future wars. This position, however, not only assumes that all men are to blame for the violence, but also discounts women's prewar sources of legiti mate political authority. Reduced to its essence, this is the message of such popular documen tary films as Abigail Disney's Pray the Devil Back to Hell, which represents the women's peace movement in Liberia as arising entirely from the war itself. No mention is made in the film of the rich history of collective action by Liberian women, nor of the powerful ritual, social, and political positions they have held in the past. The horrors of war, paradoxically, are cred ited with freeing women to discover their own untapped potential and achieve liberation from their oppressive, patriarchal menfolk. Another common assumption is that it is the dissolution of previous social relations, along with mass casualties that disproportionately im pact men, that opens political space for women in postconflict societies. In the absence of the usual personnel to fill positions of authority, new candidates, often with the help of external change agents, step in to fill the gap. Although not as dismissive of men as the first model, this construct likewise assumes that prewar society had no space for women in authority-bearing roles and that women's emergence as peace ac tivists, organizers, and pressure groups is a rad ical break with the past. Finally, many of the ex ternal change agents subscribe to what can only be described as a civilizing mission oriented toward universalizing neoliberal discourses of individual human rights, gender equality, and other progressive goals. The postwar moment is explicitly framed as a valuable but limited win dow of opportunity, which will close quickly if not exploited to the maximum (Abramowitz 2009, Merry 2006). In my own experience, returning to my previous research site in Liberia after more than 14 years of civil war, I found a widely cir culated discourse that "women are traditionally considered property" was being invoked as an explanation for continuing high levels of rape and domestic violence in the postwar period. This was striking because I had never heard such an expression in the years before the war and because it was repeated by both foreign aid workers and by Liberians working with them. Both indigenous Liberian societies and the national political culture had been unabashedly patriarchal long before the war, but women had also held visible, highly authoritative positions in both rural and urban contexts. Although adult women were said to be "married to" their husbands' families and unions were celebrated with the exchange of bridewealth, women retained membership in their own families of origin and exercised considerable rights over the labor of junior household members and collective resources in their roles as sisters and aunts. Moreover, they often acted collectively to assert their authority over areas considered within their sphere of expertise (including food production and marketing), to check the abuses of male leaders, and to demand protection for individual women (Moran 2006). Yet, in the www.annualreviews.org Gender, Militarism, and Peace-Building 267This content downloaded from 158.143.233.108 on Mon, 18 Sep 2017 14:36:53 UTCAll use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

postwar period, everyone seemed to be assert ing that sexual violence was somehow intrinsic to Liberian culture, although Abramowitz (2009) has turned to the ethnographic record to document carefully the history of sanctions applied to rapists and violent domestic abusers in the past, including banishment from the community and capital punishment. She argues that humanitarian organizations, many of them with explicitly feminist identities, have imposed "a specific framing of Liberian and African cul tural history and heritage as being intrinsically, totally, and irreversibly patriarchal, dominant, violent, and oppressive" (p. 195; see also Hodg son 2005, Fassin & Pandolfi 2010). Very similar framings have been offered of the traditional culture of Iraq and Afghanistan to support U.S. military interventions ideologically in those countries and elsewhere (Abu-Lughod 2002; Kandiyoti 2008; Moghadam 2001, 2005; Razach 2004). Feminist or women's NGOs sometimes fail to recognize the power they wield in postcon flict societies with high unemployment, limited infrastructure, and few sources of access to the resources and prestige controlled by foreigners. Members of one Liberian NGO described to me the agonizing decision to turn down an offer of funding from a foreign aid group that wanted to set up women's health clinics specifically for "rape victims." As the Liberian nurse heading the organization explained, not only would such clinics have stigmatized any woman seen entering the door, but also clinic workers would have been forced to deny health care to other women equally in need of their services, a requirement the staff found simply unethical. In their desire to address the special needs of women in postconflict societies, external actors can impose new, apparently life-long identities (such as rape survivor) and narrative frameworks that may be difficult for local activist women to resist. Likewise, postconflict survivors who fall into categories that are not recognized by powerful actors may have difficulty gaining access to services offered by the humanitarian community. Since 2006, I have been conducting interviews in Liberia with male noncombatants. Such men are nearly invisible in the scholarly and policy literature, which devotes enormous attention to the prob lem of reintegrating violent male excombatants but ignores the experience of men whose victimization often echoes that of women and children. Standard practices for disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating former com batants typically include cash payments and vouchers for school tuition or vocational train ing and other relocation expenses in return for turning in a weapon or ammunition. Men and boys who had spent the entire war trying to avoid recruitment into armed factions and who had resisted the lure of looting and violence, however, qualified for no assistance because most programs for "noncombatants" consisted of rape counseling and were directed at women. When I expained my project to a highly placed United Nations political affairs officer in Liberia, she expressed amazment that I could find any "men who did not fight" to interview. As one of my informants stated, "We are truly the forgotten men." The masculine identities embraced by these men as alternatives to the militarized version of manhood so visible during the war could be models for the violent excombatants in need of rehabilitation who so concern the international agencies, if only these men were recognized. One of the most important themes to emerge, in more than 80 interviews I have conducted so far, is the role of senior women in either sending younger male kin to war or refusing them permission to join the armed factions. The authority of mothers, grandmothers, and aunts to deploy young mens' labor power to defense or other tasks is obscured by the discourse of prewar patriarchy just as the hiding and protection of men from involuntary recruitment are overlooked when women's recognized peacemaking activities are limited to public demonstrations. The massive body of scholarly work on gender, militarism, and peace-building seems not to have been incorporated into the essen tialized, simplified images of violent men and suffering women that are neatly packaged for marketing and consumption by western aid 268 MoranThis content

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donors. Interventions by anthropologists, with a more critical and longer time perspective on particular places, are sorely needed. According to Pankhurst (2008b), further specifying of the varieties of masculinity to emerge in times of both war and peace is particularly crucial; "we need to understand more about men who do not resort to violence, even when they have all the life experiences that would lead us to expect them to do so" (p. 312). She notes that the term femininity is not deployed in the same generalizing and deterministic manner as has been the case for masculinity; feminist scholars of militarism and peace-building have been careful to differentiate the "various and contrasting social roles, identities, sources of and constraints on power and control, access to and use of their own labor" for women, but they have neglected this task for men (p. 313). Attending to gender in all its aspects, she sug gests, may be the best course for understanding how societies move from war to sustainable peace, and perhaps even for understanding how militarism as a process can be reversed or re structured. My current research with Liberian men who did not fight in the civil war attempts to take up this challenge, as no doubt will many others. DISCLOSURE STATEMENT The author is not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS The preparation of this review was assisted by several undergraduate students at Colgate Univer sity. Lauren Robinson helped to compile many of the sources in the initial phases of the project. Laura Simoko and Amy Pennenga read and summarized materials and formatted the bibliogra phy. Discussions with Laura Simoko, Anne Pitcher, Sharon Abramowitz, and participants at the May 2009 Liberian Studies Association meetings in Monrovia, Liberia, helped me to frame the organization of this material. Thanks go to Jordan Kerber for proofreading and editorial assistance. LITERATURE CITED Abdela L. 2004. Kosovo: missed opportunities, future lessons. See Afshar & Eade 2004, pp. 87-99 Abramowitz SA. 2009. Psychosocial Liberia: managing suffering in post-conflict life. PhD thesis. Harvard Univ. 380 pp. Abu-Lughod L. 2002. Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. Am. Anthropol. 104:1-8 Abusharaf RM. 2006. Female Circumcision: Multicultural Perspectives. Philadelphia: Univ. Penn. Press African Women and Peace Support Group. 2004. Liberian Women Peacemakers: Fighting for the Right to be Seen, Heard, and Counted. Trenton, NJ: Afr. World Afshar H, Eade D, eds. 2004. Development, Women, and War: Feminist Perspectives. Oxford, UK: Oxfam Altinay AG. 2004. The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Amiri R. 2005. Fine lines of transformation: Afghan women working for peace. See Durham & Gurd 2005, pp.243-50 Anderlini SN. 2007. Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Anderson B. 1991. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London/New York: Verso Anderson MB. 1999. Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace?Or War. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Bauer G, Britton HE, eds. 2006. Women in African Parliaments. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner www.annualreviews.org Gender, Militarism, and Peace-Building 269This content downloaded from 158.143.233.108 on Mon, 18 Sep 2017 14:36:53 UTCAll use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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