

GEXcel Work in Progress Report Volume III

Proceedings from GEXcel Theme 1:
Gender, Sexuality and Global Change
Spring 2008

Edited by
Lena Gunnarsson

Centre of Gender Excellence – GEXcel

**Towards a European Centre of Excellence in
Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of**

- Changing Gender Relations
- Intersectionalities
- Embodiment

Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Dept. of Gender Studies
Linköping University
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Centre of Gender Excellence, Gendering Excellence – GEXcel

Towards a European Centre of Excellence in Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of

- Changing Gender Relations
- Intersectionalities
- Embodiment

Nina Lykke, Linköping University, Director of GEXcel

In 2006, the Swedish Research Council granted 20 million SEK to set up a Center of Gender Excellence at the inter-university Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Linköping University & Örebro University, for the period 2007–2011. Linköping University has added five million SEK as matching funds, while Örebro University has added three million SEK as matching funds.

The following is a short presentation of the excellence center. For more info contact: Scientific Director of GEXcel, Prof. Nina Lykke (ninly@tema.liu.se), Secretary Berit Starkman (berst@tema.liu.se), or Research Coordinator: Malena Gustavson (malgu@tema.liu.se).



Institutional basis of GEXcel

Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Linköping University & Örebro University

The institute is a collaboration between:

Department of Gender Studies, Linköping University

Centre for Feminist Social Studies, Örebro University

Affiliated with the institute are:

Division of Gender and Medicine, Linköping University

Centre for Gender Studies, Linköping University

GEXcel board and lead-team

– a transdisciplinary team of Gender Studies professors:

- Prof. Nina Lykke, Linköping University (Director) – Gender and Culture; background: Literary Studies
- Prof. Anita Göransson, Linköping University – Gender, Organisation and Economic Change; background: Economic History
- Prof. Jeff Hearn, Linköping University – Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities; background: Sociology and Organisation Studies
- Prof. Anna G. Jónasdóttir, Örebro University – Gender Studies with a profile of Political Science
- Prof. Christine Roman, Örebro University – Sociology with a profile of Gender Studies
- Prof. Barbro Wijma, Linköping University – Gender and Medicine

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- Prof. Birte Siim, University of Aalborg, Denmark

Aims of GEXcel

1) to set up a temporary (5 year) Centre of Gender Excellence (Gendering EXcellence: GEXcel) in order to develop innovative research on changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment from transnational and transdisciplinary perspectives.

2) to become a pilot or developmental scheme for a more permanent Sweden-based European Collegium for Advanced Transnational and Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (CATSgender).

A core activity of GEXcel 2007–2011

A core activity will be a visiting fellows programme, organized to attract excellent senior researchers and promising younger scholars from Sweden and abroad and from many disciplinary backgrounds. The visiting fellows are taken in after application and a peer-reviewed evaluation process of the applications; a number of top scholars within the field are also invited to be part of GEXcel's research teams. GEXcel's visiting fellows get from one week to twelve months grants to stay at GEXcel to do research together with the permanent staff of six Gender Studies professors and other relevant local staff.

The Fellowship Programme is concentrated on annually shifting thematical foci. We select and construct shifting research groups, consisting of excellent researchers of different academic generations (professors, post-doctoral scholars, doctoral students) to carry out new research on specified research themes within the overall frame of changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment.

Brief definition of overall research theme of GEXcel

The overall theme of GEXcel research is defined as *transnational and transdisciplinary studies of changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment*. We have chosen a broad and inclusive frame in order to attract a diversity of excellent scholars from different disciplines, countries and academic generations, but specificity and focus are also given high priority and ensured via annually shifting thematical foci.

The overall keywords of the (long!) title are chosen in order to indicate currently pressing theoretical and methodological challenges of gender research to be addressed by GEXcel research:

– By the keyword “*transnational*” we underline that GEXcel research should contribute to a systematic transnationalizing of research on gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment, and, in so doing, develop a reflexive stance vis-à-vis transnational travelling of ideas, theories

and concepts, and consciously try to overcome reductive one-country focused research as well as pseudo-universalizing research that unreflectedly takes e.g. “Western” or “Scandinavian” models as norm.

– By the keyword “*changing*” we aim at underlining that it, in a world of rapidly changing social, cultural, economic and technical relations, is crucial to be able to theorize change, and that this is of particular importance for critical gender research due to its liberatory aims and inherent focus on macro, meso and micro level transformations.

– By the keyword “*gender relations*”, we aim at underlining that we define gender not as an essence, but as a relational, plural and shifting process, and that it is the aim of GEXcel research to contribute to a further understanding of this process.

– By the keyword “*intersectionalities*”, we stress that a continuous reflection on meanings of intersectionalities in gender research should be integrated in all GEXcel research. In particular, we will emphasize four different aspects: a) *intersectionality as intersections of disciplines and main areas (humanities, social sciences and medical and natural sciences)*; b) *intersectionality as intersections between macro, meso and micro level social analyses*; c) *intersectionality as intersections between social categories and power differentials organized around categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age, nationality, profession, dis/ablebodiedness etc*; d) *intersectionality as intersections between major different branches of feminist theorizing (eg. queer feminist theorizing, Marxist feminist theorizing, postcolonial feminist theorizing etc.)*.

– Finally, by the keyword “*embodiment*”, we aim at emphasizing yet another kind of intersectionality, which has proved crucial in current gender research – to explore intersections between discourse and materiality and between sex and gender.

Specific research themes for first 2,5 year period of GEXcel

The research at GEXcel will focus on shifting themes. The research themes to be announced for the first 2,5 years are the following:

Theme 1) “Gender, Sexuality and Global Change” (on interactions of gender and sexuality in a global perspective), headed by Anna Jónasdóttir

Theme 2) “Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities” (on ways to critically analyze constructions of the social category “men”), headed by Jeff Hearn

Theme 3) “Distinctions and Authorization” (on meanings of gender, class, and ethnicity in constructions of elites), headed by Anita Göransson.

Theme 4 + 5) “Sexual Health, Embodiment and Empowerment” (on new synergies between different kinds of feminist researchers’ (eg. philosophers’ and medical doctors’) approaches to the sexed body), headed by Nina Lykke and Barbro Wijma.

The thematically organized research groups will be chaired by GEXcel’s core staff of six Gender Studies professors, who make up a transdisciplinary team, covering humanities, social sciences and medicine.

Seven more themes are under planning for the second 2,5 year period.

Ambitions and visions

The fellowship programme of GEXcel is created with the central purpose to create transnational and transdisciplinary research teams that will have the opportunity to work together for a certain time – long enough to do joint research, do joint publications, produce joint international research applications and do other joint activities such as organizing international conferences.

We will build on our extensive international networks to promote the idea of a permanent European institute for advanced and excellent gender research – and in collaboration with other actors try to make this idea become real, for example, organizations such as AOIFE, the SOCRATES-funded network Athena and WISE, who jointly are preparing for a professional Gender Studies organisation in Europe.

We also hope that a collaboration within Sweden will sustain the long-term goals of making a difference both in Sweden and abroad.

We consider GEXcel to be *a pilot or developmental scheme* for a more long-term European centre of gender excellence, i.e. for an institute- or collegium-like structure dedicated to advanced, transnational and transdisciplinary gender research, research training and education in advanced Gender Studies (CATSgender).

Leading international institutes for advanced study such as the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of California Irvine, and in Sweden The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies (SCAS at Uppsala University) have proved to be attractive environments and creative meeting places where top scholars in various fields from all over the world, and from different generations, have found time for reflective work and for meeting and generating new, innovative research. We would like to explore how this kind of academic structures that have proved very productive in terms of advancing excellence and high level, internationally

important and recognized research within other areas of study, can unleash new potentials of gender research and initiate a new level of excellence within the area. The idea is, however not just to take an existing academic form for unfolding of excellence potentials and fill it with excellent gender research. Understood as a developmental/pilot scheme for CATSgender, GEXcel should build on inspirations from the mentioned units for advanced studies, but also further explore and assess what feminist excellence means in terms of both contents and form/structure.

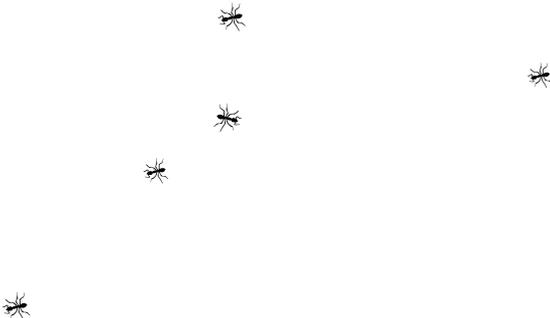
We want to rework the advanced research collegium model on a feminist basis and include thorough reflections on meanings of gender excellence. What does it mean to gender excellence? How can we do it in even more excellent and feminist innovative ways?



Editor's Foreword

This is the second work-in-progress report documenting the research activities carried out within the framework of GEXcel's first research theme, *Gender, Sexuality and Global Change*. As GEXcel Visting Fellows the authors spent varying periods of time at Örebro University in spring 2008 to work on their projects.

During April 24–29, 2008 they all gave seminars at Örebro University where they presented and discussed their work in progress. This volume comprises the fruit of this work.





Chapter 1

“Coming, Coming, Coming Home”¹: Applying Anna Jónasdóttir’s Theory of “Love Power” to Theorising Sexuality and Power in Caribbean Gender Relations

Violet Eudine Barriteau

This paper applies Anna Jónasdóttir’s construction of “love power” to developing a theory of sexuality and power in the contemporary Commonwealth Caribbean. I engage in a triple play on the meanings of the word “coming” and anchor these meanings to black feminist theorising of the concept of “home” (Smith 1983). In much of my research, I have theorised about the intersections of gender and power, or gender, power and public policy (Barriteau 2001, 2003a, 2003b), but I have not explored gender and sexuality, nor the power and politics of sexuality. Reading Jónasdóttir’s theory of love power helps me to see that there are both unitary/individual and societal dimensions to what often goes consistently wrong for women. In this theorising I am specifically interested in the complications romantic loving poses for Caribbean women in sexual relationships with men. I am particularly interested in ongoing attempts to subordinate women, even as women continue to pursue erotic pleasure. I want to track how these complications become extrapolated into wider systemic inequalities, even as these are simultaneously reflected back onto the individual relationships and their representations of gendered hierarchies of power and inequalities.

I attempt to foreground my analysis in the centrality of Caribbean women’s lives, as they navigate the intersections of the public and the private, production and reproduction, caring and desiring, pursuing sexual pleasure and often receiving emotional pain. My challenge is to work backwards and forwards from the dynamics of that basic union (played

1 Adapted from George Lamming’s essay, “Coming, Coming, Coming Home.” Address to the Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts Symposium. Trinidad, *The Daily Nation*, September 15th: 14–15, 1992.

This paper is an edited version of the paper presented on April 24th, 2008 during the Spring Seminar Series of the GEXcel programme.

out in private, intimate spaces and sites such as the home and sexual relations), to contemporary manifestations of power negotiations and imbalances in Caribbean political economy.

In Caribbean culture, the word “coming” has an excitement and anticipation that I hope to convey in creating new theoretical insights about power and pleasure in women’s lives. While coming is used to refer to the eve of the orgasmic climax in sexual intercourse, in my analysis I want to capture the exhilaration, tension and anticipation of “coming” to reveal another layer of the complexities of asymmetric gender relations in the Caribbean. I am intrigued by Jónasdóttir’s theorisation of “love power” and the way it may work in women’s lives. In what ways does love power manifest itself in Caribbean women’s sexual relations with men? Do women have power in love relationships with men? Is it as Jónasdóttir stated, that women enter socio-sexual unions, owners of their capacity to love which they can give of their own free will, yet are without effective control over how or in what forms they can legitimately use that capacity? (Jónasdóttir 1994: 224). Is women’s love power extracted? Or do women willingly surrender or compromise more readily in their intimate relationships?

Jónasdóttir’s theorising should also help me to refine a model I created about gender systems in late 20th century Caribbean societies (Barriteau 1998a). I concluded that while women made significant gains in material relations of gender, ideological relations of gender continue to construct women as inferior, and subordinate, ranking their gender identities, roles and choices as lesser than that of men (Barriteau 1998a, 2001). My analysis remained at the macro level and I paid no attention to sexuality and women and men as socio-sexual beings, in addition to their socially constructed gender identities. The theory of “love power” links the material and the ideological and moves between the micro (socio-sexual beings in relation) and the macro, political sexuality and political economy. I intend to use Jónasdóttir’s theorisation of “love power” to carve a new understanding of Caribbean sexuality. This new understanding should not only recognise historically fluid and contested features, but should also seek to explore desire, sensuality, pleasure and power in formulating a woman-centred discourse on sexuality in the region.

What’s love got to do with it?

It is somewhat ironic that notions of love, sex and romance are everywhere embedded in the Caribbean imaginary, yet unexamined in the day to day lives of women in their sexual relations with men. Unexamined are also the implications of these relations for ongoing conditions of inequalities in women’s lives. It is not only in the marketing campaigns

of tourist destinations that the Caribbean seems filled with the desire for and promise of more love, sex, and romance. Evidence of this abounds in social commentaries by calypsonians, dance hall lyrical chants by Reggae artists, folk songs about love affairs gone awry, letters to the press seeking advice on relationships, popular concoctions for building sexual stamina, “putting it back”, and obeah remedies for recapturing straying lovers or claiming new ones.

Feminist research in the region has explored almost every dimension of women’s lives, yet we have not focussed on women’s sexual unions. The majority of Caribbean countries are now heavily dependent on tourism as the major earner of foreign exchange and the most valuable economic activity. Increasingly sex and romance tourism is being used to market Caribbean destinations. Given the region’s heavy reliance on tourism, sex tourism has become an important but unofficially acknowledged product of that sector.

There is substantive research on sex tourism in the Caribbean (Chanel 1994, Albuquerque 1998, Kempadoo 1999, Cabezas 2004, Sanchez-Taylor 2001, Sharpe and Pinto 2006). Homosexual and heterosexual sex tourism/trade between gay tourists and Caribbean women and men and to Caribbean destinations has also been examined from a range of perspectives (Alexander 2005, Kempadoo 2003, Puar 2001). There is research on Caribbean women working as prostitutes/sex workers and increasingly UN bodies in collaboration with United States agencies have been examining the trafficking in women and girls for sex work in the region (Thomas Hope 2007). Yet, there are almost no feminist investigations of love, sexuality and sexual relations with men and the complications these pose for women’s lives. Even more intriguing, there has been no attempt to interrogate these as possible contributing factors to the unequal relations of domination that women experience in the wider society as well as intimate spaces.

Jónasdóttir’s theory of love power: politicizing sexuality

Jónasdóttir develops a specific theory as to why or how men’s power position with respect to women persist even in contemporary Western societies and builds her process of inquiry around a series of questions (Jónasdóttir 2007a:3). From this, Jónasdóttir moves to the concept of love power. She states the actualisation of love power comes into the picture, emerging as a result of her assumption, “that a crucial part of the theoretical analysis of women’s exploitation must be done within the field of sexuality, and not limited to economy or work, and also that the analysis has to be extended ‘beyond oppression’”(Jónasdóttir 2008: 5 in manuscript). She fine tunes her discussion by emphasising that contem-

porary patriarchal relations or male dominated society is produced and reproduced by means of the appropriative practices of exploitation of women's love power (Jónasdóttir 2008).

The fact that Jónasdóttir has politicised sexuality by problematising and treating as systemic the sexual union, provides a critical point of entry for examining the interconnections between what happens between men and women in sexual relations and what happens between women and men in the economy and state. The majority of sexual unions and relations exist outside of legal marriages and even cohabitation. She insists on exposing and centralizing the power dynamics of a politicized sexuality and offers epistemological and methodological signposts dealing with the complications of socio-sexual relations and for moving beyond the public/private divide which has limited so much of earlier feminist theorising. By insisting that we approach the study of political sexuality through existing empirical data about the impact of increased needs and new social relations within the family and economy, Jónasdóttir expands the range of epistemological tools to be used for understanding what goes wrong in women's lives.

Love power: care and erotic ecstasy

Jónasdóttir's articulation of the concept of love power locates a transformative, creative power at the centre of the love relationship.

In the search for a term that could denote precisely this 'practical, human sensuous activity', a term that could distinguish it both from the power of labor or work. . . . I came to believe that love is the best term available if care and erotic ecstasy are incorporated as its two main elements.

(Jónasdóttir 1994: 221)

Some of the two dimensions of love power have been covered extensively in investigations of Caribbean women's lives, but they have never been dis-aggregated to create any type of explanation of power imbalances. A great deal of intellectual energy has been expended on women's caring work, whether within families, households, or the state and the economy. There is an extensive literature on Caribbean women and work (Gill and Massiah 1984, Elliot 2006), in households and in pursuing strategies for survival (Barrow 1986, French 1994), and in informal and formal economic activities (Seguino 2003, Jayasinghe 2001, Lagro and Plotkin 1990, Freeman 2000).

The research that comes closest to approximating investigations in erotic ecstasy is the investigations into sex work. I argue that this is another dimension of women's care work, fulfilling the sexual needs of others. A knowledge gap remains. We need research that treats the sexual relationship as constitutive in what women experience as relations of domination or oppression, or at least attempts to find out what happens with women and between women and men in love relationships. It is my thesis that women's pursuit of erotic ecstasy is what propels and maintains them in intimate relations with men, and become for many the eventual source of their powerlessness. Even as I recognise that being cared for and caring for someone are dimensions of erotic ecstasy, I also assume that in the pursuit of the erotic, women end up with the care work and continue with caring, and often they do not experience the dimension of being cared for. Many continue either hoping the erotic would materialise, or eventually they substitute their desire to be cared for and fulfil other dimensions of their sexual pleasure, with caring for others.

Jónasdóttir's theorisation of love power is compelling at several levels, even though challenging in my attempt to apply it to Caribbean women as socio-sexual beings. In one sense, I hypothesise that women pursue erotic ecstasy and end up with the care work. Women are responsible for the care of the relationship, care of the men, children and elders of the family, care of the organisations in which they are members, and most of the caring work in the economy. In another sense, in the pursuit of erotic ecstasy, there is that man-woman dynamic. Women may experience mutually, satisfying sexual encounters, we may have deeply fulfilling sexual relationships, but often what women want is a desire to be cared for by men beyond sexual encounters. I hypothesise that women's powerlessness in love, the point at which their love power becomes "extracted" or "surrendered" is within the erotic dimension of love power.

I differ with Valerie Bryson when she states she is, "inclined to prioritise caring rather than the erotic element of love power as a central political issue, along with more general reproductive rights" (Bryson 2008: 34), even as I agree with her that for many women, old forms of oppression and exclusion remain. It is because these forms persist that we should shift the focus of analysis. I want to prioritise erotic ecstasy of love power. It is the dimension in which women in their sexual relations with men are constantly being forced into powerlessness. As challenging as it is to unravel, I think we have to explore what happens to women and between women and men in the realm of erotic ecstasy. I also agree with Jónasdóttir that making love is as foundational and as necessary as making tools and that much of what women do as socio-sexual beings is making love. By that I mean they engage in a range of activities beyond

sexual intercourse and in those activities they pursue the erotic dimension.

Applying “love power” to Caribbean realities

In reviewing the Caribbean evidence, Jónasdóttir’s sense that women’s experiences of relations of domination arise in something other than the conditions and terms on which labour is organised and exploited is valid. More women than men are enrolled in tertiary educational institutions and graduate in larger ratios, are relatively more highly skilled, and possess fair to high levels of social capital (Bailey 2003, Elliot 2006). Simultaneously women experience higher levels of unemployment, and are the first retrenched or the last to receive training when factories become high skilled. Women receive lower wages for comparable levels of work and of households falling below the poverty line there are more headed by women (Andaiye 2003). In politics, all conditions of equality of access have been met since the 1950s, but in the area of political leadership and occupation of senior governmental appointments the record is still uneven and in no way parallels men’s hold on powerful political positions (Vassell 2003). Governments established state machineries on women and/or gender, removed punitive legislation, produced reports and recommendations on how to improve the conditions for women, introduced more egalitarian laws, and consistently reported to UN bodies on their attempts to work towards gender equality in Caribbean societies (Tang Nain and Bailey 2003). Yet relations of domination remain.

Marriage/sexual unions and appropriation of women’s sexual resources

Existing research indicate that motherhood and then marriage are the primary sources of identity for Caribbean women (Robinson 2003: 246). The Women in the Caribbean Project also found that women who were in long term unions with men postponed decisions about marriage if it would not be accompanied by a change in their material level of comfort (Anderson 1986). According to this survey, for many working class women, marriage should mean an observable change in their standard of living. However these findings need to be contextualised. Rates of marriages/legal unions have been historically low and continue to be so. Caribbean family structures come in multiple variations, running from extended families of several generations occupying one dwelling space, through to the nuclear family (Smith 1996) and encompassing what Rosina Wiltshire classified as the transnational family. The complicated

sexual relations Caribbean women have are threaded through these family forms. Without further probing, it is difficult to determine whether Caribbean women truly do not desire formal marriages over motherhood or whether the ranking is a form of adaptation, an adjustment to the realities of the instability of marital and other forms of sexual unions.

Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow say of sexual relations in Barbados:

Both men and women regard sex as pleasurable, desirable, and necessary for health and general well-being, and they discuss, separately and together, how to improve sexual performance and pleasure. Stylized sexual banter between women and men occurs in public and private settings and is enjoyed by both sexes.

(Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1981)

According to them, West Indian men's preoccupation with sexual activities is very pro-female, unlike machismo. They maintain that a man's reputation as a lover is not based on the conquest of the inaccessible woman but on his success in sexual performance, in knowing techniques that give a woman pleasure (Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1981).

Caribbean men are relatively open about having multiple sexual partners. Michael Lieber states about men in Trinidad:

wives and lovers tended to be mere 'chicks' – women to be exploited for their sexual availability, their services, and sometimes for their money [...] Men are unwilling to make sacrifices and to work out problems with women; it is too easy to walk away from problems and go searching for new women. Women know this and fortify themselves with a resiliency and resignation attuned to the unreliability of men.

(Lieber 1981)

Barry Chevannes tells us “that in Jamaica multiple partnerships are a feature of male sexual behaviour” (Chevannes 1999: 5). He also found in a 1985 survey, “*that only 50%* of the males he interviewed acknowledged that they had more than one partner. However, many more indicated that they would have liked to have more, implying that the lack of finance was the limiting factor” (Chevannes 1999: 5–6). In another survey Chevannes found that women also had multiple partners and that those partnerships were motivated by their need for money and feelings of sexual independence (Chevannes 1999: 5–6).

Danielle Toppin underscores the early start to reproduction for many working class young women in Jamaica. She presents information on the sexual relations of three teenaged young women, one of whom is 14 years old, five months pregnant and living with a man ten years older (Toppin 2007a). Another is 15 and also lives with an older man. She moved out from her mother's home to avoid sexual molestation by her stepfather. The third is still at home, has a teenaged boyfriend, a good relationship with her mother and has discussed with her mother her decision to be sexually active. Toppin submits that these young women are grappling with the feelings and consequences of their entry into sexual relationships. Toppin reports that the pregnant young woman attends a Jamaican organization that allows teenaged mothers to complete their education and to receive developmental counselling, with one of the core areas of concern being delaying unwanted pregnancies. Despite this, Toppin notes the young woman tells her she doubts that she would use condoms with her partner. She tells Toppin he will not use them, and she would not push him to, because he might think she has another man, even though she suspects he is sexually active with other people (Toppin 2007a). Toppin also informs that according to a report by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, one in every ten Jamaican women is married or in a common law union before her eighteenth birthday, with approximately one percent doing so before the age of 15 (Toppin 2008). Toppin continues:

Although ideas regarding men's right to ownership over 'their' women in intimate relationships can be found across communities, the practice of cohabitation between under-aged females and older men is predominantly found in communities marked by poverty. In many instances, young girls become bargaining tools for economic improvement, placing them in relationships in which the power imbalances affect them negatively.

(Toppin 2008)

Two of these young women are living with older men because of issues of economic deprivation and for one the additional grief of sexual harassment at her home. The information on cohabitation between older men and girls in poor communities underscore the troubling dynamics of developments in political economy affecting women's sexual lives. Here the life chances of girls are being shaped in a context that breeds powerlessness, despair, and lack of sexual and social autonomy.

The majority of female students at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies that I asked state they want to be mothers. However none are willing to do so outside of marriage, stating they first

need a stable relationship. Is that the exercise of power in sexual unions or the pursuit of the romanticised ideal? Do they assume that once married there will be no need for negotiations over power arrangements in their intimate relations? The majority of women who are single parents have been in relationships with the fathers of their children and many are in current relationships with other men who may also have children with other women. Common Caribbean expressions are “the baby father”, or “my child mother.” When these expressions are used they indicate the relationship status of the other parent as being only that – there is usually no longer an emotional or sexual relation.

Sexualised violence/economic violence

Another way to examine politicised sexuality is to link the economic violence done to women and men in the workplace with the sexualised violence which occur in privatised spaces and sites such as the home and intimate relations. Evidence exists that when men suffer economic hardship, loss of jobs, or reduced income, the incidence of violence against women rises. What has been inadequately tracked is how women’s experiences of that same form of economic violence in their working lives increase their vulnerability in their relationships, in the absence of any state sponsored protective mechanisms. Economic hardship reduces women’s economic autonomy and leaves them more susceptible to abuses in their sexual unions because of their dependence on men for financial. Gaitrey Pargass and Roberta Clarke reviewed studies on violence against women in the Caribbean, and examined some of the beliefs as to what causes violence against women as well as established some of the continuities between domestic violence as a form of sexualised violence (Pargass and Clarke 2003: 39–72). They found that a key factor emerging in a study of violence in Suriname is that when women made the first report of violence, their partners had been violent for many years before (Pargass and Clarke 2003: 43).

Danielle Toppin holds the media accountable in the prevalence of sexual violence in Caribbean society. She cites a case where a popular reggae artist was jailed for the rape of a young girl and many artists, radio personalities and popular local figures came out in support of the artist, ignoring the plight of the young victim and elevating the convicted rapist “to a wrongfully imprisoned political prisoner” (Toppin 2007b). Toppin concludes: “sexual violence is a weapon. Our sexuality becomes a tool to be used against us. How can we even begin to talk about sexual and reproductive health in a culture in which sexually violent art is acceptable?” (Toppin 2007b).

Conclusion

Kathleen Jones advises that “the test of Jónasdóttir’s theory should not be the degree of generality, but whether its account of the construction of women as loving caretakers ‘for’ men, instead of as desiring subjects in reciprocally erotic relations, is persuasive” (Jones 1994: xii–xiii). Jónasdóttir’s theory is applicable to the Caribbean. To determine the full extent of its explanatory powers requires research on the organisation of sexual unions and how love power operates in women’s lives. The evidence examined indicates intense negotiations and accommodations over power, and for some their love power is extracted. The situation with the young girls in cohabiting unions, is more stark, they are indeed powerless, but what of the situation for women with considerable economic resources and social capital whose sexual unions seem as problematic?

I have tried to demonstrate that the nexus of political sexuality and political economy is dynamic and sometimes contested. I maintain that not only are there ongoing attempts to “extract” or contain women’s power in sexual unions, but that for women who prove powerful in other social, political and economic relations, there are attempts to force them into powerless positions in their sexual relations with men. The power of love – “love power” – is an un-theorised epistemological frontier in Caribbean feminist studies. I maintain that women’s experiences of relations of domination emanate from many sources. One of them is the relationship between women and men as socio-sexual beings, with love power, and at the core of that union. Feminists need to know more about how women experience care and erotic ecstasy, in their private and public lives. Jónasdóttir’s theory of love power indicates the need for an in-depth study of women’s sexual relations with men towards developing a theory on power and sexuality in Caribbean’s women’s lives.

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Chapter 2

The Curious Resurrection of First Wave Feminism in the U.S. Elections: An Intersectional Critique of the Rhetoric of Solidarity and Betrayal

Kimberle Crenshaw

The intense conflict that has emerged between feminists and other progressives in the 2008 US Presidential campaign provides a sharply drawn text from which to study the rhetorical politics of essentialism and solidarity in American feminism. Even before Obama became the Democratic nominee, observers around the world recognized that the outcome would make history given the all-but-certain fact that either a white woman or a Black man would win that party's nomination for the Presidency of the United States. But even as this new history continues to unfold, certain political dynamics have emerged that seem to replay a very old and tragic story, namely, the ugly political split between white feminists and abolitionists in the post-Civil War era. In the same way that key women's rights advocates mobilized feminism in pursuit of the singular objective of delivering a woman to the White House, feminists in the post-Civil War era set their exclusive focus on winning the franchise for (white) women. Political solidarity among women gave way to decisions by white feminists to move away from arguments rooted in universal equality and towards rhetorics grounded in racial privilege. Justified by their sense of having been profoundly betrayed in the constitutional battle to secure the franchise for freedmen, First Wave feminist leaders such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton opted to abandon their abolitionist roots and to strike dubious alliances with the forces of domestic racism and global imperialism. In pursuit of their goals, they campaigned to block the passage of the 15th Amendment, realigned their allegiance from abolitionism to white supremacy, shed their radical critiques of patriarchy, and affirmed the basic tenets of American imperialism.

Second Wave feminism in the U.S. has been constantly challenged to move beyond the essentialist, elitist and imperialist aspects of the First Wave's exclusive orientation, so much so that it is a standard practice in many feminist circles to qualify the term "woman" with acknowledg-

ments of differences across race, class and sexuality. What is particularly surprising at this moment, however, is how leading feminists who have acquiesced to this critique have so readily and publicly jettisoned some of its basic tenets. As the prospect of shattering the gendered glass ceiling in politics beckons, feminist advocates have functionally repackaged “woman” within the racial and class confines of the past. In the past, these limitations ultimately undermined the ability of First Wave feminism to carry forward a fundamentally transformative social vision, just as they may contribute to the erosion of feminist political capital today.

In the pages that follow, I will lay out apparent parallels between First Wave feminism and the contemporary moment. My threefold objective is to lift up the historical dynamics that help constitute the contemporary Presidential debate; to highlight the intersectional dimensions of “women’s rights”, “women’s oppression” and “women’s solidarity” that are all too frequently marginalized in feminist discourse; and to gather insights about the rhetorical contours of solidarity and betrayal in contemporary feminist politics.

Intersectionality

Intersectional theory forms the overarching prism through which the racial and gender dimensions of both First and Second Wave feminism are read together. Turning the intersectional prism onto the coalition “women”, the patterns by which white and elite women have articulated, controlled and deployed feminist politics reveals a clear portrait of dominance within discourses of resistance. The specific focus of this analysis is on the collapse of the intersectional interests and identities of white women into a singular subject “woman”, and the political use of this constructed category to enable racist and imperialist agitation in the singular pursuit of a single political end – the suffrage. Uncovering the consequences of this First Wave feminism for non-white women and men, and revealing the refrains of this rhetoric in the contemporary struggle over yet another political goal, are the central objectives of this journey.

First Wave feminism: the disuniting of race and gender

It is by now standard history to tell the story of U.S. First Wave feminism in broad strokes, commencing with the participation of radical white women in the abolitionist movement; their growth as a political constituency within abolitionism; their eventual call for gender equality in tandem with the end of forced labor; their tireless agitation to end slavery and to guarantee equal rights for all; their bitter disappointment that

the Reconstruction project did not usher in a fully inclusive reform; their break with abolitionism to form an independent women's movement; and their decades-long struggle for suffrage that finally culminated in the ratification of 19th Amendment.

The footnoted version of this history would add significantly more color to this narrative, highlighting perhaps their early reluctance to agitate for suffrage, the encouragement and support offered by former slave Frederick Douglass; the Civil War's role in installing the "citizen soldier" as a predicate for civil inclusion; the failure of abolitionists to embrace fully the notion of racial egalitarianism; and the viciously racist rhetoric that would eventually frame their break with the abolitionist movement and justify the suffragists' "expedient" descent into white supremacy and imperialism.

Historians and feminist philosophers may well differ on the political and moral consequences of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's decision to abandon a multiracial and cross-gender alliance for race and gender justice, but the indictment of their tactics transcends their decision to quit the coalition. Their rhetoric expressing their outrage about being sidelined in their pursuit of the franchise reveals much more than a political disagreement. Rather, their comments betrayed a sense of righteous indignation born from an entitlement to maintain a social superiority over racially subordinate men. This sentiment is clear in Anthony's acknowledgment that her support of the "Negro" was conditional:

[s]o long as he was lowest in the scale of being we were willing to press his claims; but now, as the celestial gate to civil rights is slowly moving on its hinges, it becomes a serious question whether we had better stand aside and see 'Sambo' walk into the Kingdom first.

(Anthony 1981)

To their mind, the extension of the franchise to freedmen was not simply an error of an incomplete distribution of the right to vote. Rather, the greater offense of the 15th Amendment was its *maldistribution* of the franchise against the natural hierarchy of racial worth. The injury was more than the mere fact that African-American men got the vote and white women didn't, but that in giving Black men the vote, white women lost their security against dominion by lower-ranking men. Indeed, much of the rhetoric that would eventually form the core of suffragist philosophy was premised on the outrage that men lower on every conceivable scale of worth would be given power over native born and racially privileged women. Stanton made this plain when she argued that she did not believe in "allowing ignorant Negroes and foreigners to make laws for

[her] to obey". It was abject degradation for white women to be subject to the "two million ignorant men (who) are being ushered into legislative halls. What can we hope for at the hands of the Chinese, Indians and Africans?" (Stanton 1981). This was an argument that premised feminist agitation on the reification of existing racial hierarchies. Constructing their struggle for inclusion as a zero-sum game, a vote for Black male suffrage became nothing more than a vote against white women.

The illusive parallelism of slavery and patriarchy

The sharp split between white feminists and abolitionists was animated in part by a false parallelism that emerged during the antebellum period. White women who labored as activists in the abolition movement began to see slavery as a metaphor for women's bondage. The analogy proved to be not only an effective trope for consciousness-raising but an effective rhetoric to capture and deploy abolitionist fervor for women's rights.¹ Yet, the tendency to see sexism as a parallel "ism" to racism was problematic in the context of slavery, and would continue to obscure important differences between racial domination and patriarchy well into the future (see e.g. hooks 1981; Spelman 1988).

Underlying the "slaves of patriarchy" claim was in fact a consciousness fundamentally at odds with the assertion that white women and African-American men were similarly situated. In fact, a different belief set operated underneath the rhetoric of sameness, a tacit acknowledgment among white feminists that they really were not at all on similar footing as Black people. Indeed, it was the assertion that white women were quite different from Black freedmen that formed the bedrock of their outrage in being passed over in favor of Black men. As their rhetoric clearly demonstrated, there was a set of privileges and a presumptive positioning over Black people that entitled them to civic inclusion, if not prior to Black men, then certainly along with them.

1 This "reading" of early feminism was a common narrative shared even by those feminists who opposed the white supremacist dimensions of feminist agitation. For example, Martha Gruening writes:

If the Negro slave belonged to his master, she belonged no less, absolutely, to her husband as did her property, her earnings, and even her children. Both were disfranchised. Both were deprived of education and subject to economic disabilities which they shared with no other class. Even the constitutional right of free speech was not extended to woman when it meant public speech, as she found when she wished to join in the protest against slavery; and even among the abolitionists her presence on platforms and committees caused serious dissensions.

(Gruening 1912: 245)

Sexism in this view is grounded in not being accorded the privileges which would otherwise have been expected. This version of feminism relies on existing race and class power to make its claim.² Similar to contemporary arguments such as reverse discrimination, the 19th century arguments that are premised on baselines of merit are themselves socially constructed out of racial power. When claims of unfairness are premised on a perceived failure to distribute privilege based on a corrupt baseline, the claim reinforces and entrenches precisely the subordinating dynamics that constitute the status quo.³

Feminism and imperialism

As the suffrage movement neared the turn of the century, the argument premised on the unjust preference for Black men became a dead horse, but a good trope being hard to find, white suffragists continued to beat it. Waves of violence had brutally suppressed the Black vote, and full-scale segregation, already a reality by the mid 1890s, was by this point fully endorsed by the Supreme Court.⁴ Where violence was not enough to suppress Black voters, new methods were being tested, including poll taxes, grandfather clauses, literacy tests and the like. In principle, each of these methods ran counter to the fundamental rights of democratic participation that formally grounded the feminists' claims, but the realpolitik of the situation rendered most white feminists moot on the subject.

Key leaders were similarly underwhelmed by democratic principle in the context of American imperialist expansion. Anti-imperialist sentiment emerged in some quarters after the U.S. acquired the Philippines in the Spanish-American war. Anthony and Stanton not only failed to join these voices, they stood against independence and used the subsequent demand for Filipino representation as an opportunity to point out yet again the absurdity of enfranchising lower orders of men over refined white women. Anthony returned to this well-worn theme in speaking before the Senate Select Committee on Women's suffrage: "I think we are of as much importance as are the Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, Hawaiians, Cubans, and all of the different sorts of men that you have before

2 President Johnson vetoed civil rights legislation based on a similar logic. To his mind, providing civil rights protections and the freedman's bureau was actually discrimination against whites (see Foner 1988).

3 As I argue in "Mapping the Margins" both feminist and antiracist politics often wind up at odds with each other when they fail to incorporate and politicize the core aspirations of each (Crenshaw 1991).

4 See e.g. Vann Woodward (2001) arguing that segregation had been largely accomplished by violence and custom by the time the Supreme Court settled its constitutionality.

you. (Laughter). When you get those men, you have an ignorant and unlettered people, who know nothing about our institutions” (Anthony 1902: 4). To the House of Representatives, Anthony declared the possibility of empowering such unqualified men over superior women to be a “shameful outrage” (Harper 1908: 1115). Of course there was an alternative route to link the interests of women’s suffrage to the nationalist liberation of Filipino men and women. Returning to the basic premise of liberal democracy, some feminists sympathetic to both women’s suffrage and anti-imperialism pointed out that both aspirations rested on the illegitimacy of power when it is not based on the consent to be governed (Hoganson 2001). Yet Anthony and Stanton seemed to be motivated more by the global application of their domestic strategy: prove to men in power that white women can assist them in the national project, be it white supremacy or imperialism. Anthony in fact endorsed the view the anti-imperialists were potentially guilty of treason in encouraging Filipinos to resist U.S. control. “Anthony’s implication that she was a better citizen than the treasonous anti-imperialists (not to mention the mutinous Filipinos) can be read as an effort to demonstrate her superior loyalty and hence political worth” (Hoganson 2001: 14).

Contrary to anti-suffragists who worried that female suffrage would create a political disaster, Stanton and Anthony argued that white women would not steer the vessel off course. Instead, they would join in as powerful oars-women, providing the muscle to push the American project past the perilous tides of Blacks, Indians, immigrants, and distant savages who threatened to capsize the Republic. Stanton’s imperialist sensibilities were not tamed by her earlier declarations of a “common bond of union” between women of the world (Stanton 1981). In the same way that she jettisoned universalist notions of civic inclusion in favor of a narrowly construed gender perspective, her solidarity with women of color extended only to the assurance that if their debased men should get the vote, so should the women.

The underbelly of first wave feminism: a provisional assessment

The compromises and reversals that the suffragists performed in pursuit of the franchise took several decades to accomplish. In the process, white feminism built connections with reactionary forces in the U.S., and firmly established its mission as a political advancement and personal development strategy for elite white women. This transformation was grounded in a parallelism which obscured the specific contours of slavery and racial oppression; a sense of entitlement based on a natural-

ized baseline racial privilege; a uni-dimensional view of gender premised on their exclusive intersectional identities; and a willingness to authorize and advance white supremacy at home and American imperialism abroad.

First wave resurrection?

It is perhaps this incomplete vetting of First Wave feminism that has precipitated the divisive and surprisingly essentialist feminist campaign for Hillary Clinton in 2008. To be sure, women are far from monolithic in their support for Clinton, and many feminists with impeccable credentials threw their support to Democratic contender Barack Obama long before he clinched the nomination. This is an election in which reasonable feminists can obviously find themselves in different camps. What remains puzzling, however, is the strident tone of the historically questionable arguments that have been marshaled in the name of feminism. This rhetoric is more than a political effort to wrap a woman candidate in bright feminist packaging. It functions more fundamentally to implicitly – sometimes explicitly – denounce others as anti-feminist for failing to heed the call of feminist solidarity. Here the solidarity/betrayal fugue strikes notes that are discomfiting yet familiar, a blast from the past that seems entirely unmediated by the four decades of Second Wave feminism that interceded.

More troubling still is the sense that, to varying degrees, many of the compromises made in the name of First Wave feminism bear more than a passing resemblance to the rhetoric being deployed today. Among the moves that were made by Clinton feminists that seemed to channel the past into the present was the uncritical deployment of a racialized set of criteria to claim Clinton's superior qualifications; efforts to frame a vote for Obama as a sexist discrimination against Clinton, and the attachment of a woman's voice to militaristic and imperial approach to global conflict, an orientation that Anthony and Stanton championed. Clinton herself embodies much of this rhetorical performance. Yet more striking examples of these various themes are presented in the defenses of Clinton offered by well-known progressive American feminists Gloria Steinem (2008) and Robin Morgan (2008). Here I will pay special attention to Steinem's defense of Clinton.

(Which) women are never the frontrunners?

Gloria Steinem's "Women Are Never the Front-Runners" was broadcast on the pages of the *New York Times* (2008) in the most opportune moment possible. Just days after Obama's eye-opening win in Iowa,

Steinem's editorial reframed Clinton, the year-long front-runner, into a victim of a century-old preference for Black men. With little qualification or nuance, Steinem baldly stated: "Gender is probably the most restricting force in American life, whether the question is who must be in the kitchen or who could be in the White House". Given Steinem's explicit ranking, amplified later in her editorial, one might have expected a riff on how differently Clinton would fare in the election were she a man rather than a woman. Curiously, Steinem instead premised her claim on a hypothetical that sought to re-imagine Obama as a woman rather than a man. This woman, Achola Obama, with the same record and characteristics as Barack Obama, would not have had a chance in the race, she asserted, thus proving that gender was more restrictive than race.

A more telling analogy would obviously be a Clinton who is a male – an obviously more persuasive argument if the point is solely that Clinton is disadvantaged by comparison to a (Black) male Obama due to her gender. Steinem's choice to ground her argument in a female Obama rather than a male Clinton is more puzzling still because history already tells us that a male version of Clinton would fare better than a female Clinton. But even given the Achola Obama hypothetical, the assertion that Clinton is fundamentally disadvantaged vis-à-vis Obama requires Steinem not simply to compare Clinton to a female Obama but also compare her prospects against a Black Hillary Clinton. Here the hypothetical literally disintegrates. First, it is inconceivable that there would be a Black former First Lady (to date an empty set)? The nature of interracial intimacy in America makes it beyond unlikely that a white candidate with a Black wife would have gotten close enough to even cast a shadow on the doors of the White House. In this context then, it is simply an error to say that it would be gender that "cooked her goose" long ago; it would clearly be her race that put her out of the running to be the First Lady in the first place. Had Steinem run the analysis in this direction, Clinton's racial privilege would have at least been as much in play as Obama's gender. If Obama is holding stolen goods in his male knapsack, certainly Clinton's white hands must be singled from holding her own hot goods.

Steinem's failure to understand the full implications of her own hypothetical is symptomatic of a non-intersectional feminism, one that fails to account for how gender is expressed across race and class lines. Consequently, Steinem and many other Clinton supporters inexplicably fumble when it comes to interrogating Clinton's class and race power. Instead, her current portfolio of race and class capital which remained available and increasingly usable throughout her competition with Obama was taken as a neutral baseline against which discrimination against her "as a woman" is predicated. As the failed hypothesis with the Achola

Obama shows, Clinton is not just a woman, she is a white, elite woman who has already climbed to heights of power and prestige that the vast majority of people of all races and genders will never experience. This taken-for-granted privilege that grounds the assertion that Obama is comparatively unqualified sounds suspiciously similar to Stanton's unreflective assertion that white women are more qualified to pass through to the electoral promised land than Black men. Moreover, the assertion that Clinton's inability to capitalize on her superior capital is per se evidence of sexism functions similarly to the 19th century claims that that granting the franchise to Black men constituted an insult to white women.

Having fully erased Clinton's racial capital and, implicitly, Obama's lack thereof, Steinem makes her most controversial claim: that there is a historical pattern of Black men receiving benefits and privileges before women. This pattern, she claims, can be seen in the contemporary distribution of access and power in the U.S. To support this assertion, Steinem cites the 15th Amendment, the very front of the misplaced resentment that metastasized into the ugly face of resentment that haunts us still. Steinem's citation here of the "fact" that "Black men were given the vote a half-century before women of any race" (Steinem 2008) is stunningly simplistic as evidentiary support of such a contestable claim. Even more incredulous is that she advanced this claim without any caveat signaling the unattainability of this "right," nor the decades of untold suffering and brutality that ensured that Black men could pursue this right only at their own peril. That Steinem allows this comparison to stand without qualification seems to project the very myopia that blinded her foremothers squarely into the 21st century. Here, it bears repeating Frederick Douglass' rejoinder to Anthony and Stanton's dismissive attitude toward the unparalleled terrorism that eventually engulfed this "advantage."

When women, because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed upon the pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have (the same) urgency to obtain the ballot.

(in Stanton et al 1985)

The context of racism in creating disproportionately burdensome and sometimes tragic conditions of Black community life seems as absent in Steinem's estimation as it was in Anthony's. To both, a formal gesture of inclusion, variously based upon white interests, obscures the racist conditions of life that both benefit white women and undermine the well-

being of Black men and women. Even separated from this, Steinem's claim that Black men are advantaged over white women in modern society is challenging, not because there is little evidence that casts doubt on this bare claim, but because it is difficult to know exactly where to begin. The first challenge is in understanding exactly what the claim is meant to convey: on one hand, she clearly seems to assert a bare ranking. If ever there was an out-of-bounds move in contemporary feminism, the ranking of oppression would seem to be it. Steinem's awareness of this reality is reflected in a subsequent paragraph in which she disclaims any intent to rank sexism as worse than racism. One is thus left stranded in a sea of confusion, however, given her clear assertion that Black men have privileged access to positions of power relative to women.

Obviously, such a claim depends on what measures are used and Steinem does little to clarify her yardstick. She mentions the armed forces in which Black men are more represented. She fails to mention Congress in which women are far more represented than Black men. One need only look at the worksite of Obama and Clinton, the U.S. Senate: Obama is currently one of one; Clinton is one of several female Senators. In terms of wealth, health, lifespan, and education, one would be hard pressed to find any advantage that Black men have over white women. And while white women's relative disempowerment to white men is certainly undeniable, it is also true that white women are everywhere white men are, including in the White House, which itself becomes an apparent resume-builder that is totally unavailable to Black men.

So what, at the end of the day, can be inferred from Steinem's puzzling descent into essentialist rhetoric? At least one interpretation can be drawn from the examination of the First Wave feminist trajectory: like her predecessors, Steinem sees sexism in Clinton's failure to be able to capitalize off of all of her assets. Much can be said in both instances about the questionable expectations that these assets should have been readily available to her to deploy. In the same way that 19th century feminists expected, perhaps naively, that their contributions to abolition would automatically translate into the franchise, Steinem and others seem to predicate their belief that the meritorious Clinton is maliciously treated when her "qualifications" and "ready on day one" claims are contested. Aside from the basic question of whether and how much being First Lady counts as on-the-job training, there are at least some feminists who remain unconvinced that a dynastic claim to the White House is necessarily a big step forward for feminism. Earlier feminist critiques of marriage and class critiques about inheritance might have been more readily available for expression in the era where a more radical, anti-patriarchal feminism circulated. Today's Clinton feminists seem poised

to jettison these legitimate critiques of Clinton's claims in the same way that Anthony buried her radical feminism at the turn of the century.

Conclusion

Both Steinem and Morgan advocate for Clinton because they are women. Says Morgan, "As for the 'woman thing'? Me, I'm voting for Hillary not because she's a woman – but because *I* am" (2008). Steinem, echoes, "I'm supporting [Clinton] because she'll be a great president *and* because she's a woman" (2008). How any voter equally concerned about intersectionality, or even with a similarly essentialist view of race should be guided by their analysis is utterly unaddressed.

Morgan's essay and Steinem's op-ed seem to reveal a troubling truth about much of Second Wave feminism. Despite the affirming gestures routinely performed at the very mention of difference among women, despite the aspirations of global solidarity, despite the disclaimers about essentialism, there nonetheless exists at the core of their perspectives an essentialist identity politics – one that can effortlessly be deployed to discipline and deliver wayward votes to a woman candidate.

Today's Presidential election, like the struggle for the franchise a century ago, appears to represent a single-issue politics that such feminists rally around as a matter of faith as much as politics. Feminist rhetoric as deployed by these public intellectuals returns to its origins as a discourse seeking political power and inclusion on the basis of a white gender identity. And in the same way that 19th century feminists expediently re-crafted their basic messages to thread the needle of white patriarchy with their political aspirations, Steinem and Morgan have seemingly cabined their more radical politics to advocate the belief that a woman in the White House will necessarily engender something profoundly liberating and new.

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Chapter 3

Global Gender Solidarity and Feminist Paradigms of Justice

Ann Ferguson

There are two key problems for feminists who are working for global gender justice for women. One I will call the Justice problem and the other I call the Solidarity problem. The first is a normative question which asks what goals and principles of justice, that is, what paradigm of Justice, is viable cross-culturally to assess the situation of women in different societies to decide which societies promote justice for them, if any. The second is a political question, which is also theoretical, which is this: if we reject essentialism and acknowledge that women have many power and privilege differences from each other which will enter into their political priorities and frame their interests, how can women, and their feminist male allies, unite across these differences to challenge patriarchal social structures that promote gender injustice?

In this paper I will address the Justice problem first and then the Solidarity problem, and because I am using a feminist historical materialist approach which rejects idealist approaches to ethical and political normative questions (cf. Mills 2004), I will defend the Solidarity principle of Justice that I outline below against the two other Justice paradigms from the Western Liberal tradition, on the grounds that historical changes due to globalization are now creating the material conditions for solidarity coalitions against global injustices of various sorts, including gender injustice, to be created with the pre-figurative social relations necessary for people to accept the radical solidarity principle of justice.

The Justice problem

Claims about justice or injustice presuppose different paradigms and principles of justice, and in particular they presuppose certain goods or values that individuals have a claim to, as well as obligations by other humans either not to interfere with their achieving those goods, or actually to assure that they obtain those goods. Different paradigms of justice prioritize different values and so those using them may often disagree as to whether a given policy or state of affairs is just or unjust. I maintain that in spite of differences between feminists as to whether they espouse the neo-liberal, social democratic or solidarity conceptions

of justice I outline below, they would all agree that women in spite of differences in class, race/ethnic or heterosexual privilege are subordinated to comparable men in the relevant contexts because of existing male-dominant or patriarchal “sex/gender systems”, “sex-affective production systems”, “the socio-sexual system”, “gender systems”, or “the social relations of gender” in which those in the social position of men have more power, privileges and choices than those in the social position of women¹. Where feminists differ on gender justice is in terms of what goals or values should be promoted for women to achieve gender justice, e.g. individual freedom, equality, or solidarity, and what institutions will have to be changed in order to achieve it².

I will be highlighting applications of these three paradigms of global justice that are used by women’s and feminist movements. I accept the critique of feminist identity politics that intersectional and postmodern feminisms have posed, and argue that a solidarity rather than an identity politics is what is necessary for transnational feminism. Further, I use an intersectional materialist feminist approach to show that many women’s empowerment projects and human rights demands counter mainstream feminist frameworks of justice which are based on capitalist values, specifically the first two paradigms I discuss. In this paper with respect to gender justice activism, I will concentrate in particular on groups working for reproductive justice. I will argue that there are historical circumstances that can lead groups who defend women’s human rights by using the first two paradigms of justice, neoliberalism and social democracy, to defend reproductive rights, to broaden their analysis to incorporate the more radical paradigm of solidarity justice.

1 These terms are various ways of describing institutionalized and socially constructed systems of gender power that perpetuate male domination (cf. Rubin 1975, Ferguson 1989, 1991, Jónasdóttir 1994, Connell 2003, Barriteau 2003). Although intersectional and women of color feminists have interpreted systems of gender power not as separate or as discrete systems since they are found within as well as between class, race and other social systems of power, most have nonetheless acknowledged that they give particular men, say white men and men of color of the same class, sexuality and nationality, power over women of color situated similarly or in subordinate class, sexual and national positions (cf. The Combahee River Collective 1979).

2 Most feminists would agree as well that the traditional view that issues of justice are issues of power and inequality that only apply to the public sphere ignores power inequalities in the private sphere of the family and sexual relations, hence that the concept of the political needs to include the personal (cf. particularly Okin 1989, Tronto 1993).

Neoliberal/Freedom vs. Social Democrat/ Equality paradigms of Justice

The two main camps defending the justice of capitalist democracy as a political economy, Neo-Liberals and Social Democrats, both have their roots in the classical liberal thought of Western Europe. Both of them are based in the human rights and social contract approach to understanding individuals' duties of justice to other individuals as well as their obligations to nation states and, conversely, their claims against that state and other citizens. They disagree on whether to prioritize individual freedom or equality when there is a conflict between them in the operation of a capitalist democracy, with the former camp emphasizing freedom and the latter equality.

Neo-liberals argue that political and civil liberties are best promoted by giving individuals strong property rights, and argue that this requires a minimal state which has divested itself of any public property and lets the capitalist market operate on its own with minimal regulation. Social democrats argue that the social and economic rights necessary for the minimal equality of citizens and their positive freedom require a welfare state which provides minimal safety nets so as to guarantee an adequate standard of living, health care, housing and education for all. However, even social democrats promote corporate capitalism, although limited by progressive income taxes.

Radicals critique both of these paradigms of justice, arguing that no form of capitalism is able to deliver its own values, either freedom or equality, to the majority, and hence that capitalist democracy does not meet its own internal criterion for social justice. International competition for cheap labor and the need to cut corporate taxes to reduce capital flight abroad has meant that most capitalist nations have cut their welfare state spending to avoid amassing huge deficits. Most have turned to neo-liberal economic policies: cutting corporate taxes and privatizing national resources in the hope that the creation of this new private capital will create incentives for the expansion of national corporations which will provide more jobs at home. But due to corporate globalization, the real wages of the popular classes have fallen in many countries, although less so in social democracies. Families have only been able to keep up with the rising cost of living by having more and more mothers working full time in the wage labor force in addition to their unpaid housework.

Corporate globalization creates a theoretical problem for both welfare liberalism and neo-liberalism, since they are based on social contract theories of justice that only apply to nation states. Thus, principles of

justice developed from their frameworks do not really apply to global issues since they are outside the social contracts of national governments.

The Capabilities approach to human development

The recent elaboration of the so-called Capabilities approach to human development of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Nussbaum 2000, Sen 1995) is now used in many development projects of the United Nations and the World Bank to clarify what the goal of global economic development projects should be. I see their theory as an example of the Social Welfare paradigm of justice expanded in application from the nation state to the global level. The Capabilities approach can be applied in a manner similar to Rawls' principle of difference (Rawls 1971, 1985) to fault any society which does not allow its most marginalized people to achieve the thresholds necessary for achieving the more basic human capabilities such as life itself (e.g. because of death by starvation), healthy functioning (because of lack of income or health care) and the education to develop the higher human capabilities.

My concern with their position is that it is not situated in historically based movements for social justice or in critiques of capitalist and imperialist power structures. Indeed since the main focus of Nussbaum's institutional critique as a feminist are patriarchal family structures and religions, she seems to imply all that is needed besides a welfare state with minimal public education and health care may be economic cooperatives for women which give them the economic independence to have more bargaining power in relation to male kin. This latter idea I take to be very like the World Bank approach in its development projects for women which do not challenge the capitalist or post-colonial power relations in the so-called "developing countries".

The Solidarity paradigm of Justice

In the Critique of the Gotha Program in 1877, Marx critiqued the social democrats' program for working class justice which was based on setting up a capitalist welfare state that would prioritize meeting citizens' needs over capitalist profits. He argued that the socialist principle "from each according to his/her ability, to each according to his/her needs" is not achievable under capitalism and could not be achieved until the material conditions were achieved to eliminate scarcity and the social relations of production were communist: that is that there had been a socialist revolution and there was collective ownership of production. Lenin further developed the Marxist theory of how this might occur, in a set of stages which included a socialist state which would still distribute

goods according to workers' merits as well as needs, and the so-called "withering away" of this state when workers had attained collective solidarity and overcome the competitive individualism of capitalism (Lenin 1943). Marx had argued that the socialist Ability/Needs principle could not be a principle of justice in capitalism. His historical theory of norms and values as ideologies which promote the interest of the dominant groups implied that capitalist social relations can only ultimately reward and value capital and not the needs of labor. Thus, capitalist principles of justice, whether neo-liberal or social democratic, must ultimately be based on rendering unequals to unequals, e.g. based on one's property or capital, including human capital and work/"merit" (Marx 1977)³.

Marx can be said to be doing non-ideal ethical or normative theory in this essay, and I agree with his approach. Workable and sustainable alternative visions which challenge the values of an existing society in a way which undermines justifications for the existing social order can only be based on the actual development of alternative social relations of production and reproduction, that is to say, alternative economic, kinship networks and communities, which give people a realistic and not just utopian understanding of what is fair and just. While the large state socialist experiments have all collapsed, so that the path to socialist relations of production Lenin envisaged has failed to materialize, I argue that the radical Solidarity Ability-Needs principle is becoming viable by another route which I will outline below when I take up the Solidarity problem.

The feminist debate on reproductive freedom and justice

An example of a liberal feminist approach to an issue which uses the libertarian principle of justice is the abortion rights movement. In the US women's right to choose an abortion to end an unwanted pregnancy has been promoted by liberal feminists as the principle of choice, and has also been expressed as the principle that women should have the right

3 The forces of capitalist globalization are at the base of the failures of state socialist societies in the so-called Second World (the USSR, China and Eastern Europe) to survive. (Cuba is a special case which I will not discuss here.) As the authors of the Midnight Notes Collective (2004) point out, the social welfare guarantees and a reduced rate of wage exploitation in state socialist societies could not compete with what they call the "new enclosures" by corporate capitalism of the world's formerly commonly owned resources. Authoritarian corrupt governments in state socialist countries, the lure of globalized consumer culture, and Western hegemony in military might have also played their part in diminishing the strength of the state socialist vision as an alternative to capitalism.

to do what she wants with her body, which is her property, that restrictive laws and other people's values should not interfere with. The *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion through the second trimester was defended as a constitutional right to privacy. It has been challenged by religious conservatives as violating the right to life of the foetus, conceived of as a person.

Although initially the split in the feminist reproductive rights movement has been between liberal feminists and social welfare feminists, more recently disillusionment with the possibilities for the welfare state has given rise to more radical tendencies. At first the debate was an economic one by social democratic feminists who argued that for those too poor to afford an abortion, abortion is not a real choice. Then the issue was broadened so that it became the more general question of *access* to reproductive choice. In the 20th century many poor women of color were sterilized without their consent, both in the US and in Puerto Rico, in part through policies that did not inform women that they were receiving tubal sterilizations after giving birth. Thus, the libertarian emphasis on the freedom over one's body as one's personal property ignores the absence of enabling conditions of race, ethnicity and class, such as economic ability to pay or ignorance of medical procedures because of language barriers, which keep many women from having the real ability to make reproductive choices.

From the 1980s forward there have been progressive feminist coalitions in the US and elsewhere linking women of color, white women, and queer LGBT networks to promote an intersectional analysis of reproductive justice. This is a paradigm which promotes thinking through issues of reproduction from the point of view of the most marginalized people in the country, whether they be undocumented non-English-speaking immigrants, Native Americans on reservations, lesbian, gay or transgendered parents, or poor single mothers, often women of color. Reproductive justice is only present, according to this line of thought, if one has a viable choice not only not to have children, but to have children that will be healthy and socially accepted as well. This includes not only questions of whether abortion services and birth control are accessible but whether the social conditions are present to raise a healthy child, including whether there is a healthy environment for raising children, whether there is adequate child care, health care, educational possibilities, and housing.

In the U.S. the National Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) has been networking to other social justice movements, including the environmental justice movement as it challenges the existence of toxins and other environmental hazards which disproportionately harm fetuses

and children, and which are disproportionately present in communities of color (cf. Bullard 1993, Fried 1990). Thus, many proponents of reproductive justice, since they must engage in coalitions with other left social justice movements in order to deal with the intersectional justice demands of their members, are open to the promotion of alternative economic and community self-help measures of the sort that suggest an emerging Solidarity paradigm of social Justice.

Solidarity and the intersectionality problem

We can now put the solidarity problem of intersectionality for feminist global politics in this way: is it feasible to suppose that feminists of different nations, classes, ethnicities, genders and sexualities can put aside their differences and find common cause to challenge global gender injustices, particularly when these may involve challenging the privileges and powers that each of these intersections give some in relation to others? If one's identity as a woman and any interests associated with that social location are not sufficient to overcome the clash of interests women have around class, race and other socially institutionalized privileges, how is it plausible to defend a normative claim about group solidarity based on a view about the group interests of which one is a member, when one's other intersections besides gender align one with group interests which may oppose those of other women?

Intersectional feminist views on solidarity

The two intersectional feminist thinkers Chandra Mohanty and bell hooks give us two promising models of solidarity which attempt to improve on the simple definition of factual solidarity as a felt bond with others based on group interest, and the corresponding normative view of solidarity as the obligation one has to develop bonds with others in one's social group so as to promote the collective interest of the group. Carolynn O'Donnell (2007) characterizes these two views as those of *coalitional solidarity*, of Chandra Mohanty, and *sisterhood solidarity*, of bell hooks. Both of these views reject the view of sisterhood of Robin Morgan which Mohanty characterizes as an essentialist assumption that one can subtract all one's other social identities as accidental in order to concentrate on being of a gender which is oppressed by male dominance/patriarchy. In her latest book *Feminism without Borders*, Mohanty sees solidarity as "involving a common context of struggles against specific exploitative structures and systems that determines our potential political alliances" (Mohanty 2003: 49). Such a common context creates potential coalitions of and by those placed in similar oppressive structures

that might allow them to form a collective oppositional moral and political *vision, or alternative common values, e.g. of radical equality*, for which to struggle. In my and Carolyn O'Donnell's view, there is a problem with Mohanty's notion of *coalitional solidarity* as she has developed it: it is unclear what counts as a common or comparable structure of oppression which can allow people to form such oppositional vision-based solidarity relations. White women of all classes and nationalities who have not been "racialized" (Mohanty 2003: 143) are left out of the kinds of coalitions Mohanty envisions, which are completely tied up with the specific racial-gendered-class work positions of Third World women workers in the global capitalist economy.

But in fact we have seen women of different classes, races and nationalities bond politically around non-work relations, in what I have called "sex-affective relations" (Ferguson 1989, 1991). Examples include reproductive rights, and anti-violence against women practices, for example in what might be seen as the struggle for women's equal control of their "love power" (Jónasdóttir 1994) in support groups for battered women. So it could be argued that the problem of how to deal with possible conflicting group interests for a theory of solidarity is not really solved by Mohanty, but simply passed on to a question of what oppressive but similar structures one takes to be "more essential" around which to base oppositional alliances.

bell hooks suggests another way to look at the development of feminist solidarity, as a common bonding across differences of race, class, sexuality, nation, religion etc., based on dialogue and disagreement (hooks 1984). For hooks, this *sisterhood solidarity*, or what I call *transformational solidarity*, is an achieved value in a dialogical process, involves transforming oneself by a passionate commitment to promote the collective good of all women which would require the elimination of all social domination relations that oppress them, not simply those of gender, i.e. sexism. Clearly such a sense of solidarity goes beyond that of a present-interest-based solidarity, since one's present interests as a socially located individual, e.g. with class, race, heterosexual, or national privileges, will often be in opposition with promoting transformational solidarity⁴.

4 It should be noted that this notion of feminist solidarity, since it is not based merely on a social identity location, is something that both women and men, and indeed people identified as transgendered, can also develop. For example, one recent paper on queer feminist politics by Cressida Heyes (2005) has emphasized how non-transgendered feminists can ally with transgendered people because of our understanding that patriarchal body norms makes all women and to some extent men uncomfortable with our bodies (cf. also work by Mitch Boucher on trans feminism, 2007). And for some political problems with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersexual global alliances, see Ungar 2001.

A critical global ethics of care vs. solidarity justice

Like the global feminist ethics of care approach developed by some feminists (Ruddick 1989, Held 2006, Tronto 1993, Robinson 1999) as a critique of mainstream theories of justice and applied to a critique of capitalist globalization and militarism, the Solidarity paradigm of justice presupposes a caring relation and a caring practice, i.e. it involves a caring concerned relationship of trust which merges one's sense of one's own interest with particular others in the particular contexts one is in solidarity with. However, it also sees itself as making social justice demands on both national governments and supranational institutions (the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, and transnational corporations).

Like the ethics of care, the solidarity principle "from each according to his/her ability, to each according to his/her need" is at once an abstract principle of justice yet one that cannot be achieved without the concrete relations of care and cooperation that motivate one to really understand the needs of others and to identify with them. From an intersectional feminist view, such as that used by Kimberle Crenshaw, one cannot promote gender justice for women who differ by race, class, sexuality and nationality without an attention to the different needs-in-context that a poor woman, an immigrant non-English speaking woman, a lesbian, or a woman of color may have from a middle class white woman when it comes to needed protections from domestic and sexual violence (Crenshaw 1997). However, white activists doing gender anti-violence work who establish solidarity relations with diverse women have accepted the Solidarity principle of justice which commits them to contextual exploration of their different needs so as to demand legal changes and services that meet them (e.g. bilingual translators, battered women's shelters in the relevant neighborhoods, legal reform of immigration law, etc.)

Unlike the feminist ethics of care, it should be noted that the Solidarity paradigm of Justice is based on a politics which assumes a fundamental antagonism or opposition between those with unjust power and privilege and those committed to solidarity to challenge it. Thus it is an *ethico-politics* which can only be practiced in a group, in a social movement. This differentiates it from the ethics of care which assumes that individuals can apply this type of moral practice in their relations with others, and assumes no fundamental antagonism between self and other, or between one group and another. In this sense, solidarity politics has a different focus than care ethics: it is a collectivist approach, whereas care ethics is an individualist approach.

Internal vs. external critique: Justice as Solidarity

Finally we are ready to discuss the empirical situation that we find ourselves in such that solidarity networks can exist and solidarity justice is conceivable as a practical normative principle. It is conceivable and practicable because the contradictions of capitalist globalization have created internal spaces which are importantly at odds with the usual normative bottom line logic of capitalist social relations, so the Solidarity Justice paradigm can act in part as an external critique of the larger system against which it defines itself⁵. An increasing number of the anti-corporate globalization social movements are no longer satisfied with *either* the welfare state capitalist model *or* the state socialist model as alternative visions for social justice (cf. Allard, Davidson, and Matthaei 2007). They attempt to operate as much as possible on the Solidarity principle of Justice, which they have framed in a decentralized vision that either bypasses or supplements reliance on the state or the capitalist economy to deliver the conditions for solidarity justice⁶.

Those with this vision promote alternative cooperative economies, community-based sustainable agriculture projects and networks of caring support, communal ownership of land and natural resources or leaving them as “commons” – owned by none – and alternative visions of political democracy as more participatory and local, based in semi-autonomous municipalities and communities and social movements loosely linked together by solidarity through fair trade and political coalitions against neo-liberal globalization (Gibson-Graham 2006). These are not isolated examples of coops or individual projects, but whole networks of people which are forging what Bowman and Stone (2004, 2006) call a solidarity economics, and what Alperovitz (2006) calls a commonwealth tier alongside of the capitalist economy and centralized nation state.

5 Gramsci (1988) might have seen this as a counter-hegemonic space. If we define it that way it implies that solidarity economics and politics are still within the capitalist system rather than having broken with it. For my line of thought to be true to a feminist appropriation of Marx’s Critique of the Gotha Program these spaces must be seen as at least semi-autonomous; otherwise they will not be able to form new values of the sort needed to support solidarity justice.

6 From the point of view of values, it might be argued that collectivist values in Stalinist regimes were over-emphasized at the cost of individual rights while in Western capitalist democracies, particularly the U.S., there has been an over-emphasis on individualism at the cost of collective solidarity. The crises over both sorts of value imbalance have fueled decentralized autonomist alternative visions that are neither classically capitalist nor socialist but that aim to promote both collective solidarity and individual rights through participatory democracy that recognizes the need for a politics of difference (cf. Young 1990).

Conclusion

We might connect the transformed understanding of one's self-interest in collective solidarity projects and networks with that of radical humanists Karl Marx and Iris Young, who posit in their various ways that the goal in life ought to be for humans to be able to choose, promote and develop their own capabilities in a democratic fashion with other humans. Marx thought this would only be possible in a society without exploitation, i.e. in going from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom (Marx 1844/1977); while Young thought it required social justice movements which were successful in overcoming both economic and non-economic oppressive and exploitative structures (Young 1990). In this paper I have defended a particular concept of solidarity, and a solidarity paradigm of social justice. I have argued that applying this paradigm as a normative critique is realistic not utopian because the material and social solidarity networks have already developed which makes it viable. It is also one based on a non-idealist approach to the ethics of justice, unlike the dominant paradigms offered by neo-liberal and welfare state models of justice.

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✧

Chapter 4

Materialist Feminism, the Pragmatist Self and Global Late Modernity: Some Consequences for Intimacy and Sexuality

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Stevi Jackson

The concept of the “self” has re-entered the theoretical lexicon in recent years in part through Foucault’s analyses of “technologies of the self” (Foucault 1988) and in part through theories of late modernity. My focus here is on the latter, on theorists who argue that contemporary social conditions have given rise to highly individualized forms of self-hood and also to transformations in gender and sexual relations, particularly Giddens (1991, 1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2002). These writers are currently setting agendas for social theory in much of Europe and beyond – and doing so in relation to issues of central concern to feminists. My aim here is to challenge both the conceptualizations of individualization that underpin their arguments and their ethnocentric, western focus, in part through considering the alternative forms of modernity emerging in East Asia. In the process I am also arguing for a reconceptualization of self and subjectivity, taking as my inspiration the pragmatist thought of George Herbert Mead.

My interest in Mead’s theorization of the self might seem a long way from materialist feminism. Recently, however, I have argued that we need a multiplicity of perspectives in order to grasp the complexity of gender, sexuality and social life in general (see Jackson 2006). I suggested that we should consider at least four dimensions of the social: structures and institutions; meaning (encompassing both wider cultural discourses and meanings emergent from everyday interaction); everyday social practices, and finally the self and subjectivity. These dimensions are interrelated and all are part of what is “going on” in any social situation, but we cannot see them all from a single perspective. For example, sexuality is shaped by structural factors, from the institutionalization of heterosexuality to the workings of global capitalism (Hennessey 2000), but is also about meanings, practices and desires that are not reducible to structural effects and cannot be understood with conceptual tools designed to analyze social structures.

Having been warned against stretching “the concept of the material to the limits of its elasticity” (Rahman and Witz 2003: 251), I would not claim that all these dimensions are material but would maintain that taking account of them is *consistent* with materialism. The wider social structures, relations and practices that shape our lives do have a material reality in that they exist and have effects independent of our understanding of them. Social reality, however, does not reside only in structures, but also in the everyday relations between and actions of human individuals. It is these local and particular practices and the meanings associated with them that constitute our lived reality – which is the space in which selves are constituted. Insofar as Mead’s notion of the social self embeds subjectivity in the actualities of everyday practices, it fits with a broadly materialist world view, though it cannot enable us to see the structural relations that transcend everyday realities and by which they are bounded.

Why modernity theorists?

Theorists of late modernity do address social-structural change and thus seem to offer a means of linking the self back to macro-social structures and processes. They also challenge the “turn to culture” associated with postmodernism and reassert the significance of the social (see Heaphy 2007). They see the rapidity of recent social change and increasing globalization not in terms of a break from modernity but rather as an intensification of processes already evident *within* modernity. Late modernity is associated with “detraditionalization” and individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), a disembedding of the individual from solidaristic bonds and a reflexive “project of the self” (Giddens 1991).

Late modernity theorists suggest that these changes are accompanied by a re-ordering of gender and intimate relations. Thus we are said to be living in an era of “the normal chaos of love” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995) or “liquid love” (Bauman 2003), witnessing a “transformation of intimacy” (Giddens 1992) or even “the end of patriarchy” (Castells 2004). While Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) cast women as less individuated than men, caught between living for others and forging lives of their own, Giddens locates them as agents of change. For Giddens the shift from romantic to “confluent” love and the “pure relationship”, contingent on mutual satisfaction rather than life-long commitment, is partially motivated by women’s pursuit of more democratic relationships. Feminists have been critical of such propositions, arguing that they underestimate the persistence of gender inequality, the continuing importance of intimate social bonds and the degree to which choices

we make about social life are shaped by our socio-economic location (Jamieson 1999, Smart and Shipman 2004, Irwin 2005).

These alleged changes in gender and sexual relations are, for modernity theorists, linked to the emergence of new forms of self-hood. The erosion of normative prescription and a weakening of collective social ties are said to free individuals to create “a do-it-yourself biography” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim) or fashion a “reflexive project of the self” (Giddens 1991). There is a danger in these accounts, however, of rendering the self as insufficiently social or even *asocial*. While the idea of a self-made self presupposes reflexive processes of the kind explored by Mead, the modernity theorists represent reflexivity as self-centred rather than, as in Mead’s original account, founded on the relationship between self and other.

Mead’s self

Mead did not see reflexivity primarily as heightened self-concern, but as the capacity to see ourselves as subject and object, which rests on a dialogic interplay between self and other. Reflexive self-hood is the basis of all sociality, of *being* social and participating *in* the social. Mead’s self, envisaged as fluid and as process, is in many respects congruent with some post-structuralist formulations of “subjectivity in process” (Weedon 1987). It is, however, more grounded in social relations and practices and, by virtue of its reflexivity, is less decentred, fractured and precarious than in many postmodernist accounts – and has more scope for agency. While there is no unitary, stable “core self” in Mead’s account, our ability to remember (or rather retrospectively reconstruct) selves other than the self of the present enables us to create for ourselves a sense of continuity or wholeness (1934: 243–4). Reflexive self-hood, then, implies a degree of agency and active *meaning-making*, but it is always both produced within and bounded by its social context.

Reflexivity is, essentially, the ability to see oneself as subject (I) and object (Me). This is frequently misunderstood as a distinction between a social identity (Me) and an individual “I” or, as Giddens would have an “I” as the “unsocialized part” of the self (1991: 52). There *is* no pre-social “I” in Mead’s work, but rather a momentary mobilization of self as subject (I) in constant dialogic interplay with self as object (Me). The relationship between them is not a spatial one between two parts of the whole, “but a temporal and reflexive” one (Crossley 2001: 147), in which the “I” of one moment becomes the “me” as soon as it exists in memory to be reflected upon as “a ‘me’ which was the ‘I’ at the earlier time” (Mead, 1934: 175).

The idea of self as ongoing reflexive process, continually reconstituted in relation to others, has important implications for the ways in which we conceive of gendered self-hood, though Mead himself had little to say about gender. There are, however, indications that he saw his account of the self as applicable to both women and men (see Aboulafia 1993) and I would read his account of self-formation as gender neutral. Far from being a drawback I see this as an advantage: there is no need to assume, as does psychoanalysis for example, that the *mechanisms* of self-formation are differentiated by gender (Stanley and Wise 1993). To make this assumption, especially if those mechanisms are regarded as universal, is to fix gender polarization as inevitable.

According to Mead, the self arises “in social experience” (1934: 140). It begins to be formed early in life as a child learns to distinguish between self and other, to “take the attitude of the other”, to locate herself in relation to the others in her immediate circle and ultimately to social others in general (the “generalized other”). Gendered selves emerge not because girls’ and boys’ selves are constructed by different routes, but because the world of others with whom they interact is gendered and the child, in becoming socially competent, must make sense of gendered social interactions with these others. This is quite a different view of the self-other relation from that posited by postmodernists and Lacanian psychoanalysis in that it is not intrinsically oppositional. While “othering” plays an important part in maintaining gender boundaries (and other social boundaries) it is not the only self-other process in play. For Mead, establishing and maintaining a self is not about repudiation of the other, defining oneself against the other, but locating oneself in relation to individual and multiple others (see Stanley and Wise 1993). As a result, gendered self-hood emerges as variable – there is no single way of being male or female. Moreover, because interaction with others continues to impact on self-construction throughout our lives, the self changes over time and in different contexts: who we are is not fixed by infantile experience. This perspective also reverses the psychoanalytic assumption that sexuality shapes gender (Gagnon and Simon 1974), in that awareness of ourselves as gendered precedes sexual awareness and the former provides a frame through which the latter is made sense of and incorporated into our continually evolving sense of self (see Jackson 2007).

Nonetheless, variability and change in the “content” of gender co-exists with the persistent social reality of gender categories themselves (Delphy 1993), which impinge upon us from birth (or even before) and become fundamental to our social being as well as shaping, in intersection with other material social divisions and inequalities, the conditions in which our lives are led.

Reflexivity and gendered modernity – false connections

In recent social theory reflexivity is frequently placed in opposition to the social, framed in terms of choice and freedom from social constraints. Undoubtedly social constraints do have material effects on the degree to which and the directions in which we exercise reflexivity, but a simple opposition between the collective (social) and the individual (reflexive, agential) is inappropriate. The social order enables (unevenly and unequally) as well as constrains – makes certain ways of acting, thinking and being possible as well as others less possible. These constraints (and enablements) do not just come from social structures, but from the everyday business of interacting with others and the cultural resources we draw on in making sense of our world. Once we see sociality as encompassing more than social structure and pay attention to the interactional, meaningful everyday aspects of sociality, reflexivity becomes not an individual quality opposed to the social, but a fundamental part of sociality.

To see reflexivity as symptomatic of freedom from constraint, as in Giddens and the Becks, is problematic. There are two forms of individualized reflexivity evident in their work. First, there is “institutional” individualization in which the unpredictability and normative uncertainty held to be characteristic of late modernity leaves us with “no choice but to choose” to become authors of our own biographies. Secondly we have Giddens’ notion of the reflexive project of the self, in which we actively engage in a self-conscious fashioning of the self, since “who we are” under post-traditional conditions is no longer pre-ordained. Feminists have been critical of both ideas of reflexivity on the grounds that they fail to recognize the unequal distribution of opportunities for reflexivity. They have pointed out that women in late modernity are subject to re-traditionalization as much as de-traditionalization (Adkins 2002) and that the middle classes have more resources from which to fashion the self as project (Skeggs 2003). Certainly social divisions and inequalities impact on our reflexive processes and the resources available to us for self-construction – if the self is social it cannot be otherwise. But focusing only on forms of reflexivity associated with choice and privilege misses the relationality that is absolutely fundamental to the reflexive self.

If reflexivity is essential for social being it would seem impossible to argue that subordinate groups are lacking in reflexive capacities. Since reflexive self-hood requires the ability to imagine oneself from the other’s perspective and anticipate the other’s responses to oneself, subordinates often need to be highly reflexive. To take the paradigmatic case, the master rarely needs to worry about what the slave might think of

him and how that might impact on his future lines of action; the slave, in order to survive, has to be acutely aware of what her master thinks of her and might want of her. Moreover, feminine attributes deemed “traditional”, those associated with the work of care, may also contribute to a heightened relational reflexivity where anticipating others’ wants and needs becomes the stuff of everyday life. If men’s freedom from having to be concerned with the localized business of maintaining their own bodies and spaces (Smith 1988) enables certain forms of self-reflexivity, women’s responsibility for maintaining others’ bodies and places *constrains* them into other forms of reflexivity. And if, as Anna Jónasdóttir says, women are situated “as ‘empowerers’ of social existence – for men” (1994: 13), women’s reflexive skills may simultaneously feed into men’s reflexive self-making. Looked at this way women do not lack reflexivity but have traditionally been highly reflexive social actors.¹

Reflexivity cannot exist outside, exceed or transcend the social but it is possible, and consistent with Mead’s theorization, to conceive of differing forms of reflexivity and reflexive self-hood engendered by particular social conditions and produced from differing social locations. The self as envisaged by Mead is, as Giddens (1991) notes, a basic requirement for social competence. But this does not necessarily mean that it is “low level” reflexivity: it can entail a high degree of self-awareness in relation to others.² Giddens’ (1991) self as project is not so much a higher, individuated, level of reflexivity as a different form of it, one in which the self is reflexively reconstructed *as if* it were entirely individual. Individualized self projects do not exist in opposition to the social: on the contrary “the language of self awareness, is [...] bound by its cultural situatedness” and even in the act of constructing an individual self we “still rely on common cultural forms” (Adams 2003: 229).

One respect in which Mead’s conceptualization of reflexivity does resonate with that of the late modernity theorists is in his recognition that we are less reflexive when engaging in habitual activities and that reflexivity is heightened when we confront new or unexpected situations – which is likely to happen more often during rapid social change. Thus he might well have agreed that the “de-routinization of the mundane” breaks down the habitual “into a cloud of possibilities to be thought about and negotiated” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 6). But whereas the late modernity theorists envisage the self as cast adrift from cultural expectations, for Mead the reflexive self is always anchored in sociality.

1 Some of these ideas were initially worked through in unpublished papers co-authored with Sue Scott presented at meetings of the European Feminism and Social Theory Network on University of Helsinki, August 2001.

2 This is a revision of, and a departure from, an earlier argument (see Jackson 2007).

Modern western gendered, sexual self-hood

The transition to late modernity in the west from the late 20th century has been associated with what Giddens calls “plastic sexuality”: the freeing of sexuality from reproduction, new sexual identities and lifestyles and greater sexual autonomy for women. Often this is taken to indicate progress towards pluralized, democratized sexual culture, permitting greater reflexivity as we fashion and reshape our sexual selves. I would argue, though, that the contemporary western sexual climate is far more complex and far more problematic, especially for women, than this narrative of progress implies – and not simply because these developments are subject to moral and political contestation. Changing sexual times have thrown up a host of tensions, contradictions and associated anxieties (see Jackson and Scott 2004). Western culture is saturated with sexual imagery, yet adults still try to preserve children’s “innocence”; gay and lesbian chic can be fashionable while gays and lesbians are commonly harassed, bullied and assaulted; intimate sexual secrets are revealed in detail in the popular media, many heterosexual couples find it difficult to talk about the sexual acts they engage in with each other. Western sexual culture provides copious resources for fashioning sexual selves, enhancing sexual self-knowledge or seeking self-improvement, but these also provoke anxieties about one’s sexual “fitness” or proficiency. And to answer these anxieties there are self-help books offering advice on relationship problems and techniques for improving performance, in turn adding to the climate of excessive concern with the sexual and fuelling the anxieties it creates (see Jackson and Scott 1997).

The difficulties this can entail for constructions of sexual self-hood can be illustrated with reference to the situation of young western heterosexual women. Their horizons are no longer limited to heterosexual domesticity, but they still inhabit in a highly heterosexualized social world. New scripts for sexual self-hood are on offer, for example in the media, which promote aspirations for sexual autonomy, experimentation and pleasure, yet the double standard of morality, in modified form, is still with us, as is sexual violence. The contemporary sexual landscape would seem to require a high degree of self-reflexivity and self-surveillance from young women as they attempt to walk the fine line between not being sexual enough and being too sexual (see Holland et al. 1998, Tolman 2002). Here then, reflexivity is a product of both enablement and constraint, of balancing new possibilities against persistent inequalities.

The idea of “sexuality” – as a specific, erotic aspect of human life and being – is modern and dates only back to the late 19th century (Heath 1982). It is also a western concept, with no indigenous equivalent in

East Asia; here the idea of sexuality as intrinsic to self is alien. All East Asian languages have a word for sex but the concept of sexuality has proved particularly difficult to translate (See Jackson et al. 2008a). Often, until recently, it was not possible to find a language with which to talk about sexuality in the same way as is routinely done in the west (Lee 2002). Today even sex-workers can find it difficult to describe “doing that thing” (Chen 2008), while more “respectable” women are even more circumspect (Liu 2008). Yet the term “sexuality” is being taken up by eastern scholars and some activists, both through engagement with western ideas and through attempts to grapple with local conditions and consequences of modernity.³ This raises the question as to whether the “sexual” that eastern and western thinkers are dealing with is a product of modernity *per se* or particular variants of it. East Asian nations such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are as modern or post-modern as the west, and China is rapidly modernizing, but is this modernity “the same” as the western version?

Imagining modernity

It is through the observation of apparently similar trends occurring in modern societies that theorists of late modernity are able to make universalising claims. Western societies along with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (though not China)⁴ are characterized by: the increased participation of women in paid labour; falling rates of marriage; rising average age at marriage; more people remaining single; falling fertility rates; and finally, the emergence of social movements for gender and sexual rights (see especially Castells 2004). Such trends, however, always conceal within them considerable complexity and variability even within a single nation and cannot be taken to indicate that late modernity has the same gendered meanings and consequences in all parts of the world. For example, in the west falling rates of marriage are associated with rising rates of cohabitation and single living but this pattern is not being replicated everywhere in the east (see e.g. Kamano and Khor 2008). We should not assume universal tendencies towards individualized selfhood, or infer that eastern nations are simply catching up in the “individualization race” (c.f. Smart and Shipman 2004).

3 From here on this papers derives from my collaborative work with Woo Juhyun and Liu Jieyu (Jackson, Liu and Woo 2008a and 2008b).

4 China is a somewhat different case in that the mobilization of women into the labour force was a consequence of the communist revolution, falling birth rates resulted from the one-child policy, marriage rates remain exceptionally high (see Liu 2004, 2007) and dissident sexual movements have had little opportunity to flourish (He 2001, Evans 1997, Sang 2003).

The individualization thesis has been formulated from within western cultures with a long history of individualism (see e.g. MacFarlane 1978). What does individualization mean in societies that do not share the western individualistic heritage? What does de-traditionalization mean when the tradition in question is not a western one? What intimacy is being transformed where the tradition of romantic love is not part of local culture? Furthermore, given that the ideas of the modernity theorists are problematic even within the western contexts in which they originated, do they have any purchase at all elsewhere? What effects is modernization having on intimate lives and sexual selves in the east, and how far are these similar to or different from what is happening in the west? How far are changes attributable to modernization *per se* or to local conditions and culture?

One aspect of western individualism has been free choice of marriage partners and the idea that marriage should be based on love, though with changing conceptions of love over time. It has also been associated with a long history of households based on nuclear families. East Asian societies do not share this history; here families are understood not simply in terms of living relatives but existing through time, so that younger generations owe homage not only to present elders, but also ancestors. The family is also a cornerstone of Confucianism. Chinese in origin, Confucianism remains influential not only in China and Taiwan, but also in Korea and to an extent in Japan. The Confucian ethic privileges harmony, order and hierarchy, the needs of the collective over those of the individual, filial piety and women's obedience to men.⁵ The form of self this engenders is profoundly relational – a self defined by one's place in a hierarchical order. In particular, it leaves little scope for women's autonomy or for expressions of sexuality that are not harnessed to the need to produce male children who will perpetuate the family.

Today Confucianism is less an explicit belief system than a set of taken-for-granted traditional assumptions about “the way things are” (or should be). Its traces have nonetheless left their mark on East Asia and helped shape the context in which East Asian sexualities are lived and understood. Despite facing challenges from modernizing projects and processes it has persisted within East Asian modernity, for example becoming embedded in corporate culture. Throughout East Asia “harmony” remains a valued feature of social life, within family and workplace, and it is often incumbent on women, as subordinates, to ensure it is not disrupted (see, for example, Muta 2008, Lee 2008, Liu 2008).

⁵ The three obediences: of a single woman to her father, a wife to her husband, a widow to her son.

This both constrains women's individuality and engenders a heightened self-reflexivity in relation to individual and collective others.

East Asian modernity has not only been built on different historical and cultural foundations but also on a different relationship between tradition and modernity, in part precisely because of the association between the "western" and the "modern". Aiko Tanabe and Yumiko Tokito-Tanabe (2003) argue that, while eastern nations modernized through "learning from and imitating the west", the maintenance of a self-identity as distinct from the west required the incorporation of tradition within modernity and vice-versa. Therefore, they suggest, modern eastern societies cannot be characterized, in Giddens' (1990) terms, as "post-traditional"; Asian self-hood entails a "complex self-reflexive endeavour to position oneself for *and* against 'European modernity' and 'indigenous tradition'" (Tanabe and Tokito-Tanabe 2003: 4, emphasis in original). And, of course, it is generally women who become the bearers of tradition in such circumstances. Women, however, are active agents in these processes, individually and collectively involved in renegotiating and reshaping their daily lives in changing conditions, in confronting new oppressions and new opportunities. In the process, they are often constructing their own ideas of what it means to be modern selves.

Reflexive selves and eastern sexual cultures

Although modernization and globalization are testing traditional moral boundaries and making alternative sexualities more possible, the development of sexual discourses in East Asia is still bounded by particular local configurations of tradition and modernity. In keeping with my argument that reflexivity is social, other-directed as well as self-directed and is as often occasioned by constraints as by choices, I suggest that East Asian women exhibit high degrees of reflexivity in negotiating the contradictions of the sexual cultures they inhabit. For reasons of space I confine myself here to one example: East Asian lesbians.

The idea of reflexive sexual selfhood in the western context has been associated with the possibility of creating alternative, non-heterosexual lifestyles and identities. New sexual cultures are emerging in Eastern urban centres, sometimes borrowing ideas from the west and sometimes inventing new local identities (see e.g. Sang 2003). Writing of the growth of a lesbian movement in Taiwan in the 1990s, Manuel Castells (2004) argues that this development, "in a quasi-authoritarian political context, and amidst a deeply patriarchal culture, shows the breaking of traditional moulds by global trends of identity politics" (2004: 266). While Castells concedes that Asian lesbianism has been adapted to local cultural conditions, he gives insufficient attention to the ways in which lesbian

identities are shaped by those conditions. In East Asia homosexuality and lesbianism challenge the foundations of a form of patriarchal family that differs from its western equivalent. Here to eschew reproductive, marital relationships is to renege on the paramount filial duty of ensuring family continuity and to assert individual desires over the perceived needs of the collective and flies in the face of all tenets of virtue.

Being a lesbian in East Asia is still not easy. In China lesbians have been subject to administrative detention and re-education as “hooligans” and are still regarded as sick or perverted even by more liberal opinion (Evans 1997, He 2001). Despite Taiwan’s well-developed lesbian community (at least in Taipei), lesbians can rarely be “out” in the western sense and often lead double lives. Even in claiming public space, as in gay pride marches, held in Taiwan since 2003, this may not, given the common practice of masking on such demonstrations, entail public declaration of individual identity still less being out to family and colleagues (Martin 2003, Sang 2003). In Japan too negotiating a lesbian lifestyle remains a delicate matter where such a choice remains outside the thinkable and where living with another woman does not mean escaping pressures to marry (See Kamano and Khor 2008). In South Korea the lesbian community is almost entirely closeted. Here lesbians very literally lead double lives, adopting secret names within the lesbian community. Their lesbian friends do not know their “real” names, while other friends, family and colleagues have no idea of their other names – their names mark the boundary between their two lives (Woo 2007).

Leading such “double lives” and constructing separate selves illustrates the ways in which reflexivity operates under both conditions of choice *and* constraint, functions both in the process of being silenced by an oppressive homophobia and in finding a voice as a dissident self. Both selves are reflexively constructed in relation to others and are other-directed in terms of two separate social communities through which it is possible to maintain a lesbian self and an implied heterosexual self. This situation provides perhaps an extreme case of the potential multiplicity of the self and the human reflexive ability to manage, if sometimes painfully, the disjunctions and tensions within ourselves.

Conclusion

Following Mead I have insisted that the self is social, founded on a self-other dialogue that is relational rather than oppositional and constructed in the spaces and practices of everyday sociality. It is multiple, in that different versions of self emerge in different contexts, constantly subject to change throughout life, but reflexively reconstructed to produce a sense of continuity. Self-reflexivity is not, and cannot be, an entirely indi-

vidualized project as the modernity theorists would have it, because even in its self-consciously self-fashioning form it is nonetheless enabled and constrained by social context, cultural resources and relations with others. I have suggested that it is possible to conceive of differing forms and levels of reflexivity, but that seeing heightened reflexivity as only a product of choice and freedom from constraint misses the relational dialogue between self and other at the heart of the reflexive process. Thus the oppressed can be, and often need to be, as reflexive as the privileged – albeit in different ways. Self-formation depends on its local social contexts and this is vitally important in understanding the different forms of self-hood that emerge in varying contexts and in avoiding universalizing assumptions. We also, however, need to take account of the dimensions of the social that Mead himself did not consider, and that pragmatist and interactionist perspectives alone do not enable us to see – in particular the material structural inequalities and broader cultural contexts that shape the forms of reflexivity available to the privileged and the oppressed.

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⁶ A note on referencing East Asian names: In East Asia the family name is placed before personal name. Many East Asian authors reverse their names to follow western convention when published in the west, especially in the USA. When referencing names used western fashion a comma is used to separate family name from personal name (as with referencing western names).. When the name heading the publication is used according to eastern convention no comma is used – and this can change as authors switch between conventions. Thus for example, Liu Jieyu’s earlier work was published as Jieyu Liu, but she reverted to Liu Jieyu in 2007. Thus she is referenced as Liu, Jieyu (2004) and Liu Jieyu (2007) – without the comma in the latter case. Lan Pei-Chia and Ho Sik-ying have also published under both conventions. And the sharp eyed will have noticed another variation in how Chinese names, specifically, are romanised. Two syllable/character personal names are joined as one word in mainland China but hyphenated elsewhere but with different capitalization conventions. Koreans use both forms.

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Chapter 5

Masculinities and Power in Contemporary China – Reflections on the Phenomenon of Bao Ernai (Keeping Mistresses)

Xingkui Zhang

A "sexual contract"

In April 2007, a story about a wealthy businessman keeping a young college student as his mistress (bao ernai) spread quickly among users of the Internet. The uniqueness was not the topic itself, but the existence of a "baoyang xieyi" – an agreement of extramarital relationship or what I would call a "sexual contract". According to Nanfang Dushi Bao (Feng 2007), the student, under the pseudonym of Guo Fang, was 21 years old and a freshman in 2005 when she first met Chen Ming, owner of a private enterprise. Her father died a few years before, leaving her mother with Guo Fang and her two younger brothers. She had been in debt for paying her university tuition and had worked as a tutor. Chen offered her a monthly payment of 10,000 yuan in return for her being his mistress. Guo Fang agreed and, to ensure her getting the payment, she drafted a contract which was signed by both parties and each kept a copy. In the contract were specified the financial obligations Chen should undertake and the sexual service and companionship Guo should provide, plus she should not date any boyfriend or have sex with any other man during the contract period from May 2005 to July 2008. The affair was discovered by a private detective hired by Chen's wife. They were stunned when Guo produced the contract, which she had kept in her purse. Guo Fang was reported to have shown no sense of shame or guilt as she was carrying out an agreement involving mutual rights and responsibilities. (See Appendix)

The practice of "contracting a second wife" or "*bao ernai*", as is popularly known in China, has been the topic of public debates in recent years. It was first found among business owners, managers and professionals from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and other countries and regions since the opening of Chinese borders for international trade and investments since the late 1970s. The obscure nature of the practice has made it difficult to come up with accurate figures of the number of people involved. According to Maria (Siu Mi) Tam (2004), in the peak years of the early 1990s, every year more than 60,000 Hong Kong men crossed

the border to work in mainland China. Among them, one in six was involved in *bao ernai*. The widespread nature of the practice could be further supported by a recent Hong Kong news report that the number of illegitimate children parented by Hong Kong residents in mainland China was about 50, 000 by 2006 (Dagongbao 2008). Today *bao ernai* is not limited to overseas Chinese men. It has spread to the wealthy and powerful in mainland China: businessmen, corporate executives, government officials, police officers and some middle-class professionals. The complex nature of *bao ernai* makes it good material to study gender, sexuality and global change in contemporary China. This paper mainly explores issues of masculinities and power in gender relations based on an analysis of the hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1987, 1995, 2005) and the hegemony of men (Hearn 2004, 2007).

The literal translation of *bao ernai* is “contracting a second wife”. The use of the verb *bao* is of great significance. It denotes claiming exclusive rights over something, usually involving items that could be put to a certain price or value. Therefore, for men to contract a woman, it implies both financial transaction and exclusive rights to a woman’s body and her sexuality. In official disciplinary code (State Council 2007), the practice is labeled *baoyang qingren* (keeping a lover), which will cost civil servants their positions. The verb *baoyang* here is a combination of “contract” and “financial support”. The gender-neutral noun *qingren* (lover) conceals the gendered nature of power relations in China. Cases of rich and powerful women keeping male lovers do exist (which is analogously called *bao erye*, or keeping a second husband), but they are much rarer compared with men’s keeping mistresses.

Hegemonic masculinities and the hegemony of men

The “sexual contract” provides a case for revisiting the notion of hegemony in both the concept of hegemonic masculinities and the hegemony of men. Hegemonic masculinity is the pattern of practice that allows men’s dominance over women. It embodies the currently most honored way of being a man (Connell 1987, 1995). Hegemony refers to “overarching ideologies at the level of everyday, taken-for-granted ideas and practice performed “with consent”, “without coercion” (Hearn 2004: 53). Hegemony does not necessarily involve violence, but rather, it means ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832). The concept of hegemony denotes both force and consent and therefore can assist both material and gender power relations (Hearn 2004: 65). In contemporary China, though women formally enjoy equal rights with men, men’s dominance is detectable in the distribution of wealth and power, opportunities in education and

employment, gender division of labour, and discourses on gender and sexuality. The hegemony of both men and masculinities is reflected in the Chinese culture and practices which legitimize men's ownership of the women's body, sexuality, love and caring, and reproductive capacity. For instance, despite criticism from women's rights groups, media and public outcry, and party-state sanctions, men who keep mistresses are the elite business and political power holders who otherwise appear to be role models of "*chenggong renshi*" – successful people. To some extent, *bao ernai* is paradoxically both an indication of a man's moral degradation and a symbol of his manhood. The former is just a minor flaw (*xiaojie*), while the latter is of vital importance to a man's capability to achieve great feat (*dashi*). It has been almost a consensus among men that those who achieve great feats do not have to mind their minor flaws.

This paper will analyze gender and sexuality in contemporary China as "a set of relations, activities, needs, desires, productive/reproductive powers and capacities, identities, values, institutions, and organizational and structural contexts" (Jónasdóttir 2008: 16). It looks into the power asymmetry between the men and women involved in the phenomenon of *bao ernai* in three areas: class, region and political status.

The class and regional division behind *bao ernai*

The contemporary practice of *bao ernai* emerged in the 1980s when China established special economic zones in its south eastern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian to attract foreign investments. Many Hong Kong and Taiwanese businessmen came in without bringing wives and children. They met with migrant women from central and eastern provinces of China who flocked to the south-east coast of China to seek employment. Many of these women ended up in the service and hospitality sector, where it was easy for them to meet the businessmen. There are also large numbers of young migrant women working in firms owned by foreign companies. So the *bao ernai* phenomenon was first found in, though not limited to, liaisons between the above two groups of migrants. Chinese men from mainland gradually followed the practice of their overseas counterparts when they had accumulated enough wealth. In the 1980s, mainlanders who got rich first were self-employed men who opened private businesses in the city and work-contractors who served as brokers between urban employers and rural labourers. Since the early 1990s, private firms along the east coast of China started by mainlanders have also been allowed to employ workers from central and western China and the booming market-oriented economy have created a new class of rich entrepreneurs. Another prominent group of men who keep mistresses are government officials and employees.

The development in different regions in China and distribution of wealth, however, are extremely uneven. The rigid household registration (*hukou*) system is still maintaining the urban-rural divide. As a result, there has been a pattern between the *bao ernai* men and their mistresses: men coming from more prosperous classes and regions, often older and established in their careers, and women from poorer classes and regions and much younger or in junior positions. More recently, female college students have become more favorable targets. They fit in the pattern too, as they have a heavy burden with rising tuition fees and living expenses, but China does not have a social network for college students to be employed part-time. Of course, the scale of female college students who actually become *ernais* might have been exaggerated by the media.

The issues of masculinity

Shen (2008: 59) finds six main themes among Taiwanese businessmen having sexual liaisons with mainland women: (1) sexual “play” as a part of business operation; (2) biological needs and emotional loneliness while away from home; (3) mainland women as cheap and loose; (4) commonness among other transnational, privileged men; (5) performing charity; and (6) peer pressure. These justifications could at best be regarded as excuses as they have missed an obvious factor: (mainland) women’s inferior position to (Taiwanese) men. Women have been objectified and commoditized when “sexual consumption of women is seen as an expression and display of the wealth, status, and manliness” (Shen 2008: 67). Yoeh and Willis (2004: 158) also observe that “the temptation is particular strong because a Chinese girlfriend or mistress demonstrates men’s virility and economic status, and feeds into men’s masculinized sense of self”. Likewise, Hong Kong media depict men’s involvement with second wives as indications of “chivalry and masculinity” (So 2003). All these seem to be in line with Connell’s (1998) theorizing of the existence of “transnational business masculinity”.

Mainland sources offer a slightly different picture for mainland men to keep mistresses (Xinxi Shibao 2004, Jiang 2005, Huang et al 2008): (1) compensation – these men who are in their 40s and 50s have experienced hardship in their earlier lives; (2) adventure (from a sexual point of view); (3) boredom with first wife; (4) belief in polygyny (or the Daoist belief that the more women a man makes love with, the healthier he will be and the longer he will live); and (5) influence from western ideas of sex freedom.

There are different emphases in the analysis but a similar pattern regarding Chinese masculinities is found in both overseas and mainland Chinese men: the notion of male “play”. Men who keep mistresses usu-

ally would not choose to abandon their first wives and if their first wives found out about their affairs, they would try to settle the crisis by assuring their wives that their relations with their mistresses are not serious. A common strategy is the use of the very popular saying “*fengchang-zuoxi*” – playing impromptu games as circumstances requires. The kind of socializing among business circles (often involving public servants as in China the party-state plays a key role in business transaction) is generally known as *yingchou* (give-and-take, ritual socializing), which takes places in venues such as hotels, restaurants and KTV bars, where services from women are available.

Prostitution is illegal in China and therefore risky, while keeping mistresses is a much safer strategy. The discourse of “play” and peer pressure reflects a male dominated corporate culture in the business world as well as in the world of politics. When peers take young and beautiful women as mistresses, the competition is not about who can resist the temptation, as the moral-ethical code of society in general would expect, but rather, who has the most beautiful and elegant woman or who has the largest number of mistresses. The dream pairing of hero (*yingxiong*) and beauty (*meiren*) is still fantasized. In this male culture, winning the heart of a beautiful young lady is most manly of all the successes that a man could achieve. A preferred model of *bao ernai* for many men is virtually a new form of polygamy: a successful man married to a wife and having steady relations with one or even multiple mistresses, hence the new saying “*jiazhong hongqi budao, waimian caiqi piaopiao*” (the red flag at home stands, while colourful flags outside abounds).

Objectification and stigmatization of ernais

Apparently the flags in the saying are a metaphor for women. This is just one example of the objectification in the discourse of gender relations in China today. Here is another example of how one mainland businessman rationalizes the need to *bao ernai*: “For a man to go around in this world, he will be belittled without a “*xiaoer*”. What’s more, he won’t be successful in business (Mao 2003: 197). The use of the term *xiaoer* for *ernai* is revealing. “*Xiao*” is the Chinese for “small” or “little” and “*er*” is the Chinese number two or second. In most cases, “*xiao*” has a derogatory connotation, such as the Chinese soldiers’ referring to Japanese soldiers as “little Japanese” (*xiao riben*) in World War II movies. Also the combination *xiaoer* reminds people of the twos in a set of playing cards. Another case in point is the recent “3377 incident”, in which a woman who first dated a married man and then married him after he divorced his first wife was dubbed a “little third” (*xiaosan*). The objectification of women in relation to extramarital affairs is also reflected in

an earlier version known as “*gao poxie*”, or “do broken shoes”. Here a woman who had more than one sexual partner was compared to broken shoes worn by more than one man.

While men could justify their practice as “natural” and “universal among men”, harmless to family, or with the claim that they are not seriously involved, women who are in the position of mistresses become targets of criticism and stigmatization. The lower class and regional background of these women made them easy targets for media and folk portrayal of them as evil “gold diggers” that pose a threat to both the urban wives and their husbands. As Shen (2005: 422) concludes, the sexual liaisons of Hong Kong, Singaporean, and Taiwanese businessmen with Chinese women in China are constructed by these three societies as dangerous to family harmony and national borders. Shih (1998: 315), on the other hand, observes that representations of mainland women in mass media emphasize their cultural difference from the women of Taiwan and Hong Kong and are filled with patriarchal injunctions and eroticizations. For example, Taiwanese construction of *dalumei* (little sisters from mainland) denotes the fear of contamination. In mainland China, rural migrant women are constructed by the state, the market, and intellectual discourse as second-class citizens who are sexually promiscuous, dangerous, and threatening (Zheng 2007). To some first wives who have conflict of interests, *ernais* are “thieves and prostitutes”.

Zhang Yufen, the famous “*ernai* killer” who has had a ten-year legal battle with her husband over his betrayal of marriage and now works as a private detective specialized in investigation of *ernai* cases, comments that *ernais* “don’t know how to respect their own body and emotion, unrestrainedly destroy legal families and conjugal attachments” (Liu 2008). Though Zhang also realizes that her campaign against the mistresses rather than the men who keep mistresses is tragic (she calls it a “war between women”), she laments that men are absent in the war, as there is even no name for the man who keeps mistresses. (My use of “*bao ernai* men” seems clumsy.) He is just a *man*, unlike *ernai* or *xiaosan* for women! This again reveals the unequal treatment of men and women in such incidents. For each corrupt official who had come to his downfall, there was a woman (or, rather, women) behind it. The Chinese idiom “*hongyan huoshui*” (red complexion unlucky water) might be translated as “women are the root of all evil”. Women are both the victims and villains.

The issues of power and women's agency

Like the previously cited justifications by men in Shen (2008), these excuses are not firmly grounded. For instance, Zheng (2006: 165) finds biological determinism in men who justify their sexual exploitation of women as “men's normal biological nature to crave sex just like food”. Party and government officials who were caught often in retrospect blamed the temptations that they faced, just as Taiwan and Hong Kong businessmen blamed mainland girls for seducing them. My observation is that these are again justifications or excuses for men to behave badly. Missing is the fundamental issue of patriarchal power that these men possess over other men and women.

The agreement between the college student and businessman partly reveals the incentive for her to have the relationship. She seems to have taken it as a business transaction. Most of the cases of *baosernais* reveal that the main incentive for being *ernais* is to be rid of poverty. Genuine love and affection may develop, but it often comes after the relationship has proceeded. Pan Suiming, a sexologist based in People's University in Beijing, argues for the economic factor in extramarital affairs in general. According to Pan (2004), among those in the top 5 percent of highest monthly income, 45 percent have reported extramarital sex, while only 5 percent of the lowest 40 percent in monthly income have reported extramarital sex. It is also admitted that changing ideas of sex and women's views on chastity have been a factor. This needs to be followed up.

Gender and class relations in China have been changing as part of the global change, but what is unique is China's urban-rural and east-west gaps. Therefore, I add place of origin as an important category for sociological analysis of power relations between people from different regions of Greater China. There are three different layers in this analysis: First, businessmen from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and other parts of the world versus mainland Chinese women. The former groups are superior in the global division of labour. The second layer is businessmen and party-government officials in the southeast coastal regions versus women from interior provinces. The third layer is urban men versus rural women. In such a structure, rural women in the central and western part of China are doubly vulnerable. Low levels of economic development in their own regions forced them to migrate to the east coastal region to seek employment and a better life, but there are various barriers for them to get equal opportunities and treatment in the new place.

Women in general are victims of male dominance as a result of the gendered division of labour. Zhang Li (2001) tells the stories of how powerless wives of rich businessmen felt when their husbands started to have relations with other women, as the businesses are in the hands of

the husbands even though wives' contributions have been indispensable. This has to do with the division of labour in family-run businesses in which the wives are usually responsible for what would conventionally be referred to as "domestic" tasks, such as monitoring workers and inspecting the quality of products, while husbands are usually responsible for "external" tasks such as purchasing of materials, distribution of products and dealing with financial matters.

Sometimes, men don't have to be extremely wealthy and powerful to exert their power. Meanwhile, women can also still demonstrate their agency in fighting for their own rights. There have been both individual women and women's organizations that strongly condemn men's *baoyang ernai* and call for establishing new laws to prohibit it. Also, some mistresses are seeking protection of their rights. Here I will quote another high-profile case in China.

The woman who fought for the rights of "ernais"

Xie Lijun has been the center of media attention since early 2006 when she revealed her story as an ernai. She was a divorced and unemployed woman who used to earn a living on using her private car as a taxi, which is called kai heiche (drive a "black" car) or feifa yingyun (illegal operation of transport). She was caught by a policeman in 2004, just a month after she had bought the car with a loan from her brother. To evade punishment she subduced to the sexual request of the police officer, whose surname was Chen, and maintained a relationship with him for more than a year. Chen was a married man in his early 40s. She even became pregnant. After an accidental abortion, the relationship turned sour. Xie suspected that Chen might have wanted to desert her for other lovers and deliberately induced the abortion. After this dispute Chen sided with his wife who had beaten Xie twice in public. Xie reported Chen to authorities with sex videos as evidence. Chen received disciplinary punishment for adultery but no legal liability. Xie thought the punishment was too lenient and started to publicize her story on the Internet by threatening to release the sex video. She later started a website under the name of Ernai Weiquan Wang – Protecting Rights for Ernais. (Based on Su 2006)

Xie might be an atypical mistress – she was by all means a stigmatized woman: a divorcée, illegal operator of a small business, mistress, and advocator of rights for *ernais*. But how she became a policeman's mistress merits scrutiny. Whether women are voluntary or under coercion to be mistresses, that only the rich and powerful can afford to *baoyang ernai* demonstrates that power asymmetry based on gender, class and place of origin is an important factor in the analysis. Xie has recently been involved in two agendas: fighting (so far unsuccessfully) a legal battle

for compensations and publicly warning young women of the doomed fate of mistresses. For those women like Zhang Yufen, who believe that young women should have their moral discipline not to sabotage other women's marriages, no rights should be granted to mistresses.

Change in sex and sexuality in mainland China

The spread of the practice of *bao ernai* coincides with significant changes in people's views on sex and sexuality in China. Pan Suiming (2006) believes that there has been a sexual revolution going on. Since the founding of the PRC, the state exerts great power over people's private lives. In the arena of sex and sexuality, there was an official discourse of sexuality created as uniform, normative standards of sexual conduct based on monogamy and reproduction. In fact, sex is something that married couples do, but nobody talks about it (for instance, in media, books etc). Romantic love first became a theme after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and gradually, sexuality entered the everyday discourse through books, magazines, radio and television.

News reports on corrupt officials would often cite their use of drugs and pornography. Sexual pleasure has become legitimate rights for both men and women to pursue. However, they tend to turn to medical doctors for treatment if there are problems such as impotency. In late night radio talk shows doctors are often invited to answer questions together with the host. Specialists in reproductive medicine are in high demand in hospitals and specialized drugstores are competing for customers who believe in the effectiveness of drugs in enhancing sexual performance and pleasure.

There is also the booming business of pornography, though illegal. Again, the sources are mainly western, with Hong Kong and Taiwan serving both as sites for production and distribution. In this sense, pornography as an industry in China is part of the global network, with Hong Kong and Taiwan playing roles of brokers. They produce new forms of pornography, reproduce traditional Chinese pornography and import western pornography and then bring them to mainland China. This reflects the global impact on Chinese society in sex and sexuality.

Discussion

The *bao ernai* phenomenon has become a very important aspect of the woman question in contemporary China. The stakeholders have been changed since the early 1980s with the change of the Chinese social stratification and migration of people for opportunities in investment, employment and education. For instance, men who keep mistresses are

made up of more complex backgrounds, with an increasingly larger number of government officials and public servants. It was reported that 95 percent of the high profile corruption cases involve these men's sexual liaison with beautiful young women, often several women at the same period of time (China Youth Daily 2006).

However, the public outcry and government countermeasures in response to the outcry have only touched the moral and legal implications. Very few have explored deeper into the phenomenon for the root causes and complexity of the matter. The existing patriarchal social structure has seldom been challenged as China is formally a socialist country advocating gender equality. The truth is, men in China today take the lion's share of both the executive power of government and business and the power in the family as head (at least symbolically).

The subordination of women in general and some women in particular because of class, occupation and place of residence, makes many young women vulnerable to men's control and domination. Take the case of female college students. There has recently been an increase in the proportion of women students in colleges after years of expansion in college enrolment, though in general there is still a gap between them. Of the more than 8 million female undergraduates, it must be a very tiny proportion of them who are *ernais*. But this does indicate a change in the group of women targeted by men. As men are getting ever richer and more powerful, many college students are actually faring much worse. Instead of being regarded as *tian zhi jiaozi* (the favorite sons and daughters of heaven), being financially supported by the state, and secured with a job upon graduation, they are now faced with heavy burdens of tuitions and living expenses. China does not have a mature system to provide students with loans or opportunities to work for paying university costs. Further, women graduates are also in a disadvantageous positions in seeking employment. For college students to be involved in *bang dakuan* (seeking patronage from a rich person) or *zuo ernai* (being a mistress), it is not merely an issue whether it is ethical or legal. There are practical reasons behind.

Also at issue is the dynamics of masculinities. From the phenomenon of *bao ernai*, we could observe what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 852) refer to as the potential "internal contradiction" within all practices that construct masculinities. For instance, keeping concubines had been condemned by progressive intellectuals of the late Qing and early Republic of China (from mid 1800s to mid 1900s) but was practiced even by many of the intellectuals themselves (Wang 1995). Today *bao ernai* is a controversial issue of similar nature. On one hand, it is regarded by public opinion as a form of corruption. On the other, it is practiced by

the most prestigious classes of men. This may not appear to be hegemonic at all. However, if we look more carefully into what is implicated in the practice of *bao ernai*, we can find that there are certain elements that reflect the hegemonic masculinities of men throughout Chinese history apart from sexual gratification and emotional fulfillment: demonstration of virility (with a body that appears to defy the aging process), ability to maintain the patrilineal family, economic resources to support such a lifestyle, possession of young women's body and heart, etc. I am not implying that men have not changed and that they will never change. What I am trying to say is that if the hegemony of men is not challenged and the structural inequality between men and women persists, men's oppression and exploitation of women will be hard to change.

More recently, there has been talk about sexual revolution. For example, Pan Suiming (2006) maintains that love and sexual pleasure are now viewed as an essential part of marital relationship, which partly accounts for China's growing rate of divorce and extra-marital affairs. However, many traditional assumptions about female sexual behaviour remain unchanged. The *bao ernai* phenomenon provides an arena for researchers to look for gender and sexuality in relations of power, productions, reproduction, and representation. New approaches are to be devised to conduct survey to get a clearer picture of the stakeholders in the issue and new perspectives need to be taken in analysis of the data.

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Appendix

Below is what I call a “sexual contract”, though in the literal translation from Chinese it is called “an agreement of monopoly and support”. I deliberately make this clumsy translation as the word *bao* denotes claiming exclusive rights to the women’s body and sexuality and *yang* denotes financial support. So from these two characters, the modern Chinese coinage *baoyang* reflects the fact that men are the subject and these women relegated to the status of sex slave under the bondage of the contract.

Agreement of Monopoly and Support

Party A: xx (man)

Party B: xx (woman)

To maintain the emotional relationship of Party A and Party B, not to affect each party’s study, work and family, after careful consideration, both parties agree on the following:

1. Party A should provide Party B with an apartment with at least one bedroom and one living room, in a location nearby the university that Party B is currently attending, with expenses such as rent and utilities covered by Party A.
2. Party A pays Party B a living stipend on a monthly basis, at RMB10,000 yuan. Party B should not under any excuse ask for extra fees or gifts from Party A, unless Party A voluntarily presents.
3. Not until after her graduation, i.e. during the period of this baoyang agreement from 2005 to July 2008, must Party B date any male as boyfriend, let alone have sex with any man other than Party A. Once discovering (such violation), Party A shall annul this agreement without hesitation and reserve the right to seek compensation for previously paid fees.
4. Party A requires that Party B should accompany and serve Party A at least from Friday evening to Sunday evening each week, except for special circumstances such as when Party A is out on business trips or holidays. As long as it does not affect Party B’s studies, Party B has the obligation to accompany and serve Party A on other days.
5. During the three years, Party A and Party B only maintain a relationship of boyfriend and girlfriend. Party B has no obligation to produce a child for Party A; therefore Party B may require Party A to take voluntary measures of contraception. In case of accidental pregnancy, Party A should cover the medical and nutrition fees (as actually paid).
6. The content of this agreement is absolutely confidential, with only two identical copies. Both Party A and B have the obligation to keep the secret, or else face the consequences.

The above agreement should be observed by both parties. They should maintain mutual care, concern, consideration, and understanding.

Party A: xx (Signature) 25/04/2005

Party B: xx (Signature) 25/04/2005

Notes on the Contributors

Violet Eudine Barriteau is Professor and head of The Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Barbados.

Kimberle Crenshaw is Professor of Law at University of California and Columbia Law School, USA.

Ann Ferguson is Professor Emerita of Philosophy and Women's Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA.

Stevi Jackson is Professor and Director of Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, UK.

Xingkui Zhang is PhD student at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia.

Appendix

Seminar Schedule

GEXcel Visiting Fellows April 2008

Location: Hörsal G (Auditorium G), Gymnastikhuset, Örebro University

Wednesday April 24

Violet Eudine Barriteau, Professor of Gender and Public Policy and Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Barbados

”Coming, Coming, Coming Home”: Applying Anna Jónasdóttir’s Theory of Love Power to Theorising Sexuality and Power in Caribbean Gender Relations

13.00–14.45

Xingkui Zhang, PhD Candidate in Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia

“Bao Ernai” in China – a Contemporary Form of Polygamy or Sexual Exploitation of Women? Toward a New Approach of Sexuality and Gender

15.00–16.45

Friday April 25

Ann Ferguson, Professor Emerita of Philosophy and Women’s Studies, University of Massachusetts, USA

Global Gender Solidarity and a Feminist Paradigm of Justice

10.00–12.00

Tuesday April 29

Stevi Jackson, Professor and Director, Centre for Women’s Studies, University of York, UK

Materialist Feminism, the Pragmatist Self and Global Late Modernity: Some Consequences for Intimacy and Sexuality

10.00–12.00

Kimberle Crenshaw, Professor of Law, University of California, USA

The Curious Resurrection of First Wave Feminism in the U.S. Elections: An Intersectional Critique of the Rhetoric of Solidarity and Betrayal

13.00–15.00

