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Gender, identity and the production of meaning.

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GENDER, IDENTITY AND THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING

A Dissertation Presented

by

TAMSIN E. LORRAINE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 1989

Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

GENDER, IDENTITY AND THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING

SEPTEMBER 1989

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In this dissertation, I argue that writing philosophical texts is a self-constituting activity as well as a meaning-producing activity and that both activities are gender-informed. To do this I develop an interpretive framework based on some philosophical and psychoanalytic theories of self viewed from a feminist perspective. The philosophical theories provide the background and context for a closer examination of a Lacanian theory of self. The latter is then critiqued and revised in light of object relations theory and feminist perspectives on psychoanalysis (in particular, those of Irigaray and Chodorow). I then apply this interpretive framework to specific texts of three philosophers (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre). I target a puzzle of interpretation presented by each of these texts. With the help of my interpretive framework I give each text a "gender-sensitive" reading that resolves the puzzle in an illuminating way.

Each text demonstrates what I term a variation in male positioning with its own version of a gender barrier that precludes certain solutions to problems presented by the text. By exploring constraints presented by the need to

maintain a particular version of male positioning, I provide an internal critique of what we might call a "masculinist" perspective. Such a critique, by calling attention to the inherent limitations of three examples of male positioning, motivates an expansion of that perspective to incorporate other points of view. I thus hope to demonstrate some ways in which gender categories inform philosophical "truths" and to motivate further work on the effects of gender in philosophical texts. Such work could clarify problems in self-constituting activity presented by the need to maintain a particular gender identity, and possibly suggest avenues for solutions to philosophical problems that would involve deconstructing gender categories entirely.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	<u>Page</u> iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
Chapter	
1 SETTING THE CONTEXT.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Overview of My Approach to a Theory of Self.....	4
1.3 Descartes and Hegel: Two Approaches to the Self.....	20
1.4 Approaches to the Self in the Hegelian Tradition: Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger.....	26
1.5 The Feminist Context for a Gender- sensitive Approach to the Self.....	39
2 LACAN AND OBJECT RELATIONS.....	51
2.1 Introduction.....	51
2.2 Lacan and the Fictional Self.....	61
2.3 Self-Construction and the Production of Meaning: Take I.....	83
2.4 Object Relations and A Critique of the Fictional Self.....	88
2.5 Self-Construction and the Production of Meaning: Take II.....	108
3 LACAN AND THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE.....	117
3.1 Introduction.....	117
3.2 Lacan and the Gendered Self.....	120
3.3 Irigaray: Woman as the Specular Other.....	131
3.4 Chodorow: Woman as Nurturer.....	153
3.5 Self-Construction and the Production of Meaning: Take III.....	169

4	SELF-CONSTITUTING ACTIVITY IN PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS: THREE EXAMPLES.....	178
4.1	Introduction.....	178
4.2	Kierkegaard: FEAR AND TREMBLING.....	194
4.3	Nietzsche: BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL.....	222
4.4	Sartre: BEING AND NOTHINGNESS.....	246
4.5	Conclusion.....	268
5	CONCLUSION.....	283
5.1	Introduction.....	283
5.2	Interpretive Framework.....	287
5.3	Variations in a Male Position.....	294
5.4	Suggestions for a New Subjectivity.....	304
5.5	Philosophy and Feminism.....	315
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	328

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The question of who we are--what kind of creature is a human being--has been with us for a long time. Philosophers have made many attempts over the centuries to give the definitive answer, but the more we probe the question the more complicated it seems to get. Evolving scientific procedures to study objects "out there" is difficult enough, but when the object of study is ourselves, we seem to run into the paradoxical problem of trying to split ourselves in two in order to become our own objects of study.

Nowhere is this paradox more apparent than in the attempts that philosophers have made to theorize about the self. We feel ourselves to be the subjects of our own thoughts and actions. My thought is not your thought; you are not responsible for my actions. Not only am I the subject of my experiences as I have them, but I can remember my past experiences as mine, and respond to current situations as "me". This "me" somehow represents the sum total of who I am and who I've been--the self to which I refer all my experiences over the greater part of my life-span. We all feel we have one, and we suspect that it is a crucial aspect of being human, and yet when we try to say just what it is, it slips away from us. We either close our eyes and stop our ears in the attempt to find it (Descartes)[1], decide it simply doesn't exist (Hume)[2], or

turn to discussions of personal identity instead (contemporary analytic philosophers)[3]. And yet a theory of self--a theory about the subjective experience we all have that my experiences are mine--is crucial to our understanding of human beings as subjects of knowledge, as agents of action, thought or desire, and as participants in social and political systems. Human beings are not simply objects whose behavior can be tabulated and analyzed; they are intentional agents whose consciousness of themselves and the world they live in form an inextricable feature of everything they say, think or do.

The traditional, humanist view of human beings as unified, rational, self-interested agents, has become increasingly suspect. In this dissertation I develop an open-ended theory of self that can meet some of the challenges of post-modernist attacks on traditional notions of the self and human subjectivity as well as fulfill some of the requirements of a feminist concern for social change. In the attempt to formulate a new approach to self-understanding that doesn't sacrifice the notions of human agency and responsibility, I propose the following:

- 1) that the Hegelian tradition of theorizing self/other relations is more helpful for developing a theory of self than the Cartesian tradition.
- 2) that post-structuralists (in particular, for the purposes of my project, the French psychoanalyst, Lacan) extend the Hegelian tradition in a useful way.

3) that feminist literature (in particular, feminist epistemological standpoint literature and feminist critiques of psychoanalysis) gives us a basis for including gender in a theory of self, as well as providing suggestions for solutions to certain problems of post-structuralist thought.

I am thus proposing an approach to theorizing about the self rooted in the Hegelian tradition as it extends through post-structuralist thought, and informed by psychoanalysis and feminist theory. The theory of self I arrive at will posit the following:

- 1) that a theory of self should be a theory about self-constituting activity rather than about a fixed entity.
- 2) that this self-constituting activity is informed by gender.
- 3) that self-constituting activity is inextricably linked with meaning-producing activity.
- 4) that meaning-producing activity is also gender-informed.
- 5) that we can trace the process of self-constituting, meaning-producing activity in the examination of philosophical texts.
- 6) that such an examination can yield further insights into how gender informs self-constituting and meaning-producing activity.
- 7) that this new understanding of the self can give us insights into how particular perspectives inform and shape social reality and how we can move toward social change.

In section 1.2 I will give an overview of this approach to a theory of self. In section 1.3 I will contrast the Cartesian and Hegelian approaches in theorizing the self, arguing for the latter. In section 1.4, I will further develop the Hegelian approach toward the self by discussing views on the self held by Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger. And in section 1.5 I will set the feminist context for a gender-sensitive approach to the self.

This chapter will prepare the way for the psychoanalytic discussion of the self presented in chapter 2 which draws heavily on the French post-structuralist, Lacan, and the feminist critiques of psychoanalytic discussions of the self presented in chapter 3. Chapter 4 will give some examples of how the theory of self developed in chapters 1, 2, and 3 can yield further insights by being brought to bear on the reading of philosophical texts. In chapter 5 I present some tentative conclusions for a gender-sensitive theory of self and give some suggestions for future work.

1.2 Overview of My Approach to a Theory of Self

It was Hegel who, in The Phenomenology of Spirit, first approached a theory of self through a description of the changing forms of consciousness. Rather than assuming consciousness always had one role appropriate to it, he stressed the importance of studying consciousness in relation to its object and traced the changing nature of this relationship. In addition to introducing the dialectical

role of the social context into the question of consciousness, he also introduced the quest for self-certainty as a problem that consciousness needed to solve in each turn of its transformation. [4]

Marx picked up Hegel's theory, stressing the dialectical relationship of human nature with its social context. For him, this meant that differing class consciousnesses were formed on the basis of one's relationship to the mode of production. Human capacities, needs and interests change over time in response to changes in the mode of production, and this change in human nature, in turn, makes for further changes in the mode of production. In class societies, the ruling class ultimately dominates prevailing ideologies. The latter generates forms of "false consciousness"--ways of understanding human nature and society that distort "reality" in the interests of the ruling class. [5]

Recent trends in post-structuralist thought (for example, the work of Lacan, Derrida and Foucault in France) have further extended this tradition to give us the "decentered self", a self that is radically contingent in nature. These trends have progressively "deconstructed" human nature, leaving an ever smaller core of essential human attributes. In taking the Hegelian-Marxist view of human nature to its logical extreme, the humanist version of the self unravels completely: less and less is counted as "natural" until the self is entirely dispersed into the social structures within which it is formed. In contrast to

the Marxist problem of demystifying "false consciousness," this aspect of post-structuralist thought presents new problems for human agency, freedom and social critique.

If what we call "selves" are the product of language and social forces beyond our control, if there is no way to distinguish an "authentic" self from one distorted by the dominant ideology, then what basis do we have for taking responsibility for our actions or for demanding social change? I believe that feminist theory can suggest some answers to this question. We are more than arbitrary products of linguistic and social forces entirely beyond our control. Despite the insights offered by post-structuralists such as Lacan, Derrida, and Foucault [6], this "post-modernist" literature misses a crucial point. We cannot create meaning in a vacuum. Any meaning I create must be created in the context of self/other relations. It is thus dependent on contact with embodied others. This contact has significance that always exceeds the linguistic and social structures that inform us as subjects. It is to this "intuitive" realm beyond language which the attempts to capture what is distinctive to "feminine" experience can lead us. In this realm words may be inadequate for the "truth" of a moment of connectedness shared with another. Yet out of that moment will come new attempts to communicate what was shared in that experience.

Feminists have always been concerned with providing women with the self-understanding necessary to understanding

their experiences as being the experiences of women. That is, they have searched for ways to give voice to precisely those aspects of women's experience they have felt to be ignored, devalued or distorted by dominant modes of expression. A contemporary strand of feminism is currently investigating the possibility of developing a feminist epistemological standpoint grounded in aspects of experience felt to be distinctive to women. [7] Feminists disagree on the feasibility as well as the desirability of such a project. Some feel that it is detrimental to the feminist cause because it presupposes precisely those essentialist arguments about differences between the nature of men and the nature of women that we want to discard. Others feel, however, that if we grant a systematic difference between the experience of men and the experience of women due to social structures that affect men and women differently (rather than due to biological differences), and if we take seriously the Hegelian claim that one's "truth" is informed by one's experience, then a feminist "deconstructive project" would be to

identify how distinctively masculine perspectives on masculine experience have shaped the most fundamental and most formal aspects of systematic thought in philosophy and in the social and natural sciences--the aspects of thought supposedly most gender-neutral (Harding and Hintikka 1983, x)

Feminists concerned with articulating a perspective rooted in what they consider to be women's distinctive experience have taken various tacks. Some have argued, on

the basis of psychoanalysis and object relations theory, that differences between male and female children in the early experiences of the process of separation and individuation from the primary caretaker, have lasting repercussions for differences between the two genders. [8] Other feminists have built directly on this work, while others have emphasized other differences in the experiences of men and women. The latter literature argues that the sexual division of labor, due to the predominance of women in the role of "sex/affective production" [9] (i.e., childbearing, childrearing, and emotional servicing) and/or the more "mundane" tasks of day to day life (i.e., cooking, housework, etc.) creates the material conditions for distinctively gendered perspectives.

Feminist discussions of different perspectives bring us to a deeper understanding of how perspectives shape and form one another, as well as of how any perspective at all comes into being. With the Hegelian tradition that stresses the dialectical interaction between self and world, and the psychoanalytic tradition that stresses the development of a self, this literature can help us address the question of how social identity and social reality comes to be.

Simone de Beauvoir introduced the notion of woman as 'other' into the Hegelian tradition of theorizing self/other relations. [10] Current feminist epistemological standpoint literature builds on this literature. In this dissertation I want to investigate self/other relations more fully by

bringing psychoanalysis and philosophy together with the help of Lacan and feminist critiques of psychoanalysis. This project is both deconstructive and reconstructive. On the basis of the feminist literature I've mentioned, I assume that a difference in perspectives exist. On the one hand I want to develop a masculinist perspective on identity and self/other relations. On the other I want to articulate more fully what the feminine perspective on identity and self/other relations might be. [11] Thus, my project is to construct a theory of self that is informed by debates sensitive to gender-difference in perspectives on self/other relations, in light of the current, post-structuralist literature (in particular, Lacanian psychoanalysis) that has cast our traditional notions of human subjectivity into doubt.

I believe that we can characterize the foundation for a masculinist epistemological standpoint versus a feminist epistemological standpoint in two kinds of self-strategies. These self-strategies are formed in early childhood and are continually reaffirmed in the context of the two realms of experience depicted by current feminist literature. I call these two self-strategies "masculine" and "feminine" with the understanding that there is a continuum between the two extreme forms of these self-strategies that are manifested by concrete individuals. Thus, characterizing them in their extreme forms is a tool in coming to understand how gender affects our perspective and reality in ways more complicated

than such a schema may allow. Just as there are many different versions of "true" masculinity or femininity, there are many different versions of these two self-strategies. In trying to characterize two self-strategies I am speaking to the truth that I think lies behind the feminist attempt to characterize an alternative epistemological perspective--a perspective that is distinct from the masculine one. Just as the current hegemony of the current dominant discourses cannot be said to represent the perspective of all men in this society, there is no feminist theory that can be said to represent the perspective of all women in this society. I don't believe that we can, or should, reduce the number of epistemological standpoints we construct to that of one masculinist standpoint or one feminist one.

What I want to do here speaks to the truth I feel emanates from post-structuralist thought: there is no one perspective, and, in fact, no one perspective can be validated as the correct one. The post-structuralist claim that there is no "rational" basis for valorizing any perspective over any other, no matter how "marginal," fosters a distrust of adopting any perspective at all. I feel there is a way out of the impasse of the distrust of theory and of any thrust toward social hegemony that this viewpoint entails. That is, there is a way out of the relativist dilemma of both taking a critical stance with respect to society and having an agenda that one wants society to emulate. By working together to achieve a collective

perspective, a new hegemony, that incorporates into its symbolic structures the lived experience of all the individuals that fill its positions, we could build a social self-understanding acceptable to all. [12]

In the chapters to come I will argue that such a social self-understanding must build on the "authentic" experiences of us all. These "authentic" experiences include those often inarticulate experiences in which our bodies as sensitive instruments register sensations in a world that provoke a complete reaction from us. We can create new categories that signify these bodily sensations in a socially acceptable form in relations with human others that mirror back to us our sensations, demonstrating their acknowledgement of an aspect of our experience that up to then we had thought was ours alone. In the reflecting mirrors of self/other relatedness we communicate bodily sensations to human others, thus giving a generalized meaning to those bodily sensations that exceed the particularity of a particular experience by putting it in context with human others. Thus, new categories of meaning are born. rather than simply building on the meaning categories already laid out in language, this kind of communication attempts to symbolize bodily sensation in such a way that other human beings can recognize similar sensations of their own.

On this view, human individuals are always embodied, always rooted in the bodily sensations that they feel due to the five senses of their own embodied selves. Language is

not solely self-referential unless it leaves behind its referential roots--the roots of feeling and sensation that lie in our embodied selves. A gender-sensitive investigation of perspectives on self/other relations will reveal different perspectives on the production of meaning. This in turn will provide some hints and suggestions for how meaning, generated in the felt sensation of bodies in self/other relations, is generated and translated into the symbolic categories that attempt to generalize human experience so that we can share our experiences and be known to one another.

In keeping with my project I want to propose a new problematic for constructing a theory of self. The new problematic I propose adopts the Hegelian notion of self-certainty. Not only are there various forms of selfhood, but each form is a response to the problem of establishing self-certainty. That human beings are subjects of experiences with selves that constitute the locus of those experiences (at least on an experiential level) is not simply a reality: it is the human response to the problem of intentional agency. To be an intentional agent requires more than a conscious subject of experience. It requires a subject that perceives itself as having some degree of autonomy and efficacy in the world--in short, a self. On this view, the 'self' could be understood in two senses--the construct ordering the range of experiences that one identifies as one's own, as well as the activity that allows for a meaningful processing of one's experiences as one lives them.

This latter notion of self would then posit selfhood (or subjectivity) as mental activity that operates according to some principle that orders one's experiences into some sort of coherence. The base of this activity would be the illusory and provisional construct of self created from one's experiences in relation to which mental activity could carry out its function. The subject of consciousness, the, would be a construct created out of consciousness--with consciousness being an amorphous, easily dispersed activity. Subjectivity would be a centering of that activity around certain experiences held within a framework of significance. It is this framework that would stabilize those experiences with respect to other experiences.

Selfhood is the human solution to the problem of effective agency. Our actions have meaning because we are responsible agents who carry them out with a purpose in mind. What we do, think and say has significance within the broader framework of social significance of which we form a part. An important feature of the ability to be an effective agent is self-awareness--a sense of one's place in the broader social framework and of how one's words and actions will impact from that place.

The body is the organic base of a huge mass of information. For agency to be possible, this information has to be ordered in some way. Consciousness processes this information. In the process it creates a self that acts as the locus of significance, the principle around which

experience is ordered. The problem of selfhood is the problem of how to create subjectivity out of the confusing mass of experience and bodily sensation generated by the human body. A theory of self that posits selfhood as the solution to the problem of human agency moves us away from a theory of self to a theory of self-construction. Not only are we interested in the various forms that selfhood has taken, we are also interested in how each of these forms solved the problem in particular circumstances. That is, how was the self established with respect to its objects at a given time?

On the view that human beings engage in purposive human activity in order to maintain themselves as intentional agents as well as to carry out their intentions, the writing of philosophical texts can be seen as a form of self-construction. A philosophical text would then be the representation of the construction of a particular form of self. Deconstruction, a by-product of post-structuralist thought [13], is a theory of interpretation that can help us read out texts as representations of self-constituting activity. The technique of deconstruction is influenced by psychoanalysis and a new way of conceptualizing the self. It is when the traditional notion of a coherent, unified self is brought into question that deconstructive readings become a legitimate way of entering a text. Once it is no longer taken for granted that the author's meaning forms a complete and consistent picture that is self-transparent, the ruptures

in the text become entryways into meaning that may subvert any given line of interpretation. A self that is divided and in contradiction with itself will produce texts with divided and contradictory meaning. Exploring the gaps and contradictions of a text will thus illuminate the contradictions in the self produced by the text, and a theory of self that addresses such contradictions will give us more insight into the gaps and contradictions of texts.

The kind of deconstructive reading I advocate is one that would bring the question of woman to the fore. One advantage of psychoanalysis over philosophical accounts of the self, is that the former brings sexuality into the limelight. This focus necessitates addressing the questions of gender and sexual difference. The self becomes a gendered self and questions about that engenderment enter into the whole problematic of a self that is inherently divided and decentered. If how we conceptualize the self affects how we philosophize, it also affects the kind of questions we will bring to a philosophical text. Once the question of woman becomes crucial to a theory of self, it also becomes crucial to the readings of texts that are based on that theory. Assuming a traditional notion of self, we will construct coherent and consistent interpretations of texts with a certain amount of closure. Assuming a divided, decentered self, a reading that traces contradictions and breaks in the text will be more in keeping than a reading that attempts to impose an order that isn't there. The problematic of gender

in psychoanalysis leads us to the question of woman as one of the entryways into subversion of meaning in a text.

Psychoanalysis posits gender identity as a problem rather than a given. Resolving this problem is one of the tasks crucial to the development of an autonomous self. A divided, decentered self must not only continually reconstruct itself to maintain some sort of coherency, it must also re-engender itself. How this is done and the tensions this causes can be revealed in a deconstructive reading that takes the question of woman as an entryway into the text.

Psychoanalysis originated in the interest of bringing people to psychic health. A coherent sense of self seems to be one of the requirements of psychic health. In the search for a norm for health, this discipline theorized not only about what the self should be, but the possible break-down points to developing a satisfactory sense of self.

Investigation of failures in attaining the full selfhood we associate with a socially functioning human being revealed the tentative nature of selfhood itself.

Psychoanalysis, in its various forms, has spawned a multitude of theories about the self, each related to a preferred method of therapy. To give a complete survey of them all, or to try and offer a distillation of all they have to offer, is far beyond the scope of this dissertation. What I would like to do is pick my way through some of what psychoanalysis has to offer in order to offer my own theory of self. My hope is to lay the ground for further work on

such a theory by pulling together some strands of psychoanalysis in a philosophical context.

Since I am not a psychoanalyst, my evidence and confirmation for a theory of self will not lie in my work with analysands. Rather, as a philosopher I will pursue the question of how a theory of self plays into one's conception of knowledge and social reality. If I can develop a theory of self that can explain gaps and contradictions in a philosophical text that are otherwise inexplicable, then I will have some confirmation of my theory. If a theory of self can provide an explanation of some of the contradictions in a philosophical text, then the connection between the self of the text and the interpretation of reality it attempts to articulate will become clearer.

What I am suggesting is that in any articulation we are not only proffering a response to the world, we are also proffering a response to ourselves. Any interpretation of the world is inextricable from an attempt to interpret ourselves and our place in the world. The creation of a particular philosophical outlook, then, is coextensive with the creation of a particular type of self. Investigating the views presented on, for example, knowing and social reality is one means to a deeper understanding of a philosophical text while investigating the conception of self that explicitly and implicitly created in the text is another. A better understanding of how the two affect one another in a particular text can lead to a better understanding of how the

two moments of subject and object interact and transform one another.

Of course the same interaction will take place between me and the texts I peruse. The theory of self I take to the text as an interpretive tool would be no more than a device for reductive analysis if I did not allow the texts to interact with and transform my theory. A psychoanalyst would not be doing justice to her analysands if she closed herself to perceiving words or behavior simply because they didn't fit her theory. As a practicing psychoanalyst she would expect her theory to change over time. Thus, in developing a theory of self that picks and chooses some elements from a vast and divergent literature, I am not trying to give a definitive theory. What I'm trying to do is develop a theory that is workable, and that could be further developed through use.

My interest in the relationship of subject and object, self and world, is based on two more specific interests that I see as interconnected: the problem of knowledge and the problem of social identity. It is my contention that it is with respect to the self that these two problems interconnect. Interpreting who we are through interpreting a reality not merely places us in a particular social order but creates our place in it. By defining the social position of the people around us we define our own social position. the latter is a more specific instance of the former--and not in an entirely different realm. In both activities we are

placing ourselves as selves in a world. And if the self is "dropped out" as it seems to be, for example, in scientific discourse, this is only because that discourse has chosen to maintain the perspective involved as an implicit given.

This dissertation attempts to provide a grounding for a more complete theory of the relation between gender and self-construction. More readings of the type sketched here would have to be done to fill out the theory with respect to philosophical texts. Philosophers who speculate about the self in the Hegelian tradition have already taken significant steps towards breaking down traditional notions of the self as a discrete, unified entity that can be understood in isolation from its world. What I have done here with the help of feminist theory and psychoanalysis is to develop a way of reading texts that would add to this tradition.

Such a theory is crucial to a feminist project. One major obstacle in the way of any program for radical social change is that the problem of maintaining a sense of self for human agency is a problem of terrifying proportions. Men obviously have a stake in maintaining a patriarchal social structure. But I don't believe that it necessarily follows that men perpetuate patriarchy out of a "natural" desire to dominate. If a typical pattern of problem-solving in our era has been to overpower the "opposition" into submission, be it with words or physical force, perhaps it is to the current strategies in self-construction that we can look for an explanation. The more aware we become of how our selves are

determined by social reality and the contradictions involved, the more control over self-definition we can take.

In the following section I will distinguish what I call a Cartesian from a Hegelian approach to the self. This will set the context for a review of some approaches to the self that have influenced post-structuralist thought. The latter will frame the view of the self, chiefly derived from Lacanian psychoanalysis, that I will develop in chapter 2. In the final section of this chapter I will review some feminist arguments about what might constitute a feminist perspective distinct from the masculine perspective that informs dominant forms of discourse. This will frame the view of the self derived from feminist critiques of psychoanalysis developed in chapter 3.

1.3 Descartes and Hegel: Two Approaches to the Self

In the philosophical tradition there have been two tendencies with respect to epistemological concerns and concerns about the social order. One tendency has been to separate the two sets of concerns, saying that questions about truth and falsity and when and whether we attain true knowledge are completely separate from questions about how the social order is constituted and how it should be constituted. This tendency takes epistemology as the study of an individual subject in contemplative seclusion from the world who pursues objective knowledge of the object at hand. Another tendency takes epistemological questions and

questions about the social order as inextricably linked: there is no such thing as a knowing subject unaffected by his or her position in a particular social order. Thus, any question about how we come to know must also account for the subject's position in society and what interests motivate that subject's knowing. With the latter view, "objectivity" in the sense of the disinterested knowledge of value-free facts is rendered problematic, if not completely undermined.

One way of labelling these two tendencies would be to call the first tendency in the Cartesian tradition and the second tendency in the Hegelian tradition.

On the Cartesian epistemological model, the more we can detach the object of study from its surroundings and determine the properties essential to it, the better we will know it. The more we can remove the object of study from its concrete context the more "objective" our study will be. Objectivity here refers to the universal validity of our findings--no matter where or when or by whom the same study was carried out, the findings would be the same.

There is a current trend, particularly in continental philosophy, to question the subject/object split. [14] On this view, there is no such thing as a perspective from which we can gain disinterested, "objective" knowledge of objects that are "out there." Any viewpoint we take is taken with an end in view. To assume that there is such a thing as the disinterested stance that can avoid subjective colorings in order to lay bare reality "as it is," only conceals one's

perspective. Thus, taking the subject and object in a fully contextualized setting could be more revealing than taking the object in isolation. It is only within the context of investigation that we can know the objectives that are coloring a given interpretation.

On the assumption that we have direct access to reality, questions about our limitations in gaining knowledge of it and the degree to which that "knowledge" is a distortion don't arise. Once we start questioning how comprehensive and accurate our knowledge is of the world we live in, the question of just how we come by that knowledge becomes important. It is then that the question of who and what we are becomes inextricably linked with questions about the nature of reality. Self-understanding then becomes a crucial aspect in our broader understanding of the world and prescriptions for the "correct" way to approach questions about reality may be given. Where metaphysical investigations don't directly address the question of how the questioning subject affects the investigation, they hold implicit assumptions about what the nature of that subject is or should be. Current analytic philosophy tends to assume that the ideal questioning subject is the contemplative, unextended thinking substance of Cartesian philosophy. [15] Such an assumption about the nature of the questioning subject has repercussions for what is taken to be relevant to metaphysical discussions. On this view the rational endeavor that will lead to true knowledge is seen as the product of a

disembodied self in contemplative seclusion from the world of everyday affairs. In order to arrive at the most comprehensive and accurate account possible of reality as it "really" is, one must detach oneself from one's mundane concerns and take an appropriately "objective" attitude toward the topic at hand. This Cartesian approach to metaphysical questions with its assumption of a distinct subject/object dichotomy has far-reaching consequences for both our understanding of ourselves and our world.

Hegel exemplifies another tradition in self-understanding as it relates to metaphysical questions in which the questioning subject is seen as a moment in a broader whole. In this tradition the questioning subject cannot be understood out of the particular context in which it is found and any questions about how that subject affects metaphysical investigations are an on-going and pressing concern. This view insists that the questioning subject cannot be dropped out of consideration once, say, we reach an appropriately disembodied stance towards the topic at hand. Since any knowledge of reality is obtained in a particular context by a particular subject, the particular nature of that subject and how it affects the knowledge obtained must always be taken into account. Thus, instead of a distinct split between questioning subject and the world "out there" under question, we have a subject that is unable to take an external perspective on the world she would question since she is a part of that world.

On the Cartesian view, questions about the nature of the self have little bearing on metaphysical questions since it is already assumed that there is an ideal stance from which metaphysical investigations should be conducted. On the Hegelian view such an ideal stance is precluded. this problematizes the relationship between subject and object and renders knowledge of the subject in all its changing forms crucial to our knowledge of the world. Thus, self-understanding comes to have an on-going and transformative effect on our understanding of the nature of reality. Instead of assuming that there is a particular stance from which we can finally grasp the truth about the world, it is assumed that as we change, the "truths" we grasp will change and that an understanding of our changing selves will give us insight into the reality we come to know.

Questions about the nature of the self have taken different tacks depending on which tradition the questions come out of. On the Cartesian view, an investigation of the self takes the self as an object like any other that one must examine from an appropriately disinterested perspective if one is to truly understand just what it is. The self-understanding that comes from this investigation is not expected to have any repercussions for either how one understands other aspects of reality or how one goes about investigating the nature of reality. On the Hegelian view, there is no disinterested perspective from which one can examine the self as an object in isolation from other

objects. Self-understanding must come through an examination of the process of interaction between self and world.

The dialectical tradition of philosophy has focused on the subject and object of knowledge and desire as two moments of a whole that interact. In this dialectical interaction the object is not merely known or desired, but enters into a relationship with the subject in which both subject and object are transformed. Such a view of the subject of knowledge and desire posits the self as a material construction with a historicity that precludes easy definition, rather than a transcendental entity.

On a dialectical reading, the self cannot be left out of any account of the world since the two are moments in a whole of interpretation. If the self has a transformative effect, that is, if the self creates reality as much as being created by it, then an understanding of the self's motivations and interests will help us understand the constraints on our claims to knowledge as well as our desires. Given that subject and object are moments of a whole rather than isolated from one another, the subject's self-understanding is going to affect its understanding of what's true and what's desirable. How one sees one's self and one's stake in that self as the foundation of one's subjectivity is going to play an important constraining role in how one understands one's world. Thus, the relationship between self and world becomes problematized. One's personal identity plays a crucial role in determining one's interpretation of reality.

In the next section I will take a closer look at approaches to the self derived from Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger. The approaches discussed here have been taken up into post-structuralist thought and will set the context for the Lacanian approach to the self taken up in the next chapter.

1.4 Approaches to the Self in the Hegelian Tradition: Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger

Hegel

In the Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel proposes to "undertake the exposition of knowledge as a phenomenon." In this work, he refocuses metaphysical discussions about timeless "truth" to a discussion of the changing relationship of knowing subject to the "truth" that is known. In keeping with a phenomenological approach, he allows the truth to determine itself completely within consciousness rather than positing it as a standard existing somewhere outside of consciousness. Hegel takes the philosophical stance of the "we" who are investigating knowledge to examine the actual experience of the consciousness who knows. he then shows how in the actual process of knowing, consciousness is forced to revise its concept of truth if it is to know at all. By tracing the phenomenology of spirit, Hegel hopes to lay the groundwork for his theory of truth in the actual experience of consciousness itself. In the first two chapters of the

Phenomenology we can see the grounds for a dialectical theory of truth that emphasizes the relational nature of the self.

At each level of consciousness a dialectic is seen to emerge where knowledge of an object is referred to the object known for verification, only to discover that the object itself must be revised. In the experience of consciousness this dialectic does not explicitly emerge--it is the philosophical perusal of what occurs in experience that renders the pattern of in-itself, for-itself and in-and-for-itself explicit by noting the necessity of the movement from one object constituting truth to the next. In the actual experience of this movement the original object is supplanted and lost as if it had never been.

In investigating sense-certainty--the first level of consciousness--as it is experienced, Hegel delineates the I, the object, and the certainty that it is the object that is the essential reality as features of this level of consciousness. At this level, the object apprehended is truth. But when I point out an object "meaning" to point it out in all its particularity, I discover that rather than pointing out a concrete particular I have pointed out a universal (the "This" I point to). Once sense-certainty has discovered that the This taken in-itself to be essential reality turned out to be for consciousness an empty abstraction, it is forced to alter its criterion for truth.

By examining the actual experience of sense-certainty Hegel has shown its own conception of knowledge to be

inadequate to itself. Because of the original inadequacy of its conception, consciousness is forced past sense-certainty to the level of perception in the attempt to find a conception of knowledge that will be borne out by its experience.

At this stage sense-certainty takes it for granted that it has direct access to truth; once the object is apprehended it is known as it is. When pushed to grasp the object pointed out in its entirety, sense-certainty's truth turns out to be out of reach. The subject/object distinction that was no problem for knowledge as long as the object constituted truth turns out to be problematic. But rather than assume the object to be truth intact, and the problem to lie in gaining access to that object, consciousness shifts its perception of the subject/object relation itself.

In perception the I, in order to relate a plurality of universals in the "one" that makes that plurality this particular object, takes the object as self-same and relates the diverse moments of her apprehension accordingly. For perception the criterion of truth is the self-same--that which remains the same from perception to perception. Now that the principle of knowledge is the universal, consciousness is freed from the self-identical relation of sense-certainty whose truth is the bare act of intuiting, and can ferret out the truth of multiple acts of perception. At this point in perception, truth is the object. Consciousness, in taking the object as the essential element,

refers untruth to its perception and takes the object as the true universal--the self-same.

In the case of perception, consciousness is forced back upon itself in that it takes the diversity of properties to be due to the perceiving I, and any untruth of its perception as being within consciousness rather than the object. Again truth is seen to lie in the entire process of I and object rather than in either the one or the other.

Rather than a direct access to truth from subject to object, we have a more complicated criterion for truth emerging. A criterion that requires ever more participation on the part of the subject in order to provide any sort of verification for knowledge at all. At the end of consciousness's experience of perception the object is no longer a tenable criterion for truth--it has broken up into two opposing elements that can only be brought together through the perceiving subject.

Perception maintains the object as truth by shifting back and forth from the object as the "also" to the object as the "one", the object for another and the object for itself. it is only from our philosophical perspective that we can see the contradiction involved in thus putting forth first one, then the other, aspect as the truth. The shifting of perception from the one aspect of the object to the other is only enabled through the reflection of consciousness back into itself. Although at this stage this return of the subject from the object back into itself is not effected with

a genuine awareness of consciousness as an object for knowledge and as constituting its own truth, its growing capacity for such a role is here made apparent.

By tracing the shifting subject/object relation that emerges in the search for an adequate criterion of truth in the first two chapters of the Phenomenology, we see an ever more complicated theory of truth emerging within the system of Hegel's thought. From direct apprehension of truth as object we have gone to a criterion of truth that oscillates between subject and object. While the oscillation between the two has not yet become apparent to the experiencing consciousness, "we" can see that the "truth" at stake here is a truth that emerges from a complex relationship between subject and object. And that the truth that emerges is affected by the self-understanding of the knowing subject that comes to know it.

While Nietzsche strongly objects to the kind of system-building endemic in Hegel's philosophy, he too will problematize the status of "truth" by challenging traditional notions about its relationship to the knowing subject.

Nietzsche

There has been an upsurge of contemporary interest in Nietzsche. [16] One of the reasons for this interest has been due to the decentering of self that Nietzsche deliberately provokes in his texts. Refusing to build a system, or to allow his philosophy to be systematized, he

writes in aphorisms. Rather than presenting extended philosophical arguments to support his views, he gives us discontinuous passages, each one of which demands interpretation in order to be comprehensible. He deliberately discourages "closure" in the interpretation of his texts. Closure would imply the definitive reading of a text, the reading that finally unravelled all the significance the text had to offer. If one could get such closure, one could also get to the "real" self that spoke the text, implying that there was such a self who intended to impart to the reader the significance that the reader's definitive reading finally revealed.

The work of people like Gadamer in hermeneutical philosophy and Derrida in deconstruction [17] has shattered the notion that a text is the product of a unified self with a definitively "correct" interpretation--the significance intended by the author. Nietzsche's philosophical style encourages the kind of deconstructive reading of conventional concepts and his own text that deconstruction has made vogue. Many contemporary figures have recently focused on Nietzsche's radical use of language and the repercussions this has for our conventional concepts.

In proclaiming such concepts as substance and the self as fictions [18], Nietzsche helped lay the ground for the decentered self that is currently getting increasing attention. We think we are people with a personal identity that extends over time to which we refer our experiences. We

think we have selves--a sense of who we are, a personality with a history, a unified self that provides the basis for our knowledge and our actions. To give increasing attention to a decentered notion of self is to increasingly undermine the notion that a person has a unified self that provides a central perspective for knowledge and agency.

The self is a fiction, something that we impose on a wide and conflicting range of forces that make up who we are. Nietzsche's point in calling such a self a fiction was to underline the fiction that we are unified and coherent agents. If we have a unified sense of self, it is only because we have succeeded in subordinating our instincts in such a way that consistency and coherence appear to reign. It is through mastering a conflicting torrent of impulses and, by setting up ruling instincts, bringing the rest into a hierarchy obedient to the ruling instincts that we are able to preserve the illusion of a unified self. [19]

The self, then, is not a thing, not a substance that we carry around with us. There is nothing stable about us. We are an intersection of forces that are forever in the process of becoming. [20] If there is anything stable about us, it is the fictional self in accordance with which we constrain those forces to act. But this self is a dream, an illusion by which we attempt to veil the reality of our constant change and becoming--the chaos that we really are. Just as we need illusions to mask Dionysian flux when it comes to

external reality, so we need the illusion of the self to mask the terror of a complete loss identity.

If, as Nietzsche says, self and substance are but fictions that we impose upon Dionysian process, and if, as Hegel suggests, the act of experiencing is a double act in which we constitute both self and object, then how we see ourselves will be inextricably linked with how we see the world. Both our view of ourselves and of the world will be no more than interpretations rather than essential truths, and these interpretations will be seen as the creations of an activity that constitutes both self and world at once. To investigate the how of self-constitution and the conditions under which it is possible, would also illuminate the how of object-constitution and the constraints under which our conception of reality is put if we are to have selves at all.

Nietzsche introduced anti-systemic strands into Hegelian thought that post-structuralists later picked up. It is Heidegger, however, who emphasized the social web of forces that converge to form a self.

Heidegger

Heidegger felt that the problem of skepticism arises from the presupposition of a distinction between inner experiences and objects in the external world. He believes that the Cartesian model presents a false view of ourselves. The self as a res cogitans is an objectified description of the self obtained by focusing on ourselves as passive

spectators. But our fundamental mode of being is one of being actively engaged in the world. On this view being human is treated as a relation where a stand is taken on one's Being in one's everyday activities. Furthermore, to be human is to be a place-holder in a network of internal relations, constituted by a public language, of the communal world into which Dasein (human existence, or the human self as a relation--see Guignon 1983, 86) is thrown. It is the cultural context that provides Dasein with meaningful possibilities for its concrete ways of being engaged in the world. Since language is the medium in which both self and world can first be discovered, there is no distinction to be drawn between a private bundle of internal impressions and the public ways that Dasein manifests itself in the world. (See Guignon 1983, ch. III.)

Thus, Heidegger, like Hegel, refuses to isolate the self from its relation to the world. In fact, the self is considered to be a relation--the active process of taking a particular stance vis à vis one's own Being. Human beings are the kind of entities that care about what it is to be human. In living out their lives they are "Being-toward-death"--that is, living with an eye to the significance that their lives as a whole will have when it is complete (Heidegger, 1962, #51-52). Because language is the medium by which we create significance, it will be crucial to both our self-interpretations as well as interpretations of the world.

In Being and Time, Heidegger takes Being-in-the-world as his starting point for investigating Dasein's Being. Thus, his analytic of Dasein emphasizes the unitary wholeness of Dasein and its environment. This in turn shifts attention from a world of entities in isolation from the Being which questions their ontology, to entities whose meaning arises in the particular context of Dasein's concern. We find ourselves thrown into a world in which we are already involved. But we are free to make something of our lives as a whole within the confines of the factual situation into which we are thrown. To take a stand with respect to my life requires a certain competence in getting along within the interrelated system of my culture. I do not have a "true" self private to me in the sense that the way I act and the roles I take on are the acts and roles of the "they" (Heidegger 1962, #27). Insofar as my acts have meaning it is a public meaning made available by the meaningful possibilities for action with which my culture presents me. That my life is mine means that I choose the possibilities available to me in a particular way, but those meaningful possibilities would also be available to anyone else.

In approaching the question of human existence (as a preliminary to the question of being in general) without preconceptions of what constitutes a human being, Heidegger develops a vocabulary of his own that indicates processes rather than occurrences that have already taken place and are now being examined after the fact. Such an approach focuses

attention on the dynamic nature of meanings and the shifting frame of reference from which each one of us makes sense of the world as our concerns change. By bringing back into the picture the questioning entity that traditional ontology overlooks, Heidegger prepares the way for a conception of knowledge that focuses on the totality of the questioning subject and the object questioned rather than trying to explicate knowledge in terms of an object in isolation from the knowing subject.

Anything that I attend to is brought to my attention within the context of my immediate interests which are in turn meaningful to me within the context of who I understand myself to be. Thus, how the world presents itself to me and how I understand myself are inextricably linked. Furthermore, the range of possibilities for self-understanding is made available to me by my culture. My self is therefore not a private entity, but an intersection of interrelating cultural systems.

For Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger the pure 'I' of Cartesian philosophy is at best a static abstraction of our experience of being selves. The latter cannot be described in terms of an object. Instead it is a process, a relating of subject to object, an interpreting activity that constitutes both self and world at once. Hegel and Heidegger stress the connection between the interpretation of self and the interpretation of world. Nietzsche does not stress the

link between self- and world-constitution. Both are a product of the same activity, but it is not clear that in producing the one, one is also producing the other. In undermining the notion of essential truth, however, he also undermines the notion of an essential self. Nietzsche deliberately works against falling into ready-made patterns of significance by insisting on playing with many masks--many selves from which he can proclaim conflicting truths. From each self comes a different perspective. A decentered self entails a perspective that no longer privileges its viewpoint as the "correct" one. Thus, Nietzsche underlines our creative power in playing with masks, in taking up selves only to put them down again. If the self is a fiction, it is also not the constraint we once thought--we are not bound to our selves as if they were givens from which we can't escape. The self as a relating process is an activity that may choose to change its orientation, with profound results for both self and world. Thus, a self could be seen as an orienting activity, a stance vis-à-vis the world, a perspective that interprets. In urging us to play, to make our words dance [21], Nietzsche is urging us to take risks in our interpretations--to risk the loss of self that a breakdown in significance entails in order to create significance anew.

Heidegger introduces a note of caution into the Nietzschean dance with his notion of the self, in the form of the They, as a "crossing point" of cultural systems. Not only is the self I am not an object, but is not even "my"

self in the sense that the interpretations that make up my consciousness are drawn from a public realm of the interpretive possibilities made available by my culture. Although my interpretations may be my own, they are constrained by the possibilities my culture makes available to me.

Due to the grammar of our language it is hard to talk about the self I'm referring to here in terms that aren't misleading. The 'self' implies a substance, not a process or relation. When I describe myself I tend to list attributes about someone that I hope has some coherence and consistency--something that remains the same over time. Subjectivity might be a better term for the self as process or activity, but it is often awkward grammatically. Also, there is a difference between talking about the activity or experience of being selves versus the selves that we consider ourselves to be. In the latter case I would probably be referring to what in psychoanalytic terms might be called a 'self-representation.' Self-representations are ideas we have about who we are that guide our thinking and behavior. They change over time as our goals change, but they are static in the sense that they are images we refer to rather than active processes.

If we take the Heideggerian notion that there is no distinction between inner and outer, that our selves are the words we speak, the thoughts we think and the action we take, then these words, thoughts and actions are testimony to the

self as a relation or process. They are self-representations we present to the world that tend to guide further processing activity as we attempt to make sense of our life as a whole. Although Nietzsche emphasizes the creative possibilities in self- and world-constitution [22], we would be hard put to create interpretations in a vacuum. No matter how much we may push at the bounds of the language and social structures at our disposal, we are constrained by the limits of what they can express.

Feminists have attempted to theorize the relationship of a specifically female self to the world. In doing so, some have attempted to characterize what might distinguish distinctively feminist self- and world-constituting activity from "masculinist" self- and world-constituting activity. In the next section I will review some of these attempts as well as some of the problems with such a project.

1.5 The Feminist Context for a Gender-sensitive Approach to the Self

Gender identity is one way that we have for representing ourselves. By labelling myself a 'man' or a 'woman' I am also conjuring up a whole range of possibilities presented to me in my culture and language. If I stay within conventional bounds I will create a self on the basis of what's offered me. If I am more adventurous, I will push beyond conventional bounds, thus adding to my culture or language new possibilities of what a man or woman could be. Caring

about the significance of my life as a whole means creating self- and world- interpretations that work for me.

In our society gender identity is a key element in our self-representations. that is, it tends to be a stable and important feature by which we orient our actions. In the process of being selves we tend to orient ourselves differently according to our gender. Gender would thus be an interesting feature to look at when it comes to the question of how we orient ourselves. Differences in orientation due to sexual difference may give us further clues as to how subjectivity is possible. If selves are fictions and every perspective is no more than that--a perspective--then what clues can sexual difference give us to how a perspective is created?

In "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality" (Harding 1983), Sandra Harding discusses the implications of feminist gender theory for gender identity and perspectives informed by that identity. Gender theory developed by Dorothy Dinnerstein (1977), Jane Flax (1978, 1983), Nancy Chodorow (1978), "and others" draws on post-Freudian psychoanalytic "object-relations" theory (e.g., Mahler, Guntrip and Winnicott). Traditional psychological theories attributed the formation of gendered personalities to nature, sex, or "social learning" after the age of three. In contrast, gender theory attributes such formation

to the very same social/physical processes within which initially androgynous newborns are

transformed, and transform themselves, into distinctive human persons (Harding 1983, 50).

Harding argues that gender theory is important due to the centrality of gender identity to personality formation [23] and due to its ability to provide a causal account of gender which is both "materialist" and nondeterministic:

The account is materialist because the form of the actual psychosocial-physical environment with which the infant interacts is the variable determining whether or not gender will be produced. The account suggests that if, societywide, men shared equally in infant caretaking and the day-to-day maintenance of self and others, and if women shared equally in the labor of ruling, gender would not be produced at all (Harding 1983, 53).

On this view, we can trace variations in gender formation to historically specific psychosocial conditions, and we can entertain the possibility that gender could be "eliminated through political processes" (p. 54).

On the basis of gender theory and additional feminist literature that examines gendered perspectives arising from the divisions of labor by sex/gender, Harding offers two gendered perspectives on rationality:

A rational person, for women, values highly her abilities to empathize and "connect" with particular others and wants to learn more complex and satisfying ways to take the role of the particular other in relationships....For men, in contrast, a rational person values highly his ability to separate himself from others and to make decisions independent of what others think--to develop "autonomy." And he wants to learn more complex and satisfying ways to take the role of the generalized other" (Harding 1983, 53-54).

The contrast of a feminine, relational point of view that emphasizes empathy and connectedness to a masculine, oppositional point of view that emphasizes autonomy and

separation, is a recurrent theme of this literature. [24] Emerging from this literature is the possibility of what some feminists have called a "feminist standpoint"--that is, a distinctively feminist perspective based in distinctively feminine experience that posits an alternative theory of knowledge to go with it. Nancy Hirschmann (Hirschmann 1987) expresses this relationship of epistemology to a feminist standpoint this way:

Feminist standpoint epistemology rejects the idea that epistemology is "objective" or "universal;" it holds that epistemology is itself a product of particular social relations. Not just knowledge, or what we know, is shaped by particular experience and the relations we have to others, but how we know and how we conceive of knowledge are also similarly shaped (p. 251).

On this view, a feminist perspective would involve not only experiencing aspects of life a masculinist perspective wouldn't (knowing different things), it would also involve experiencing aspects of life differently (knowing in a different way). To give this difference in perspective justice, we would have to give a thorough-going critique of the conceptual frameworks of dominant (masculinist) discourse.

In The Science Question in Feminism (Harding 1986), Harding describes feminists such as Jane Flax, Hilary Rose, Nancy Hartsock and Dorothy Smith as being engaged in the work of developing a feminist standpoint approach. She characterizes this approach as follows:

Briefly, this proposal argues that men's dominating position in social life results in partial and perverse understandings, whereas women's subjugated position provides the possibility of more complete and less perverse understandings. Feminism and the women's movement provide the theory and motivation for inquiry and political struggle that can transform the perspective of women into a "standpoint"--a morally and scientifically preferable grounding for our interpretations and explanations of nature and social life. The feminist critiques of social and natural science, whether expressed by women or by men, are grounded in the universal features of women's experience as understood from the perspective of feminism" (p. 26).

In chapter 6 of this book she reviews some of the specifics of the work of Flax, Rose, Hartsock and Smith. All are concerned with locating a gendered difference in perspective based in gender theory and/or in divisions of labor by sex/gender. Hilary Rose (1983) focuses on the unification of the manual, the mental, and the emotional ("hand, brain, and heart") that she claims is typical of women's work (and atypical of men's work). Nancy Hartsock (1983, 1984), in addition to drawing on gender theory, discusses the implications of engaging in "subsistence" work (cooking, cleaning, clothing maintenance, etc.) and childrearing for a feminist perspective. Jane Flax (1983) emphasizes the repercussions of a "defensive," masculine self versus a less-defensive, feminine self, first formed in early childhood and then reaffirmed by patriarchal culture. [25] Dorothy Smith (1974, 1979) examines how women's work:

relieves men of the need to take care of their bodies or of the local places where they exist, freeing them to immerse themselves in the world of abstract concepts (Harding 1986, 156).

In addition to arguing that women's labor shapes male concepts in specific ways, she claims that women's experience of their own labor is "incomprehensible and inexpressible within the distorted abstractions of men's conceptual schemes" (Harding 1986, 156).

All four attempt to make generalizations on the basis of gender theory and/or relatively rigid divisions of labor by sex/gender in our society, that could ground a unified feminist perspective. As any feminist knows, there are problems with this approach. Despite the obvious advantages of a unified perspective for collective political action, the differences among women disallow such a perspective. As Harding, after characterizing the feminist standpoint approach, goes on to ask: "Can there be a feminist standpoint if women's...social experience is divided by class, race, and culture?" (Harding 1986, 26). She goes on to argue for "feminist postmodernism," an approach that would be profoundly skeptical toward any universal or universalizing claims about "the existence, nature and powers of reason, progress, science, language and the 'subject/self'" (quoted by Harding from Flax 1986, 3).

Terry Winant deals with this problem by introducing a distinction between a feminist philosophical stance and a feminist standpoint, arguing that there is one of the former and many of the latter. She defines standpoints as locations in the political and cultural world that carry with them specific commitments to projects for political and cultural

transformation. Obviously, these will vary from feminist to feminist according to her specific location. The adoption of the feminist philosophical stance, however, entails the following:

...a commitment to bear full responsibility for a variety of philosophical positions according to which each individual epistemic subject can establish his or her epistemic authority (i.e. reliability as a knower) only as a function of his or her place in the whole net of human interdependency (Winant 1987, 143).

In addition to being competent in the dominant discourse, women are competent in the marginal discourses of their marginal identities as women, blacks, Jews, etc. This gives them epistemic competence in multiple forms of life depending on the specific marginal discourses at their disposal due to their specific background. Thus:

The feminist standpoint is to be considered not as a finished, fully elaborated standpoint, but as a flexibly developing standpoint that can handle whatever emerges in the process of eliminating sexism....Our feminism is a stance from which to articulate our concerns in the idiom we deem appropriate, drawing on the full resources of all the languages we know--including a multiplicity of "mother tongues"--or, as I shall dub such resources, "cultural and discursive birthplaces" (Winant 1987, 127).

Ann Ferguson has expressed a similar point in her article "A Feminist Aspect Theory of the Self" (Ferguson 1987). To counter the essentializing tendencies of a feminist theory that makes universal claims about the experience of being women, she proposes an "Aspect theory of self." This theory rejects the idea that the self is an unchanging, unified consciousness:

Rather, conscious selfhood is an ongoing process in which both unique individual priorities and social constraints vie in limiting and defining one's self-identity (p. 350).

Gender is only one aspect of a self that has many aspects, none of which can be determined to be prior, more fundamental or more or less authentic than other aspects of the self. Instead "aspects of our selves are developed by participating in social practices which insist on certain skills and values" (p. 351). If the skills and values developed by engaging in different social practices conflict, those participating in these practices "will develop conflicting aspects of self" (p. 351).

Just as Winant points to competence in marginal discourses as a resource for women, Ferguson points to competence in what we could call "marginal" social practices. Competence in both dominant and marginal discourses and social practices can push women to a feminist viewpoint that attempts to resolve the conflicts in self-identity such competence entails. While Winant doesn't discuss the content of categories like "masculine" or "feminine," Ferguson's article implies that we can make some general, historically specific claims about these categories. Thus, due to a "developing conflict in gender roles" (p. 353) men and women "will have both so-called masculine and feminine aspects of self as developed by their ongoing social practices" (p. 351). Although we cannot look at men to determine what so-called masculine aspects of self are, or at women to determine the so-called feminine aspects of self, we can

attempt to fill out the content of these gender categories by investigating how they operate in our discourses and social practices.

In the chapters to come I will develop a theory of self that views the self as a process engaged in an ongoing struggle to maintain itself within and through the discourses and social practices at its disposal. As a feminist, I am interested in the role gender categories have to play in any process of self-constitution. I attempt to articulate the content of these categories in light of that interest. In keeping with the views presented here by Harding, Winant and Ferguson, however, I am trying to move beyond any essentialist notions about gender by moving beyond essentialist notions about the self. My investigation of gender categories in the pages to come must thus be taken as an investigation of socially constructed categories that currently play a key role in the construction of selves and identities. I believe that some generalizations about these categories can be made along the lines of feminist standpoint literature on the basis of an examination of gendered social structures. But my purpose in building on this literature is not to make the line between genders any clearer. Rather, I would like to articulate gender categories as still useful categories for expressing different aspects of human experience and modes of experiencing in the hopes of moving beyond those categories and making a richer range of experience available to us all.

NOTES

[1] "I shall now close my eyes, I shall stop my ears, I shall call away all my senses...and thus...I shall try little by little to reach a better knowledge of...myself." From Meditation III of the Meditations (Descartes 1977, 157).

[2] "I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception....I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions." From section VI, part IV, book I of A Treatise of Human Nature (Hume 1978, 252).

[3] For an interesting discussion of how philosophical debate turned from a "self-approach" that took the experience of being a self into account (represented by philosophers like Descartes and Hume) to questions about personal identity that no longer considered the subjective experience of being a self, see C.O. Evans (1970).

[4] For a discussion of the French reception of Hegel and its influence on French post-structuralist thought, see Descombes (1982).

[5] This is, of course, a very abbreviated discussion of Marx's contribution to theories of the self. Marx, along with Hegel, has had a decisive influence on both post-structuralist and feminist thought. For discussions of some aspects of this influence, see Descombes (1982) and Jaggar (1983).

[6] For the purposes of this dissertation I am restricting myself to exploring and developing Lacanian insights into the self; I will not here defend what I believe to be the positive contributions of other post-structuralists such as Derrida and Foucault to the discussion. Although I am not at this point arguing for the importance of Lacan's contribution, I hope this will become clearer in the next chapter.

[7] I will give a more detailed discussion of this strand of feminism in section 1.4. My remarks here are meant to situate the importance of this literature to my current project of developing a theory of self.

[8] The classic sources on this are Dinnerstein (1977) and Chodorow (1978). I will discuss Chodorow in more detail in chapter 3, section 4.

[9] Ann Ferguson develops this concept in Ferguson (1983): "The conceptual category sex/affective production is a way of understanding the social organization of labor and

the exchange of services that occur between men and women in the production of children, affection, and sexuality" (p. 156).

[10] The cornerstone of theory on woman as other is Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (de Beauvoir 1961).

[11] I oppose a "masculinist" to a "feminist" perspective here because the kind of perspective I'm talking about involves the self-understanding to go along with it required for seeing one's perspective as a perspective rooted in particular kinds of experience. See the passage I quote from Harding 1986, 26, on page of this chapter.

[12] I realize this claim has a utopian ring, but it speaks to current feminist debates about forming feminist collectives despite the differences among women. I will follow up on this point in section 1.5.

[13] For some useful discussions of how post-structuralist thought affects the interpretation of texts, see Harari (1979), Silverman and Inde (1985), and Felman (1982).

[14] See, for example, Habermas (1971).

[15] For an interesting review of different responses to a breakdown in this way of thinking rooted in various philosophical traditions, see Baynes, Bohman and McCarthy (1987).

[16] See, for example, Allison (1977), O'Hara (1985) and Lorraine (1987). Also, for the French reception of Nietzsche and its influence on post-structuralist thought, see Descombes (1983), Deleuze (1983) and Kofman (1972).

[17] See, for example, Gadamer (1982) and Derrida (1978).

[18] "...the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language, in plain talk, the presuppositions of reason. Everywhere it sees a doer and doing; it believes in will as the cause; it believes in the ego, in the ego as being, in the ego as substance, and it projects this faith in the ego-substance upon all things--only thereby does it first create the concept of "thing."" From Twilight of the Idols (Nietzsche 1968a, 483).

[19] "I taught them all my creating and striving, to create and carry into One what in man is fragment and riddle and dreadful accident..." From Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Nietzsche 1966, 198). Also, see my discussion of Nietzsche in chapter 4.

[20] See Deleuze (1983) for an interesting discussion in the post-structuralist tradition of Nietzsche's concept of force.

[21] "...thinking wants to be learned like dancing, as a kind of dancing." From Twilight of the Idols (Nietzsche 1968, 512).

[22] For an interpretation that emphasizes this aspect of Nietzsche's thought, see Nehemas (1985).

[23] "...of all social characteristics, gender is the earliest to be solidified in the individual, the hardest to change, and the most inextricably connected with how we conceptualize and relate to ourselves, to others, and to nature" (Harding 1983, 49).

[24] See, for example, Bordo (1985), DiStefano (1983), Gilligan (1982), Harding and Hintikka (1983), Lloyd (1984), O'Brien (1981), Trebilcot (1983), and Wawrytko (1981).

[25] "...Flax is arguing that infantile dilemmas are more appropriately resolved, less problematic, for women than for men. This small gap between the genders prefigures a larger gap between the defensive gendered selves produced in patriarchal modes of child rearing and the reciprocal, degendered selves that could exist were men as well as women primary caretakers of infants, and women as well as men responsible for public life" (Harding 1986, 153).

CHAPTER 2

LACAN AND OBJECT RELATIONS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will delve into the riches of psychoanalytic theory guided by the requirements for a theory of self argued for in chapter one, that is, a theory of self that is:

- (1) a relational theory of self that looks at the self in a broader social context that forms and is formed by that context (as opposed to a scientific model of investigation that would attempt to isolate the self as an object of study);
- (2) a processional theory of self that looks at the self as a process in time (as opposed to a static object with essential properties);
- (3) a theory of self that takes the self as a solution to the problem of effective human agency, i.e., that relates the significance of an individual's "sense of self" to that individual's thoughts and actions and the motivations that give them significance;
- (4) a theory of self that can explain thoughts and actions, such as the writing of philosophical texts, as a self-constituting activity of a particular type that can be linked to the perspective it manifests.

In chapter three I will address the further requirement that the theory of self I evolve be one that can account for the role of gender in self-construction.

Psychoanalysis is useful to the approach to a theory of self I propose here because it explores the development of a self and the problems that can arise in such development. Because it was created to "cure" people whose functioning as socially acceptable persons was impaired, it explores possible breakdowns in the various attempts made by individuals to find a solution to the problem of effective human agency. Thus, rather than take the self for granted, it has problematized the development of a self and theorized about the conditions that make selfhood possible. This has encouraged both a relational and a processional theory of self: according to psychoanalytic theory the self is first formed in the relational context of the family, and a self formed in that context is an on-going process that can disintegrate (e.g., into psychosis or schizophrenia) at a later time. In addition, psychoanalysis is particularly useful for a feminist theory of self due to its emphasis on sexuality and the sensitivity to gender this emphasis entails.

Lacanian psychoanalysis is particularly useful to my project because Lacan chooses to emphasize the linguistic/symbolic aspects of Freud's thought rather than the aspects that stress biological drive that were taken up by classical Freudian theory. In chapter one I argued that the Hegelian tradition was more congenial to an approach to the self that accounts for the dialectical interaction of self and world. Philosophers like Nietzsche and Heidegger

have extended this tradition by further exploring the relationship of human consciousness to the world it "knows" and desires. Lacan draws on this tradition [1] and extends it into the terrain opened up by Freud with the help of Saussurian linguistics (see below). The Hegelian tradition emphasizes the effects of concepts and symbols on human consciousness and human reality. In keeping with this emphasis, Lacan deemphasizes the biological determinism of classical Freudian theory and instead posits human behavior as the effect of a broader context of social significance. Thus, we can explain an individual's behavior as the effect of both personal and social networks of meaning which relate and interact in complicated ways.

Feminist work has substantiated the important role the cultural coding of 'woman' and "women's experience" has played in women's self-understanding. [2] The project of emancipating women has thus included "consciousness-raising" to help women see how their experiences have been coded by images and concepts not necessarily their own, and the creation of new, "liberating," images and concepts. Feminists advocate this approach because they have found it personally empowering--i.e., it works. Post-structuralist work such as Lacan's can give us additional theoretical impetus for explaining why the images and concepts with which we code ourselves and our world are so important. In addition, it can provide us with further insight into how social networks of meaning impact on individuals and vice

versa. This in turn can inform our social theory with new possibilities for promoting social change.

Before expositing Lacan's views in more detail in section I, I will now set the context for the peculiar flavor of Lacanian psychoanalysis by clarifying the linguistic emphasis of Lacan's rereading of Freud. Lacan's relationship to more orthodox branches of psychoanalysis has not been unproblematic. The Société française de psychanalyse formed upon a succession led by Lacan and Daniel Lagache of a number of analysts and students from the Société psychoanalytique de Paris. Although Lacan himself was never reconciled with the International Association, the other members of the Société française de psychanalyse have since rejoined it under a new affiliation.

One of the important points of contention that led to the succession involved Lacan's emphasis on the question of the status of human discourse in analysis. Lacan was opposed to the tendency to reduce analysis to a study of behavior, a quasi-biological theory of instincts, or a "medical therapy inclined to reduce the subject's psychical life to a series of symptoms to be interpreted by the (all-knowing) analyst in the way that a doctor interprets the symptoms of physiological disease" (Wilden 1968, xxv).

Lacan felt that these tendencies failed to be true to Freud's spirit. If one was to use psychoanalytic technique, one had to have a correct understanding of the underlying concepts. And a proper understanding of Freudian concepts

could be obtained only by orienting them in the domain of language.

Lacan felt that people had turned away from Freud's more radical insights and that these insights could be put into more modern terms with the help of structural linguistics. Saussure, a key figure in this discipline, provided the foundation for Lacan's theory of the signifier, although Lacan chose to radicalize Saussure's views in his rereading of Freud. According to Saussure, there is no one-to-one correlation between words and things, between signifiers and signified. Therefore any relationship between the two is an arbitrary one. The meaning of each signifier is determined by a signifying chain of signifiers. At each articulation it has a new meaning that is determined by its relation to the context of signifiers. Saussure represented the relationship of a signifier (psychic imprint of an acoustic image) to the signified (concept) thus: S/s with an ellipse around it to emphasize the relationship of a particular signifier to its signified (Lemaire 1977, ch. one). Lacan removed the ellipse to emphasize the bar between the two. On his view, a signifier signifies only by virtue of its relationship to the whole chain (system) of signifiers. This produces the constant sliding of the signified under the signifier--signifieds rather than staying put vis à vis any particular signifier tend to slip under the bar. For the production of meaning to take place, for signifiers to generate the signified--meaning--there must be a third term to witness the

meaning produced. This third term is the subject. The subject who intends meaning constructs itself in relation to meaning and thus completes the signifying chain by finding a place for itself in that chain (Lemaire 1977, ch. three, and Coward and Ellis 1977, ch. six).

Lacan thus calls attention to the notion of a subject in process. Individuals of a society are not discrete entities that provide the supports of a social structure. We are not unified, consistent selves that adapt to the society we find ourselves in. Instead, we constitute ourselves as subjects by taking up a particular position with respect to the network of social relations that constitute society. This process can be traced, according to Lacan, in our use of language. It is with our entry into language that we first take up the position of subject. In order to utter meaningful sentences I must come to grasp my position as a speaker. If I say 'snow is white.' I must have some notion of the snow as the subject of the ascription of a property, and I must have some notion that the snow I am describing is not me. In other words, a meaningful utterance locates the speaker as well as what is spoken about. "Lacan calls the domain of the signifier, in which this perpetual restructuring of the subject takes place, the Symbolic order (Bowie 1979, 132). The "domain of the signifier" in its broadest form includes all the symbolic orders by which we represent reality in meaning structures that operate via opposition, i.e., logico-mathematical symbolism, language,

and social and cultural symbolism (Lemaire 1977, 55). The more sophisticated one's descriptions of the world become, the more clearly one articulates one's position with respect to the world.

To use language at all, then, there must be a subject who can distinguish herself from the world, and make further distinctions about what lies outside of her, as well as about what she is. The Symbolic constitutes the possibilities for being able to take up any position in language at all. The particular relations an individual takes up with respect to the particular set of social relations she finds herself in are fixed in the same process by which she produces herself as a subject. The prevalent ideologies of the culture will determine the particular manifestations of positioning oneself in one's culture. An awareness of the unconscious--that is the "gap" between the coherent subject that is perfectly suited to a position in society, and the contradictions within the subject that work against that position--reveal the price one must pay to perpetuate the illusion of a unified self (Coward and Ellis 1977, 93-94).

In "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis" Lacan says that the unconscious is:

that part of the concrete discourse, insofar as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse (Lacan 1977, 49).

The conscious understanding we have of ourselves and the words we utter doesn't give a full account of the meaning of our words. According to Anika Lemaire:

Lacan's originality is to have wished to furnish the proof that the signifier acts separately from its signification and without the subject being aware of it. As a constituent element of the unconscious, the figure, the literal character of the signifier, makes its effects felt in consciousness without the mind having anything at all to do with it (Lemaire 1977, 38).

Lacan makes use of the discoveries of the linguist, Jakobson, in delineating some laws of language. On this view, signifiers may be related by a principle of combination/contiguity (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, sign/thing signified) or a principle of selection/substitution (e.e.g, similarity/dissimilarity). Lacan has assimilated these two principles or axes of language to metonymy and metaphor respectively. he argues that the processes of the unconscious are structured like a language, and so also follow the axes of combination and selection. Here he links the functions of metonymy and metaphor to Freud's primary processes of condensation and displacement respectively (Muller and Richardson 1979, 339-344; Lemaire 1977, ch. two). The signifier that is actually enunciated by a subject of speech has significance only in the context of a whole "battery" of signifiers, unconscious as well as conscious, of those who hear it--including the speaker. Psychoanalysis is interested in investigating the "unconscious" subject of speech--the effects of signifiers at

play in meaning-making that are not readily accessible to the conscious subject of speech.

Lacanian theory thus explores the various meaning structures within which and by which human subjects come to position themselves with respect to the world and one another. Like Hegel, Lacan posits human consciousness as always searching for self-certainty and transforming itself and its world in its attempts to achieve such certainty. Like Nietzsche, Lacan posits a fictional self always on the verge of disintegration, a self that speaks to the desire of the subject for the illusion of wholeness. Like Heidegger, Lacan posits a self formed in and from a social matrix of meaning. What Lacan adds to this tradition is a linguistic rereading of Freud that situates the origins of individual selves within the social matrix of meaning and further explores the strategies by which selves are created and maintained. Because the strategies he explores are linguistic and representational strategies humans use in order to be persons that can function in a social whole, he refocuses psychoanalytic explanations of human behavior. Whereas before such explanations tended to restrict themselves to the individual, his or her biological drives and their interaction with the environment within the limited context of the family and important others, Lacanian theory extends that context to society as a whole. This impetus, in turn, gives social theory new insights into how individual selves negotiate larger social structures.

Although I am not in complete agreement with all of Lacanian theory, I think it deserves serious attention. As we take our identities and our world less and less for granted, we are more and more confronted with the complicated ways in which the two interact. Lacanian theory addresses the question of how our social meaning structures inform our identities and how those identities in turn, navigate those meaning structures. Lacan's linguistic turn brings the question of the relationship of self and other, self and world, into arenas already staked out by the contemporary philosophical interest in language. With the help of Lacanian theory we can read individual philosophical texts as meaning structures that make sense only within a broader context of social significance. We can also unravel those texts as answers to the problem of effective human agency. This kind of reading of philosophical texts can give us new insight into how concerns about human identity within social networks of significance inform and shape the content of those texts.

On the Lacanian view I am espousing here that the meaning produced by a subject of speech is the effect not only of that subject's conscious discourse, but a whole range of signifying chains that operate beyond the subject's awareness, the traditional approach to philosophical texts (interpretations constrained by some notion of the author's conscious intentions) reveals only a small part of the signifying activity actually at work. Furthermore, any

production of meaning is also an act of self-constitution. For example, a philosophical text, in addition to having a meaningful "content"--the thoughts it communicates (or miscommunicates)--will also represent a self in process--the evolving relationship of the authorial voice to the meaning structures evoked in and by the text. An examination of Lacanian psychoanalysis will hence be an aid to developing my thesis that philosophical texts represent a form of self-construction. In addition, Lacan feels that taking up a position with respect to meaning structures is inextricably gender-linked. Thus, his views on sexual difference will help establish the role gender plays in that process of self-construction.

In section 2.2. I will give an exposition of Lacan supporting such a view. In section 2.3 I will develop the implications of Lacanian theory for the reading of philosophical texts as an activity of self-construction. In section 2.4 I will appeal to object relations theory to critique Lacan's notion of a "fictional" self, and in section 2.5 I will develop the implications of this critique for our interpretive framework.

2.2 Lacan and the Fictional Self

To understand the Lacanian view of a "split" subject unaware of much of the signifying activity motivating her words, we must try and pin down some of Lacan's terminology. In what follows I will characterize the pre-mirror, mirror,

and post-mirror stages of early childhood development. This characterization will help us to understand Lacan's notions about the dialectical aspect of subjectivity as well as the distinction he makes between the Imaginary and the Symbolic realms. I will then characterize the adult human subject via Lacan's "schema L" and summarize the interrelationships of a split subject--the "effect" of signifying chains that operate in various realms (the unconscious and consciousness), and self/other dialectics (me/other, I/Other (Other/me))--that make any production of meaning an overdetermined and inherently conflictual process.

Lacan's linguistic rereading of Freud presents the unconscious as primarily symbolic and relational. To understand this conception of the unconscious we must be aware of the careful distinction Lacan maintains between Freud's notions of "instinct" (Instinkt) and "drive" (Trieb). The former is a biological term used to describe animal behavior that is fixed by heredity. The latter refers to the energy which motivates human beings (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 70). We will see that on Lacan's reading this energy (in French--pulsion) takes a representational form with the goal of maintaining self-constancy and has very little connection with innate instincts. Tracing out Lacan's views on the initial formation of identity as it unfolds in early childhood will give us a better sense of Lacan's rereading of Freud as a structural theory about human motivation rather than a biological theory about innate instincts. The stages

I am going to describe are not developmental stages in the sense of Piaget--they are not genetically encoded in the biological organism. Instead, they are culturally encoded. Becoming a subject within the cultural context of the meaning structures of language and symbolic codes as we know them requires a developmental process wherein the subject takes her place in those codes. How Lacan describes this process is what I now want to address.

The "Pre-mirror" or "Prespecular" Stage

The infant is born without subjectivity--no unconscious, no identity, no sense of "self". He [3] has a highly developed perceptual system, but very little muscular coordination due to his prematuration at birth. Lacan describes this organic insufficiency as a "lack of coordination of his own motility...intra-organic and relational discordance during the first six months" (Lacan 1977, 18-19). Although the infant has neither individuality or subjectivity and although he cannot walk, talk or obtain food on his own, he watches and listens to the world around him. Lacan calls this stage the "pre-mirror" stage. It lasts from roughly 0 - 6 months and it is marked with the experience of fragmentation. At this point drive takes its primary form and is synonymous with "need." Need aims at the suppression of all tension in order to keep the organism constant through the satisfaction of physical needs (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 70). The infant, being unable to actively take charge of satisfying his needs, strives to maintain

constancy through the introjection of part-objects. That is, drive as a primary representational energy, mentally represents part-objects that satisfy. There are four prespecular drives whose images make up perceptual matrices to which other images attach (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 73-74). The voice and gaze of the primordial Other--the Other that satisfies his needs--are introjected as part-objects to paper over his inability due to prematuration to maintain the organism in a tensionless state of constancy.

These elemental signifiers--the voice, the gaze, part-objects, etc.--are recorded by the infant in his link with the Other that maintains the organism's constancy. Because the infant can't place himself in the array of representations of lived experience that he records, he merges with them, becoming, for example, the part-object of breast, the gaze of his mother, or his own gaze. Phonemes, bits and pieces of the language spoken to and around him are taken in along with other images. At this stage these images are fragmentary and fleeting; there is no underlying continuity to perception.

Freud describes this early stage of human existence in "Instincts and their Vicissitudes" (Freud 1957). The infant's "pleasure-ego" absorbs objects that are sources of pleasure and "thrusts forth upon the external world whatever within itself gives rise to pain" (p. 82). The pleasure ego is so named because the criterion for distinguishing the ego

from the external world is a subjective one based on what gives the infant pleasure.

This stage, along with the next, are both narcissistic stages where the infant has as yet made no distinction between himself and the pleasurable objects that are (in actuality) distinct from him. He is self-sufficient; he is his world insofar as he makes no distinction between himself and the objects that give him pleasure. It is not until the object stage (Lacan's post-mirror stage) that the infant begins to realize himself as subject and pleasure and pain denote relations of the ego to objects rather than the status of those objects in terms of inner and outer.

The Mirror Stage

The "mirror stage," Lacan's term for the final phase of narcissism that precedes the object stage, is crucial for the development of subjectivity. It occurs at roughly 6 - 18 months and is marked by the "jouissance" (joy) of fusion with a whole Gestalt of the human form. Freud discusses the interplay of the actual ego and the ego-ideals by which an adult measures herself in "On Narcissism" (Freud 1957). In the primary narcissism of the mirror stage the infant feels himself to be ideal--his jubilation at the sight of his reflection is not yet marred by any suspicion of lack. In the transition from primary narcissism to the object stage a sort of dialectic between the actual ego and the ego-ideal comes into play:

To this ideal ego is now directed the self love which the real ego enjoyed in childhood. the narcissism seems to be now displaced on to this new ideal ego, which, like the infantile ego, deems itself the possessor of all perfections....That which he projects ahead of him as his ideal is merely his substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood, the time when he was his own ideal (p. 116).

Lacan's description of the origin of this dialectic given in "The mirror stage" (Lacan 1977, 1), characterizes the illusory identifications of the Imaginary realm. It is the nature of this dialectic that will lead Lacan to posit the fictional nature of the self.

In the mirror-stage the infant is still narcissistic; he has not yet experienced the rupture of the tie between him and his mother that will confront him with wanting what is absent. Hence, the ego as subject has not yet emerged. yet the glimmerings are there. The infant takes pleasure in his reflection because it presents him with "the total form of the body by which the subject anticipate in a mirage the maturation of his power" (p. 2). The Gestalt reflected in the mirror is a pregnant one which will give birth to the self to come. It "symbolizes the mental permanence of the I, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination" (p. 2). The dialectic between actual ego and ego-ideal is prefigured here in primordial form as the infant assumes the image of the total body (representing the mental permanence of the I) in contrast to "the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him" (p. 2) (which contrast

prefigures the gap between actual ego and ego-ideal). The assumption of the image

would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. (p. 2)

This first encounter with one's reflection sets a dialectic in motion that prefigures the dialectic between self and Other to come.

The primordial I precipitated from this original dialectic "situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone" (p. 2). That is, the very origin of the dialectic between self and Other is founded on the assumption of an image in the form of a totality that belies the fragmented movements and responses the infant actually feels himself to be. The image of the total form of the body is an anticipation of the mastery over motor locomotion that at this stage of dependency is yet to come. Hence, even the primordial I, the prefiguration of the ego to come, is a fiction, based on a projection of what has not yet occurred. The infant assumes the image because it is more pleasurable to feel one's self to be a functioning whole rather than a random array of discrete movements and sensations. But to assume this image from the outside is to internalize something that comes from the external world. At the pleasure-ego phase this is natural--but the primordial I

will emerge in the object-stage as the ego, still carrying with it the fiction of an object (the image) absorbed into itself on the basis of the subjective criterion of pleasure. Thus, at the very irreducible core of the self (if one could call it a core) lies a fiction of totality assumed from the outside that is later elaborated layer by layer in the dialectic of identification with the other.

The gap in the primordial me initiates the rivalry between these two "selves" (the inner sense of fragmentation vs. the whole image of the human form) and the aggressivity of the me who defends against the feeling of disintegration by identifying with an alien object. Whereas primary energy in the prespecular stage aimed at satisfaction of physical need, drive at the mirror stage becomes secondary energy or primary libido that takes the form of Desire. There is a growing awareness of differentiation and otherness along with psychic awareness, although the "pleasure-ego" still reigns. The infant still feels himself to be what gives him pleasure, but rather than merging with the part-objects of the prespecular stage he wants to merge with the mother as a whole object. To feel that he and his mother are one, the infant must gain the mother's recognition. Pleasure becomes linked with responses from the mother that demonstrate his effect on the mother as a whole. Desire in its primary form is the Desire to be desired by the (m)Other in order to fuse with her; it is this recognition of the (m)Other that desires

him that allows identificatory merging to occur (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 72-73).

Thus Need matures into Desire via the recognition of the (m)Other. To be desired the infant must forfeit certain pleasures in order to conform to the desire of the (m)Other. Need in its original undifferentiated form is repressed as the infant becomes increasingly aware of him-"self" as an object of the voice and gaze of the other. It is recorded as primal repression--the fixing of a primary, signifying chain--the earliest representations of Desire in their link to the (m)Other. The infant identifies with the mother, fusing with her so as to retain the sense of stability and continuity he wouldn't otherwise feel. At some point (given all the frustrations his mother causes him) he comes to realize that he not only isn't omnipotent (that is, he isn't the whole world that matters to him--the mother that supplies his needs) but his mother is also imperfect. She wants more than to cater to his needs, she has desires of her own. Not only does the infant still want to fuse with the mother (as in the mirror stage proper) but he becomes increasingly aware of his separateness. The realization that the mother lacks (i.e., has desires of her own) brings on the castration complex which marks the end of the mirror stage. With the advent of the castration complex the primordial ego formed through identificatory merging with the (m)Other will succumb to secondary repression. The child will displace his desire for (m)Other-fusion onto cultural substitutions that disallow

such fusion, and the ego will be built up by layers of identifications. But representations of identificatory mergings with the (m)Other who originally desired one in very specific ways, although repressed, will continue to exert an effect.

The Post-Mirror Stage

For Lacan, the transition from narcissism to the object stage is marked by loss; the tie between mother and child is lost and the child is confronted with his existential negativity. That is, the child realizes that he is not self-sufficient, and that objects important to him (such as the mother) can absent themselves and so are separate from him.

But what of love? In "Instincts and their Vicissitudes" Freud says that love "originates in the capacity of the ego to satisfy some of its instincts auto-erotically through the obtaining of 'organ-pleasure'" (Freud 1957, 85). It is originally narcissistic in nature, and is then transferred to objects absorbed into the ego and "expresses the motor striving of the ego after these objects as sources of pleasure" (p. 85). Thus, the infant discovers that some of those stimuli it can't avoid, i.e., certain instincts, it can satisfy itself. This auto-eroticism is then transferred to objects the pleasure-ego has absorbed, and is finally expressed as love in the motor-striving of the ego after the objects that give it pleasure. In "On Narcissism" Freud says that the departure of the developing ego from primary narcissism results in a vigorous attempt to recover the

primary state (where the infant was self-sufficient). The departure is due to the displacement of libido to an external ego-ideal. Thus, object-libido and ego-libido become distinguished, the latter being the narcissistic return to the self, while the former is based on the displacement of libido to an external ideal. here we find the basis of the desire and desire to be desired that Lacan will develop: "He who loves has, so to speak, forfeited a part of his narcissism, which can only be replaced by his being loved" (Freud 1957, 120); "an actual happy love corresponds to the primal condition in which object-libido and ego-libido cannot be distinguished" (p. 121). that is, it is not enough to strive after the objects that give it pleasure; the ego, in its attempt to return to the narcissistic state where it felt no lack, needs also to be loved, to have turned upon it the libido of the Other.

For Lacan, the end of the mirror-stage inaugurates "the dialectic that will henceforth link the I to socially elaborated situations" (Lacan 1977, 5). The I is then turned into an apparatus "for which every instinctual thrust...should correspond to a natural maturation...dependent, in man, on a cultural mediation as exemplified, in the case of the sexual object, by the Oedipus complex." (p. 5-6). That is, at the object-stage the ego strives after the objects it desires through the cultural mediation of the Oedipus complex. This means that a third party is introduced into what was a dyadic relationship

between the mother and infant, i.e., the father taken as a "paternal metaphor": "The father is a function and refers to a law, the place outside the imaginary dyad against which it breaks" (Rose 1985, 39). Desire in its secondary form emerges as the child confronts its existential negativity and yearns for the happily self-sufficient state of narcissism when he constituted his whole world. In desiring the mother--the lost object--the child wants also to be desired; it is in this reflection of libido from the Other that the self attempts to restore the lost self-sufficiency of primary narcissism.

At this point the father and language step in with the Law-of-the-Father that forbids incest (fusion with the mother) and gives the child something to compensate him for his terrible loss--the symbolizing power of language. Words, due to their power to represent what's absent, help the child to compensate himself for the pain of separation from his mother. In the famous fort/da game of the baby observed by Freud (in Beyond the Pleasure Principle), the baby throws a cotton reel out of his crib saying ooo (fort--gone) and reeling it back saying da -- thus mastering (according to Freud) the comings and goings of his mother by representing them with the help of the spool, and words that will eventually come to represent in and of themselves. By soothing the pain of absence, words allow the child to defer his desires, to articulate them as representations that he can keep until such time as satisfaction is possible.

In the desire to be desired the child identifies with the object the mother seems to desire, i.e., the father. Thus, the child assumes an image that anticipates the power that is not yet his in much the same way as the infant assumes the mirror-image. This identification, however, is modified by the restrictions placed upon the child in the symbolic matrix which encodes kinship relations (and prohibits incest). Hence, a dialectic between the actual ego with all its inadequacies in getting its desires satisfied and the ego-ideal the ego compares itself to (the ego-ideal incorporating ever more of the restrictions the actual ego is confronted with), is mediated through successive identifications with the Other within the Symbolic matrix.

The castration complex is the moment in which the subject finds his signifying place and completes the detachment from the dependency on the mother as source of satisfaction of needs. In the post-mirror stage the Desire to be desired so that identificatory fusion can occur is displaced from the mother who becomes identified with the mysterious force of repression. The child attempts to fill in his libidinal lack through fusions with cultural substitutions, rather than the spontaneous fusions of the narcissistic pre-mirror and mirror stages (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 79). Thus, secondary libido, while still linked to the Imaginary, manifests itself in the Symbolic. The transition from the Imaginary to the Symbolic is forced by the assumption of castration which creates the lack "through

which desire is produced in a way organized to cultural ends" (Coward and Ellis 1977, 120).

In the primary processes of the unconscious system, psychical energy flows freely by means of displacement and condensation. These processes are at work in the fleeting and fragmentary mergings of the infant in the prespecular stage as well as the narcissistic identifications of the mirror stage. In the secondary processes, "satisfaction is delayed while the mind tries different ways to satisfaction" (Coward and Ellis 1977, 100). In the post-mirror stage the subject acquires the ability to exercise the secondary processes of conscious thought. The processes of ego-construction through the layering of self/other identifications in accordance with paternal law are the same processes as that by which the subject is constructed in language. The subject first splits itself off from "its sense of continuum with the mother's body, then it splits itself off from the ideal ego of the mirror stage, and finally it separates itself in order to find itself a place in symbolisation" (Coward and Ellis 1977, 100). Thus, the process which constitutes a subject of speech who can place itself with respect to its world constitutes the unconscious in the same movement (Coward and Ellis 1977, 115).

The Schema L

For Lacan, a theory of "self" is a misnomer if what we mean by a self is a unified subject of experience. Lacan's theory of self is better termed a theory of the human

subject. And rather than a theory about how an ego develops and maintains itself, it is a theory about a structure of signification which can only maintain itself by repeatedly reconstituting these significations in the present.

With the help of Lacan's famous schema L [4] we can summarize our characterization of the pre-mirror, mirror, and post-mirror stages:

In this schema Lacan characterizes the human subject as a quadrature of dialectical structures that oscillate between four poles. The signifying chains that are activated in these structures operate in the two realms of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, as well as at the unconscious and conscious levels. It is not always clear just how to distinguish the various features of this quadrature. The following rendition of their interconnections is bound to reduce some of the complexity of Lacan's thought, but in doing so I hope to make clear how Lacanian theory can support the view that philosophical texts can be read as representative of a self-constituting activity.

The diagram represents four poles of subjectivity through which an individual's signification oscillates. S represents the speaking subject--the 'I' of speech. The 'me'

is the subject of identifications and narcissism that informs the 'I' with libidinal energy. The 'other' (with a small o) is the other that one addresses in the Imaginary realm--it functions as a screen onto which the identity drama is projected. The 'Other' (with a capital O) is the source of unconscious truth--the Other to which an individual's "full speech" is addressed. With any production of meaning the subject is also questioning itself about its identity.

The Other is formed, in part, by the primordial representations (the voice, gaze, part-objects, etc., discussed on page of this chapter) of the prespecular stage. In the precipitation of the me that desires fusion with the (m)Other, representations of lived experience dropped out, thus forming the primordial unconscious, as irrelevant to the primary libido. This forms the first split in the subject. The second split occurs when the (m)Other of Imaginary merging in the mirror stage is repressed due to the castration complex and the acquisition of subjectivity in the Symbolic. With secondary repression Desire for fusion is deferred via symbolic representations and representations of lived experiences of the (m)Other's Desire is relegated to the place of the Other as well.

The split subject of the me of narcissistic identifications and the I of speech make the project of self-identity and self-constitution an on-going project of trying to find some equilibrium between conflicting aspects of the subject in order to maintain the illusion that the subject is

a unified self. The place of the Other is the place of both lived representations not incorporated into the me/other dialectic and the place of meaning structures of the Symbolic (i.e., language) not incorporated by the I into the conscious signifying chains of the subject. The I is the locus of significance as determined by the rules of language. The me is the ideal ego first formed through identification with the mother (or primary caretaker) and then diverted into a series of identifications with ego ideals. Although the me/other dialectic of narcissistic identifications originates in the mirror stage, its origins have been relegated to the place of the Other. This dialectic operates in the realm of the Imaginary where the me seeks to maintain the illusion that it is without lack by repeating self/other identifications reminiscent of mother-fusion.

The I/Other dialectic originates in the post-mirror stage where the subject is introduced into the realm of language and the Symbolic order. In the taking on of sexual identity and the subjectivity of a language speaker, a split is created in the subject between the me of narcissistic identifications and the I that submits Desire to the paternal law. In the Symbolic realm the I positions itself with respect to the social categories of the Symbolic order, activating signifying chains by placing itself as a signifier with respect to those chains. It is continually deflected from a dialectical relationship with the Other, by the me which wants to dictate the position the I takes with respect

to an other. In the on-going search of the me for a sense of cohesiveness, a stable, continuous identity, it enlists the aid of the I to "translate" its identificatory needs by adding the additional, intentional aim to the speaking subject of tracing out the desire of the me.

The dialectic of the I with the Other can take two forms. The I can be the subject of "empty" speech, forever deferring Desire by representing objects of Desire in the Symbolic that are further and further removed from the unconscious representations of lived experience. That is, layers of identification motored by the me are mechanically played out in keeping with Symbolic meaning structures rather than the representations of lived experience of mother-fusion. Or, the I can be the subject of "full" speech that addresses the Other of real Desire--thus activating representations of lived experiences of satisfied Desire that have thus far eluded the me/other dialectic. [5]

The unconscious is the discourse of the Other. It speaks in the individual's dreams, slips of the tongue and so forth. This speech will have an ostensible listener, the other, to whom one is speaking, but will actually be addressed to one's own Other, the source of unconscious truth. The truth sought by what Lacan calls the "true" subject is the truth that the me evades with every narcissistic trick of identification that it has at its disposal. It is the truth of the subject's radical lack of being, the primordial gap that marks it. While the me

continually searches to overcome this gap by papering it over with identifications that give it the illusion of being whole, full speech confronts this gap by articulating one's real Desire--Desire that has been repressed by the me in its ruses to maintain illusions about its wholeness.

The me is a function of the Imaginary while the I operates in the Symbolic. The identifications of the me are crucial to subjectivity, but they also lead to the alienation of one's truth in illusion. The Lacanian "ideal norm" of selfhood (if we can call it that) is to objectify the specular lures of the Imaginary other in language (thus rendering Imaginary significance Symbolic). The strategies of the me were put into place in the preoedipal stage and lost to consciousness with the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Others are searched for that will mirror back the wholeness the me can identify with--that is, one seeks the illusion of being a particular ideal ego with a fairly predictable set of ego ideals to go with it. These Imaginary "lures" that "capture" the me can restrict the range of an individual's conscious acts and thoughts. The imagos of the Imaginary act as lures that motivate a person's view of reality, putting that person's range of available signifying possibilities into the service of a limited repertoire of narcissistic identifications. Since the self (the me) isn't a thing, but a dialectical structure dependent on the other to maintain the fiction that it exists, libidinal energy is unceasingly motivating the I, another dialectical structure,

to find and recreate the identificatory relationships it needs for its survival.

At the same time, signifiers repressed first due to the "no" of the father and one's insertion into the Symbolic, and then repressed due to one's subjugation to that Symbolic order, still exert pressure. The illusions of the me are belied by the signifiers that represent aspects of lived experience the me has had to deny. The "truths" of the Symbolic order, reality as it is officially sanctioned by socially imposed meaning structures, are also belied by aspects of one's lived experience repressed in deference to those structures.

The truth of the unconscious points to what Lacan calls the Real--the realm beyond language, the ineffable, that which slips away when we try to speak it. [6] The signifiers of the unconscious use a different logic than that of the conscious system. But it is still composed of representations of lived experience that form networks of meaning. When Lacan says that the unconscious is structured like a language, he means that the signifiers that make it up (representations of lived experience) are significant in relationship to one another, just as the signifiers of language are. They form signifying chains that operate on the principle of condensation and displacement--which Lacan assimilates to the linguistic principles of metaphor and metonymy (Wilden 1968, 238-249). The Real of the subject's lived present activate the signifiers that operate in the

Imaginary and Symbolic realms, on conscious and unconscious levels, but finally eludes all attempts at definitive signification.

In listening to the discourse of the Other, the Other who responds to the full speech of the I, one is freed from the lures of the Imaginary, and open to the possibility of new meaning. Shattering specular identifications shakes the person's stability by threatening her "sense of self", but it also allows the possibility for coming closer to articulating the true Desire blocked out (repressed) in the need to maintain an illusory wholeness. Releasing significance hitherto relegated to the unconscious releases truths of the individual's lived experience not yet accounted for by the range of conventional significance offered her given her Desire as mapped out by the me. While the Symbolic order of language can lead one to further and further alienation by deferring one's desire further and further through Symbolic signifying chains in the service of the me, it can also lead one closer to unconscious truth by representing one's Desire more accurately--the Desire articulated in the discourse of the Other.

Lacan went a step further than Saussure when he claimed that not only isn't there a determined link between signifier and signified, but that the signified is produced by the signifier. And that all signifiers have the same signified--that is, desire and castration (Juranville 1984, ch. III). This common signified presents itself according to the

primordial distinction between man and woman--the signifying difference par excellence. The signifiers are equivalent in the sense that it is true for all of them that they only exist due to their difference from the others. For a signifier to signify it cannot be taken in isolation, but must be taken in its difference from the whole battery of signifiers. No one signifier or signifying chain can render either a timeless truth or a whole subject. Meaning will continually shift with the shifting of signifiers in signifying chains. The subject will never know a definitive truth about either itself or the world because the signifieds of meaning production can never be fixed. The Desire to take one's place in the Symbolic as the person one "really" is is forever thwarted by the inadequacy of the signifier by which one must represent oneself. Thus, the subject is doomed to "castration." Since there is nothing that can fill in the subject's lack so it can finally be whole, the object of desire as such is impossible. The subject will never attain the wholeness it seeks by deferring its Desire through Symbolic signifying chains. Without such an object one might expect desire as well to be impossible. But oedipal rivalry dissimulates the impossibility of mother-fusion, leaving one with the illusion that one can find the absolute object that will replace the lost (m)Other and fill in one's gap. The absolute object or "objet a" (the desired object) is the "lure" that makes Desire possible despite its futility. Thus, the signifier and speech creates both the law of

castration imposed on the one who speaks as well as the subject that desires.

The subject as a signifier, and the self as the effect (that is, the signified) are linked through the discourse of the Other, i.e., the unconscious. A changing array of signifiers at both the conscious and unconscious level will effect changes in the signified. Thus, my identity is the outcome of a signifying network at various levels (conscious-preconscious and unconscious) and in three realms (the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real) that play themselves out in a zigzag between the four poles of the Schema L.

2.3 Self-Construction and the Production of Meaning: Take I

In section 2.2 we saw that in the act of speaking or writing, the Lacanian subject is not merely attempting to communicate information to his audience. Instead, there is an oscillation of meaning between the four poles that make up the Lacanian quadrature. That is, not only is the human subject not a unified entity transmitting information to another unified entity, but it is a quadrature in complicated communication with itself who only incidentally transmits information to another.

Such a view of the human subject requires us to change the form of our interpretations of philosophical texts. The assumption that there is a unified self behind the text with a unified set of intentions leads the interpreter to cancel out contradictions and discrepancies in the text to conjure

up a picture of what the author "really" meant. The assumption that the author is a split subject, a decentered self of signifying chains that oscillate between four poles, renders interpretations that assume such a unified subjectivity reductionistic. A reading that cancels out the contradictory, and equally valid, meanings the text yields doesn't do justice to the complexity of the text.

Desire--the desire to fill in the primordial gap in being--is the motivating force of enunciation. The speaking 'I' strings together signifying chains according to socially acceptable codes of meaning. The 'me' directs these chains in keeping with its desire to maintain the illusion of wholeness and continuity. The 'I' in enunciating a signifying chain signifies the self by taking up a position in the signifying chains enunciated. This position is motivated by the 'me' which ceaselessly reconstitutes its position with respect to the other according to old patterns. If the subject cannot reconstitute itself with respect to the other--that is, put into play the signifying chains that have represented it in the past--the subject will be threatened with disintegration--loss of continuity, loss of meaning, loss of self.

Although the 'me' attempts to direct the speaking 'I' in its interest, the subject's "truth" which has its location in the place of the Other will subvert those attempts. We thus have the picture of a subject at odds with herself. A subject with two sources of "truth"--the "truth" of the ego

that would paper over its lack with illusion, and the "truth" of the unconscious subject who would subvert that truth by bringing into play the unanticipated meaning of signifiers not yet incorporated into the me/other dialectic. The gaps and contradictions of a text can be seen as the collision of these two orders of "truth"--the self-certainty of the me (based on illusion) and the unanticipated meaning of the unconscious forever trying to subvert that truth and confront the individual with its irreducible lack.

So, the very act of writing theory is simultaneously an act of self-construction in which the subject constructs signifying chains that position it as a signifier. In the act of writing theory, the writer is attempting to assimilate experience in accordance with rules of conventional language as well as in accordance with the identity themes that give coherence to that writer's experience. To do only the first would result in arbitrary strings of words that would have meaning, but no impetus. Without a speaking "self" that informs the words with intentionality, significance beyond the conventional meaning of the words would be missing, leaving us with the feeling that we were just reading arbitrary strings of words. What gives language impact is the drive of a 'me' that through its drive to reconstitute a relation to an other in continuity with an endless series of such relations that extend back to earliest infancy, attempts to communicate something beyond the conventional meaning of

the words--the message of who the speaker is, what he is about, what his relationship to the words spoken is.

Thus theory is simultaneously about the subject who is writing it as well as about the object under examination. We can thus read it for the story it conveys about the positions a subject took in constructing self-identity as well as for the meaning it conveys in terms of a social pool of meaning.

What I would like to examine in philosophical texts is the play of the me and the unconscious subject of truth as two levels of meaning in a text--the identifications translated by the 'I' as well as the "symptoms" of the text that subvert those identifications.

On a Lacanian view, a theorist wants to find the lost object, that which will fill his lack and make him whole. That object has been truth. There are times when theory pushes at the boundaries of meaning in order to incorporate more of the lived experience that evades current (Symbolic) meaning structures, and there are times when language is put into the service of maintaining old, if comforting, illusions. Lacan gives us a way of reading out both. As Lacan says, although ideally we want to do away with the me entirely, that is not possible. Without the me we would have no subjectivity whatsoever. But what theory should be able to do is to push at the outer limits of that subjectivity. Any "self"-conception is going to be inadequate since it is based on a fiction. Analogously no theory is ever going to be whole. The illusion of the theorist is that she's finally

found closure, finally gotten the "whole" theory, the "whole" truth. She wants to maintain the illusion of that wholeness, just as she wants to maintain the illusion of her own wholeness, by evading the truth that would subvert that illusion--the meaning that eludes her theory. The desire of the theorist is finally to take on the image of the whole theorist--the theorist who's whole, who knows all, who has filled in the gap in self, the gap in knowledge. Lacan suggests not only that that's impossible, but that the desire motivating such a quest is inextricably bound with the quest for wholeness of self, for self-identity. We will never find the lost 'objet a' because we never had it to begin with. And yet we will be forever searching for that object. And, in fact, Lacan does not advocate giving up the quest for wholeness--in fact, the "cure" consists not in giving up the quest, but in adhering to it more rigorously, in a less alienated way, by escaping the lures of the me that would delude us into thinking that we've already achieved what we were looking for. [7]

But while Lacan emphasizes the illusory nature of the me's quest for wholeness, I will now turn to object relations theory for a different reading of the me's activity. A look at the work of Winnicott and Mahler, presented in the next section, will allow us to critique Lacan's conceptions of the mirror stage and of the radically fictional nature of the me. This critique will allow us, in section 2.5, to conceptualize alternative to the strategy for self-constitution

characterized by Lacan's schema L which, in turn, will allow us to conceptualize an alternative strategy in the production of meaning.

2.4 Object Relations and a Critique of the Fictional Self

Although Lacanian psychoanalysis is attractive in light of my project, I believe that it can be enriched with insights taken from object relations theory. Lacan makes room for the pre-oedipal experiences of the mother/child dyad that object relations theory tends to emphasize with his notion of the Imaginary. But on his view, one takes up one's Symbolic position in language by accepting the paternal law (forbidding sexual access to the mother) and the father as legislator of that law. Although positionality in the Symbolic order is influenced by effects of the Imaginary, it has more to do with the father (or the paternal law) than the mother. I think that Lacan's emphasis on the Symbolic leads him to overlook intricacies of relationships in the Imaginary that could further illuminate how positioning in the Symbolic is affected. When we come to the question of sexual difference and the role of gender in self-construction in chapter three the emphasis of object relations theory on such relationships will open the door to possibilities overlooked by Lacan.

Lacan's quadrature provides an illuminating conceptual framework for understanding how the kinds of pre-verbal identifications made in early childhood can interact with

identifications rooted in the Symbolic, e.g., the taking on of a particular role in life (doctor, lawyer or Indian chief). The latter involves inserting oneself into the symbolic code, taking one's place in a network of kinship relationships within the family (daughter/sister or son/brother etc.) and in the broader network of social relationships (black and rich or white and middle-class for example). These positions are encoded in language--marked out by the signifying chains connected with each position (for example, it sounds "funny" for me to say "I'm a menace to society if "I" refers to an upper-middle-class doctor and perfectly natural if "I" refers to a poor car-thief). The pre-verbal identifications of the Imaginary involve identifications based on symbiotic fusion with the primary caretaker. Since such fusion involves a more "direct" form of identification than an identification mediated by symbolic representation, it is less accessible to symbolic understanding. That is, analyzing what my uncle represents to me as a role-model that I patterned myself after is more straight-forward than analyzing the wordless fusion experiences I had with my primary caretaker as an infant. Lacan's interrelating of the Imaginary and Symbolic realms underlines the unconscious effects my original fusion had in any later identifications that take place on a more "conscious" level. On his account, Imaginary effects are playing into the Symbolic identifications I later make. And these Imaginary effects remain unconscious for the most part.

The 'me' enlists the 'I' in the attempts to repeat its original identifications and so maintain "self"-continuity. Thus the preoedipal experiences that constitute the Imaginary have a lasting effect throughout one's life, no matter how much they are modified and diverted by the Oedipal complex and the diversion of desire through the symbolic chain.

It is to Lacan's credit that he underlines the interplay of the Imaginary and Symbolic realms throughout life--the preoedipal realm where the mother predominates and the Symbolic realm of the father introduced by the Oedipus complex. In this way we can see how both the mother and the father (taken in the traditional sense) can exert an on-going influence on one's self-identity, and we can untangle some of the mechanisms involved in such an identity. Lacan emphasizes the "lures" of the Imaginary and the "illusion" of wholeness that fusion gives one--an illusion that we must shatter if we are to uncover "truth". His technique of analysis and the "short session" emphasizes the father role of rupture--breaking off the analysand's session at arbitrary moments in order to reveal the illusory nature of any Imaginary identifications the analysand may be in the course of carrying out. [8] We could contrast this kind of technique to that of the object relations theorist, Winnicott, who prefers sessions longer than the traditional 50 minutes, sessions which foster trust and the creation of a "holding environment" for the analysand. This technique would seem to be more in keeping with the analyst as mother.

I agree with Lacan that Imaginary fixations that lead one to ignore or deny aspects of one's experience that don't allow for the maintenance of illusory wholeness can unnecessarily restrict one, leading to a life ever more alienated from the "Real" that eludes one's rigidified structures of meaning. Lacan's technique, by involving the analysand in the "death work" necessary to break one out of restricted meaning structures, certainly has a place in liberating one from such fixations. His own "flight from mother engulfment," however, has led him to underemphasize the more positive aspects of the Imaginary--aspects that can be revealed with the help of object relations theory.

While Lacan emphasizes the primordial gap in one's "self"--the gap between one's own inner sense of fragmentation versus the alien mirror image one identifies with in order to feel whole--object relations theory attempts a more complete account of the origins of self. An important feature of identification in the Imaginary for an object relations theorist is the "match" between infant and primary caretaker that make it possible. Of course, Lacan recognizes the necessity of adequate mothering for the origins of self, but object relations theorists trace out more completely just what "adequate" might mean. In doing so, they bring attention to a feature of primary identification that Lacan overlooks--that is, the necessity for an adaptation on the part of both infant and primary caretaker in order to achieve the particular kind of connectedness that allow

identification to occur. This leads me to question the completely illusory quality of such identifications. True, the infant's belief that caretaker and infant are one is an illusion that will be destroyed, compensated for and protected against in various ways by the infant throughout his life. But contrary to Lacan's claim that most communication is "mis"-communication, it seems crucial to me that the feeling of identification (that for the infant amounts to an experience of fusion) is based on a very real adaptation of two entities, one to another. In Lacan's terms, one might say that identification involves actual experiences of a match between two human beings with respect to their desire to be desires. That is, for periods of time at least, the infant IS what the caretaker wants and the caretaker IS what the infant wants. Thus, identification involves the felt experience, for a period of time, of actually being all to one another, with no need to defer one's desire through the symbolic chain. The infant can feel at one with its caretaker because the caretaker identifies with the needs of the infant.

It can be argued that men have a more difficult time re-experiencing this kind of fusion in their lives--those moments when two people can actually be what the other desires at the same moment--because of their masculine need to dis-identify with the mother (cf. Chodorow 1978, Dinnerstein 1977). Reading Winnicott and Mahler, we can get

some sense of what a fusion experience involves, of what a "match" between two human beings might mean.

Winnicott felt that Freud presupposed the "separateness of the self and a structuring of the ego" (Winnicott 1965, 41). Because Freud assumed that the patient was a person, he overlooked factors involving the emergence of personhood. Winnicott, in his work with psychotics, became interested in the early developmental processes that facilitate the emergence of personhood. Psychotics are not "persons" in our usual meaning of the term. Why not? What is the process of becoming a person? Where did it break down in the case of his patients who never fully emerged as persons?

According to Winnicott, it is the mother who provides the infant with the experiences necessary for the emergence of a self. [9] At birth the infant is in a state of "unintegration." The infant has no self to act as the subject of his experiences. Instead there are only fragmented experiences. These fragmented experiences correspond to the experiences of Lacan's pre-mirror stage. The organization of the infant's experience is preceded by and draws upon the mother's organized perceptions of him. Due to "primary maternal preoccupation:" the mother offers herself as an attentive medium for the infant's growth. She both provides a holding environment for the infant in his quiescent states, and "brings the world to the child" in response to his needs. The mother, in the case of "good-

enough-mothering," is attentive enough to her baby that she anticipates his needs, presenting him with the object (e.g., the breast) that will satisfy him just as the infant craves that object. This creates a situation of infantile omnipotence in which the infant experiences himself as the source of all creation--the objects that the infant hallucinate appear, leading him to believe that it was he who created them. This infantile omnipotence is the basis for the healthy development and solidity of the self:

The simultaneity of infantile hallucination and maternal presentation provide the repetitive experiential basis for the child's sense of contact with and power over external reality (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 192).

The mother's responsiveness to her baby's needs provides a mirroring effect that allows the baby to become attuned to his own bodily functions and impulses which become the basis for his slowly evolving sense of self. One of the needs the mother must be responsive to for "good-enough-mothering" is the need for a nondemanding presence so that the infant can experience a state of "going-on-being" of needlessness and complete unintegration out of which needs and spontaneous gestures can emerge.

Just as Lacan stresses the necessity on the part of the infant for turning to an external object for the feeling of wholeness that constitutes the primordial self, so Winnicott stresses the importance of a whole external object to which the infant can turn. [10] Winnicott, however, gives a more detailed account of what this mirroring effect involves. The

infant's identifications with its mother, the fusion experience of feeling at one with its mother (and therefore omnipotent or in Lacan's terms, free of lack), requires certain conditions. That is, for fusion to occur, as the infant feels a need and hallucinates the object that will fulfill that need (e.g., the need of hunger and the breast that will satisfy it), the actual object must appear. Without this "good-enough-mothering" the infant will not be able to make the identifications of the mirror-stage. He will have no sense of creative mastery, no sense that what he hallucinates is real--and therefore no confidence that the mirror image of himself that he takes on as his own to maintain constancy in the face of felt fragmentation, is actually his. Thus, the mirror-image traced in his memory as a primordial self-representation--the first in a complicated series of signifying representations that will make up his self-identity, what it means to him to be him--occurs due to a nurturing context where his needs were attended to by the other "good-enough" to tune in to and anticipate those needs. This primordial self-representation allows the ordering of a whole series of representations that hitherto were the fragmented experiences of a being with no self. It gave those fragmented images order by grouping them (e.g., my hand waving, my foot kicking, etc.) into the gestalt of a whole human form.

Once hallucinatory omnipotence is established, the child needs to learn the limits of his power. "Good-enough-

mothering" would not involve a shift from the all-consuming attentiveness of the new mother to a mother who no longer anticipates her infant's every need. Thus, maternal responsiveness decreases in synchrony with the infant's increasing ability to communicate his needs. Now, rather than having his every wish anticipated, the infant expresses his needs through gestures and signals that the mother responds to. The mother's "graduated failure of adaptation" (Winnicott 158, 246) is essential to the development of separation, differentiation, and realization (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 194).

Just as Winnicott stresses the role of frustration in confronting one with the need for symbolic representation (gestures and signals to an outside world rather than hallucinations), Lacan stresses the role of the infant's felt lack that leads it to the desire to be desired (being what will draw the mother into fusion with one) and symbolization that will master lack by making the absent present. Again, however, note the attention Winnicott gives to a decrease in maternal responsiveness that is in "synchrony" with the infant's needs. In other words, an on-going and real synchronization of infant and caretaker is needed if the illusory identifications the infant makes are to continue.

Two kinds of maternal deficiencies are "experienced by the child as a terrifying interference with the continuity of his own personal existence" (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 194) and result in the experience of the "annihilation of the

infant's self" (Winnicott 1958, 304). One is the failure to actualize the infant's hallucinations; the other is interference with the infant's quiescent states of formlessness. In "good-enough-mothering," the mother acts as both the medium for formlessness and the instrument of omnipotence. Failure to provide such a medium results in the fragmentation of the infant's experience into a "true self" and a "false self." The former is the source of spontaneous needs, images and gestures. It goes into hiding to avoid the psychic annihilation caused by expressing itself without being able to get a response. The latter's content rises out of maternal expectations and claims. The child thus becomes the mother's image of him:

The false self draws on cognitive functions in its anticipations of and reactions to environmental impingements, resulting in an overactivity of mind and a separation of cognitive processes from any affective or somatic grounding. [11]

Winnicott here makes a distinction between two kinds of possible identifications--both of which go into the layering of identifications that make up the self. In Lacan's terms, the "true self" refers to those identifications made with a caretaker whose desires are in synch with the child's felt needs. That is, in the desire to be desired by the caretaker, the child meshes with the desire on the part of the caretaker to be desired by the child. There is a meeting ground where the desires of both fuse. The "false self" refers to those identifications made when no such mutuality of desire occurs. The child tunes in to the caretaker's

desire, but the caretaker doesn't tune in to the child's desire. This distinction can help us better understand when Imaginary identifications may release significance (by allowing new gestalts of representations of lived experience) that may be more than a replay of an Imaginary fixation that alienates us ever further from ourselves.

The interesting feature about Winnicott's account that Lacan glosses over is the particular context required for the emerging significance of the self. While Lacan emphasizes the fictional character of the self, Winnicott emphasizes the space created between infant and caretaker that allowed new significance for the infant to emerge. In Playing and Reality he introduces the notions of the transitional object and playing and discusses this space further. The emergence of the person involves the movement from a state of illusory omnipotence to a state of objective perception; of solipsistic subjectivity to objective perception; of the inner world to the world of outer reality. "Relations with transitional objects constitute a third, intermediary, and transitional realm between these two worlds." (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 195) Such transitional objects are allocated to neither of the two realms, thus allowing the baby to gradually negotiate shifting from the experience of himself as the center of a subjective world to the experience of himself as a person among other persons:

In transitional experience, we maintain access to the most private wellspring of our thoughts and imagery, without being held accountable for them in

the clear and harsh light of objective reality
(Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 196).

The transitional object of a young child can be many things, for example a soft rag or blanket the child clings to. Winnicott believes that such objects relate to the process a child (as well as the rest of us throughout life) undergoes in relating inner to outer reality. The parent who doesn't challenge the importance of the object to the child is agreeing to a neutral area of experience, an area where the question of whether the child conceived of the object or whether the object was presented to the child from the outside, will not be asked (Winnicott 1971, 12). That is, an area of experience where one does not have to make a final decision on whether an object is my own creation or part of an external reality. According to Winnicott, this intermediate area between inner and outer reality of transitional phenomena continues to play a role throughout our lives.

There is a direct development from transitional phenomena to playing, and from playing to shared playing, and from this to cultural experiences (Winnicott 1971, 51).

It is this feature of existence that for Winnicott allows us the capacity for creative living that makes life worthwhile, and it is in the overlap of the playing together of two people that real communication occurs.

The "playful" space in which the infant first originates a self is crucial for the layering of identifications necessary to taking one's place in the Symbolic order. Lacan

would, of course, agree. However, Winnicott chooses to underline the creative aspects of a holding environment based on trust and the reliability of the caretaker in which new gestalts can spontaneously emerge, while Lacan emphasizes the dangers of Imaginary "lures". Winnicott underlines the need for mutual attunement in an overlap of two play areas in which neither makes the final decision on what is and what isn't, as the appropriate environment for the emergence of new significance. Such "play" can lead to fusion-like experiences. In creative play (for example two children fantasizing together to two jazz musicians improvising together), two people play off of one another by anticipating where the other is headed (in Lacan's terms, anticipating the desire of the other and attempting to satisfy it in advance--even if the other player could not have predicted in advance what the next move desired was). The "fun" comes in the attunements of one to another that leads to a final confusion in the end about who contributed what to the playing. In contrast, Lacan emphasizes the "no" of the father that would have us forever defer fusion through the Symbolic chain.

Mahler's work corroborates and complements Winnicott's work by giving us specifics about the attunement of the mother-child dyad. For Mahler, the child must struggle to reconcile his longing for autonomy with the equally intense longing to "surrender and reimmerse himself in the enveloping fusion from which he has come." (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 273) She distinguishes three phases of development in

the child's preoedipal development, the second of which is further divided into three subphases. The first phase is the "normal autistic phase." In this phase the infant is concerned only with the satisfaction of his needs and doesn't associate that satisfaction with its source in the external world. The second phase is the "normal symbiotic phase." At 3-4 weeks of age enhanced responsiveness on the infant's part results in a dim awareness of the mother as an external object. The infant continues to behave, however, as if he and the mother form a symbiotic, omnipotent unit. "Islands of "good" and "bad" memory traces form within the undifferentiated matrix of ego and id." (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 275) From 4-10 months there is a differentiation subphase in which the infant becomes increasingly aware of his mother as an external object. In the "practicing subphase" the infant begins to express an increasing interest in exploring his world, but an interest in mother still takes precedence over interest in the world of things. It is in this subphase that Mahler locates the occurrence of "psychological birth." With the achievement of upright locomotion, the child's horizons widen, and he concentrates on his expanding abilities which are perceived by him as omnipotence. In the rapprochement subphase, which usually occurs between fifteen to eighteen months of age, the child experiences a kind of separation anxiety due to the deflation of his illusion of omnipotence. From approximately eighteen to twenty or twenty-four months of age, the child,

to consolidate his separation from the mother, denies that he needs help from another person, at the same time that he experiences the need for such help. "This leads to a behavioral picture in which intense neediness and clinging to the mother alternates with equally intense negativity and battling with her." (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 278) Mahler sees the successful resolution of this stage as crucial for the avoidance of the more severe psychopathologies, just as Freud felt that the successful resolution of the Oedipus complex was crucial for avoiding neurosis.

The next phase is the phase of libidinal object constancy. It normally takes place during the third year of life and its major task is to form stable concepts of the self and of the other. In this phase, the child establishes emotional object constancy by consolidating the internalization of a constant, inner image of the mother that was gradually developed in the previous phases. Mahler stresses that the achievement of establishing a reliable, internal image necessary for a stable sense of self is not possible without the trust and confidence developed in the child's relationship with the primary caretaker. Trust and confidence is developed through the "regularly occurring relief of need tension provided by the need-satisfying agency" which over the course of the sub-phases of phase two described above "is gradually attributed to the need-satisfying whole object (the mother) and is then transferred

by means of internalization to the intrapsychic representation of the mother" (Mahler et al. 1975, 101). In other words, for the child to internalize a "good" representation of the mother, a representation that will sooth the emotional distress caused by the inability to maintain an omnipotent duality of mother and child, something must occur in the real interactions of the caretaker/child's relationship. This something involves "need-satisfying". In delineating the various phases and subphases Mahler studied in her observations of mother/child interactions, she stresses that this "need-satisfying" cannot occur without what she calls "mutual cuing". That is, as is obvious from the description of the phases given above, the child has different needs at different times. In the autistic phase the infant needs to sleep. In the symbiotic subphase of differentiation he needs to be cuddled and engaged by eye-contact. In the practicing subphase, increased motor coordination (i.e., the ability to crawl) allows him more opportunity for leaving the mother behind. At this point the kind of maternal behavior appropriate in the previous subphase becomes a liability for the infant's need to separate from the mother. In the rapprochement subphase, the now-walking toddler needs emotional support from his mother to calm his fears about separation and loss of omnipotence, and yet encourage further separation.

The mothers Mahler observed also had needs. Some mothers were much more comfortable with a nursing baby and

resented their growing child's increased independence. These mothers found it harder to give their child the freedom to crawl at will, or the emotional support he needed as a toddler to explore. Other mothers felt overwhelmed at an infant's dependency needs and disrupted early symbiosis by encouraging their child to be independent before he was ready. All these infants did become healthy children with intact self-identity. Mahler stresses the "mutual cuing" of each mother/child pair that allowed this to come about. A child whose mother preferred a dependent infant tended to remain a "lap-baby" longer, or reacted by refusing to meld his body into the mother's. A child who didn't get the reassurance he needed at the rapprochement subphase tended to become clingy, reverting to an earlier phase where he got what he needed, or found tactics that would get his mother's attention.

Thus, we can fill out Winnicott's picture of the mother who adapts herself to the child's needs, with the mutual adaptation of mother and child that Mahler observed. Winnicott talks about "good-enough-mothering", Mahler of "mutual cuing". For both, the infant forms and stabilizes an identity in the context of a loving other attentive to their bodily cues whose bodily cues they also attend to in order to get their need met.

Through attentive tuning in to the gestalt of the cues given by the other (as opposed, for example, to the meaning content of speech, say) and the anticipation of the desires

of the other, a bond of communication is formed where who wants what becomes blurred--where the self/other distinction breaks down in a mutual recognition of desire. This forms a moment of contact between two people, a moment when one's own desire is in synch with the desire of the other in such a way that the two become mutually satisfying and fuse into a place of no lack. For this to happen, both must be prepared to anticipate the other's desire, willing to desire that the other's desire be satisfied rather than insisting that the other satisfy one's own (fixated) desire. It is through this mutual adaptation of desire that fusion is born. As a self becomes more fixed such moments become extremely rare due to the need to repeat past identificatory patterns for self-continuity. The trick becomes to find a meeting ground for fusion between two people--a place where, for moments of time, they "connect" through the fusion of mutually satisfying desire at the same time that each maintains self-integrity--that is, continuity with the layers of signification that they feel themselves to be. Of course, an infant--starting out fresh so to speak--is much less restricted by that need than an adult, making fusion that much easier. For them, physical need will provide the departure point for "authentic" contact. This point of contact, then, would be the meeting ground in an area in which the appearance of an object would be a satisfying one. Through mutual cuing and adaptation to the other of one's own desire within the range of what would satisfy that desire

given one's physical needs (the infant) or the network of signifiers that make up one's conscious and unconscious systems (the mother), one can find those points where meaning connects--where both find in the unanticipated Real that eludes current meaning structures, something that satisfies.

In light of Winnicott and Mahler's rendering of the origins of the me, we can critique Lacan's characterization of the mirror-stage. According to Lacan, the self precipitated in symbiotic fusion is a "fiction." The image with which the infant identified was outside of him. It was an illegitimate, if necessary, move to take on this image of wholeness as his own when he actually felt fragmented and out of control--and not whole at all. To maintain this identification he was forced into the dialectic of desire that leads him to identify with his father and the position of phallic power and deny the loss of the mother by upholding the paternal law that will provide him with substitutes for that loss.

We can explain this misreading of the mirror stage with Lacan's own views on the me's denial of its lack to perpetuate the illusion that it is self-sufficient. From the start the mother is no more than a vehicle for the infant's self-constituting activity. What occurs in fusion is a fiction. The infant is actually self-sufficient, using his mother to reflect himself back to himself. The feeling of wholeness is an illusion--a necessary illusion, but an illusion nevertheless. The loss of the mother is thus not

really a loss, because the infant never had the mother to begin with--he just used his mother as the first image he identified with. this image, due to the nature of early child care, carried with it many intensely felt representations of the sensations of bodily contact with the mother, but the feeling of fusion with the mother was still illusory.

The Lacanian theorist looking back on such early experiences sees the infant and mother as two distinct entities with clear-cut boundaries. The self the me maintains must be one, whole, and phallic--the self of the me without lack. In reading the phallic self back into this early childhood experience, the sense of connectedness, of feeling one with another--the two as one of fusion--is discounted as an illusion. The self that is maintained is reconstituted in experiences that repeat this conception of the mirror stage--a me that projects what I need onto an other in order to repeat an identification with something outside of myself. these identifications are always illusions, always to be looked upon with suspicion as "lures" we project upon the world to evade our primordial lack of being. Thus, on a Lacanian view, self-insufficiency becomes synonymous with the illusory nature of connectedness with others.

Lacan breaks down the illusion of a unified self in favor of a split subject that is continually reconstituting itself in a dialectic of self and other. But he assumes that

if subjectivity is to occur, this dialectic must be purely specular in nature--that is, no real connection between me and an other ever occurs. Thus, he assumes that the self is entirely fictional when in fact the concrete connections in which it is based are real. The mirror image is not merely identified with, an image taken on from the outside; it is created in connectedness with another in a space where two are one, a place where desire is satiated and becomes pleasure. Fusion with another is truly experienced--as truly experienced as the experiences of fragmentation. It is within fusion that one experiences oneself in responsiveness to another who also responds. These experiences are recorded in representations that may never reach consciousness or play into the repetition of narcissistic identifications. To feel that responsiveness one needs connection, one needs more than an image projected by the me to identify with. For meaning to be created, for the original images to be formed, the subject must be in a state of responsiveness to a world which responds to it. Thus the illusion of the mirror stage is not that one was whole in connectedness with an other, but that one does not need an other for such connectedness.

2.5 Self-Construction and the Production of Meaning: Take II

Lacan's "cure" consists in freeing the subject from the me's lures so that the 'I' can address the Other of unconscious truth. Lacan seems to think that this truth will always be that the subject is primordially lacking and so is

doomed to a futile search for the lost 'objet a' that would complete it. The truth the unconscious lets slip as the me attempts to maintain the illusion of a whole self is that there is no object that will satisfy Desire.

The me Lacan characterizes in the schema L is the me of the post-mirror stage who has repressed mother-fusion, modifying its self/other identifications in accordance with paternal law. This me represents the objects of its Desire via Symbolic categories. Satisfaction is continually deferred since Symbolic representations can never fill in the subject's gap. On Lacan's reading of the mirror-stage there is no alternative to a self-constituting activity that subjects itself to the Symbolic order since mother-fusion was an illusion. This means that the Lacanian subject is the effect of the battery of signifiers in which and by which it places itself. The subject is subjected to and constructed by language. The me, being inherently fictional in nature, provides only arbitrary guidance to the speaking subject. It is necessary for the continuance of subjectivity, but the "truth" of the subject is that it is an arbitrary effect of the linguistic signifiers at play through the four poles of the schema L. Lacan's "cure" therefore emphasizes the negative moment of undermining the subject at any point it may find peace or repose in a sense of wholeness.

Taking what we have learned from Winnicott and Mahler to Lacan's schema L we might posit another me with an alternative self-constituting activity. Assuming that it was

the kind of contact (m)Other-fusion provided, rather than an identity that could take a fixed position within the Symbolic, that the subject Desired, the subject could choose to re-experience that contact. That is, rather than defer Desire by representing objects of Desire via Symbolic categories, the me could seek fusion with another in its lived present. The "truth" of a subject with such a me would not be that its primordial gap dooms it to a futile search for satisfaction, but rather that it is forever "doomed" to seek its satisfaction in connectedness with others. Such a subject would accept that it could never be whole in and of itself and would continually reconstitute itself through contact with others.

A theorist who engaged in such self-constituting activity would have a different attitude toward the concepts at her disposal than the theorist I described in section 2.3 in light of Lacan's schema L. The theorist depicted by Lacan's schema would evade the "truth" that no matter how masterful his theory, no matter how well he wields words in keeping with paternal law, he will never find the lost 'objet a' that would complete him. Instead he will be captured by the lures of a me that structures reality via fixed imagos it projects upon the Real of lived experience. Such theory will say more about the particular theorist's identity fixations than the Real which continually eludes our attempts to symbolize it. The theorist who has taken Lacanian analysis to heart will refuse to become captured by the identity

fixations of his me. Instead, he will pay attention to the Other that his I attempts to address. The Unconscious--the discourse of the Other--will subvert the subject's every attempt to pronounce a truth, be it about himself or the world, that can stand for all time in an enduring edifice of Truth. The Lacanian theorist will thus deliberately tease his reader by refusing to make any final pronouncements. He will attempt to follow the twists and turns of the discourse of the Other--thus demonstrating his prowess in evading capture by his me. [12]

The theorist who engages in the self-constituting activity that seeks fusion will neither evade the "truth" of her inability to find the lost objet a, nor demonstrate her prowess by forever evading the lures of her me. Instead, she will engage in the playful open-endedness we saw in our discussion of Winnicott's transitional object. This kind of theorist will hold in suspension any final decision on the existential status (real or imagined) of the objects her words represent. her desire is not for the object (e.g., a truth about herself) that will complete her, but for a particular kind of contact with the other (the reader) as well as her own Other (that speaks from the unconscious). She is not looking for an object that will fill in her gap and allow her to take up a final position in a timeless Symbolic order of fixed positions, but for the word that will enable contact with another.

It is not what the word refers to that matters, so much as the feeling it evokes in the Other. Contact is made when the word (or words) sets off a chain of associations that reverberate in the unconscious, activating representations of experiences not yet integrated into the me's structure. Through receptive attentiveness this theorist tries first one word and then another, listening for the Other's response, until the right word is found--the word that "fits." This theorist's desire for psychic wholeness manifests itself both in the desire to maintain the me's structural coherence and in the desire for contact with an other that will allow new meaning to emerge. She creates a playspace in which the question of the word's viability as a substitute for Desire (i.e., as a stand-in for the objet a that is in accordance with paternal law) is left open. In her willingness to respond to the desire of the Other she holds her narcissistic identifications in suspension, looking for the word that will stimulate a yes from the Other. In these moments of contact, resolution and integration can occur. The me, rather than seeking to obscure the subject's lack, seeks to compensate for lack by incorporating new meaning into its dialectical structure. This, in turn, will allow the subject to make sense of a broader range of sensations. Receptivity to the other's (the reader's) Desire and to one's own Other's Desire (what the Other wants the me to be) allows the theorist to play with words in order to generate new meaning. This theorist will not merely tease her reader, but will allow

moments of fullness--moments of integration when both she and (hopefully) her reader discover a word or category that characterizes hitherto inarticulate sensations in a satisfying way. Just as the infant's sensations were originally given meaning in contact with the caretaker who articulated his desire for him by supplying him with objects that satisfied him, this theorist finds a "fit" between inarticulated experience and the word that could symbolize it.

For example, I could be developing a theory about childhood development. As I contemplate the process of separation/individuation I may have feelings and sensations that I can't articulate. I could choose to ignore them, cranking out my theory according to familiar views I've long held about children. Or I could attend to those feelings until I found words that made sense of them. If, say, I felt queasy every time I thought of the child's first step away from mother, I may finally connect that queasiness to anxiety about separation I had myself experienced. This could affect not only my theory, but my view of myself as someone who could easily leave people behind. thus, to incorporate this insight into my theory would require incorporating a new aspect of my experience into my self-system. [13] If I chose not to change my self-other pattern I could, for example, continue to hold the view that the process of separation/individuation is an automatic, relatively painless experience. For the theorist to allow insights such vague

feelings and "intuitions" can give, she must be willing to create a space in which she holds both her conceptions of herself and her "reality" in suspension.

By emphasizing the negative aspects of a me that evades confrontation of loss with identifications based in the "Imaginary," Lacan underestimates the positive moment of a me who seeks integrative contact based in lived experience. To counter the danger of the former, Lacan would have us unravel the me entirely. Although I agree that the danger of the me who alienates the subject ever further from the "truth" of unconscious Desire is a real one, I don't agree that human subjectivity entails the continual deferment of satisfaction. Lacan describes one approach to subjectivity, but there is an alternative approach. We could characterize this alternative approach as an alternative self-strategy that the me might choose. We would then have two self-strategies that could enable human subjectivity--one that forever deferred Desire through Symbolic signifying chains (Lacan's version) and one that sought to re-experience "Imaginary" fusion (the alternative derived from our look at object relations theory). In the next chapter I will link the two self-strategies delineated above to gender categories and develop them further through a critique of Lacan from a feminist perspective. I will then discuss the role of gender in the self-constituting activity of writing philosophical texts.

NOTES

[1] For discussions of Lacan's relationship to this tradition, see Dews (1982, chapter 2); Juranville (1984); Ragland-Sullivan (1986); and Edward S. Casey and J. Melvin Woody's "Hegel, Heidegger, Lacan: The Dialectic of Desire" and Wilfried Ver Eecke's "Hegel as Lacan's Source for Necessity in Psychoanalytic Theory," both in Smith and Kerrigan (1983).

[2] See, for example, Bartky (1979), Frye (1983), Millett (1971), Smith (1974, 1979) and Weedon (1987).

[3] After trying out just about every conceivable combination of pronouns for referring to the infant I have decided to refer to the infant/child as 'he' for the following reasons: 1) although at this point in the infant's development he has no gender identity (on a Lacanian reading), this makes no difference to the people who care for him (whether he knows it or not, he is gender-labelled from birth, and even before), 2) despite my preference for the generic 'she,' using 'he' for the generic is less confusing since 'she' can then refer to the mother without ambiguity, and 3) Lacanian theory, like Freudian theory, tends to take masculine development as the paradigm for human development.

[4] Lacan discusses his schema L in "Le Seminaire sur La Lettre Volée" (Lacan 1966, 53) and in "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis" (Lacan 1977, 193-194). The following discussion is informed by these essays, the exposition of Lacan thus far given in this section, and discussions of the schema L in Benvenuto and Kennedy (1986, 100-1, 130, 146), André Green (1966), Ragland-Sullivan (1986, 2-3, 46-47, 196-197) and Wilden (1968, 106-108).

[5] For discussions of "empty" versus "full" speech see "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis" (Lacan 1977, 30-113), Ragland-Sullivan (1986, 160-162) and Wilden (1968).

[6] I do not have space here to do Lacan's realm of the 'Real' full justice. For discussions of this important concept see, Benvenuto and Kennedy (1986), Juranville (1984, 84-86), Lemaire (1977), Ragland-Sullivan (1986, 183-195) and Wilden (1968, 197-200).

[7] See Ragland-Sullivan's discussion of transference and resistance (1986, 119-129) and Juranville's remarks on the analytic cure (1984, 95-96).

[8] Schneiderman discusses both the controversy Lacan's short session caused in the psychoanalytic community and its

effects from the personal perspective of the analysand in Schneiderman (1983).

[9] I am indebted in the discussion of Winnicott and Mahler that follows to Greenberg and Mitchell's clear account of Winnicott's views on the emergence of the self (1983, 190-210).

[10] For some discussion of the relationship of object relations theory to Lacanian theory see Ragland-Sullivan (1986).

[11] Greenberg and Mitchell (1983, 194-195). They cite Winnicott 1953, 191-192 as the source for this information.

[12] Gallop gives a playful account of Lacan's stylistic prowess in The Daughter's Seduction (Gallop 1982).

[13] The concept 'self-system' as developed in Epstein (1973) is similar in many respects to the version of the self as a process that I am developing in this dissertation. I have generally chosen to use the term 'self-strategy' since it speaks to the problematic I have set for selfhood as the solution to human agency.

CHAPTER 3

LACAN AND THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I want to explore the question of how gender affects self-constituting activity. We will find that the two self-strategies laid out at the end of chapter 2--one seeking fusion and the other deferring Desire through the signifying chains of the symbolic--can be characterized as what I will call "female" and "male" self-strategies. It will turn out that women tend to make use of the former strategy and men tend to make use of the latter strategy due to their different resolutions of the Oedipus complex. I am not presuming that this characterization of self-strategies is either universal or necessary. But it is a telling one for those times and places where the Freudian and Lacanian conceptions of the Oedipus complex can be said to illuminate the socialization process of human beings. [1]

Thus far I have developed a theory of self that pays as little attention as possible to gender. Of course, the Oedipus and castration complexes can't be the same for girls as they are for boys, but this has been accounted for by painting a somewhat deviant picture for the female path to selfhood. The full-blown self is that of the male adult--if the path to that self is different, even more difficult, for women, masculine identity is still the norm to which both the sexes are compared. [2]

Much psychoanalytic theory today still minimizes the problem of gender--there may be certain differences at key points along the way, but otherwise the process is the same. Thus, there is often no systematic effort to account for gender differences. The tendency since Freud has been to posit woman as a sort of negative reflection or complement to man. Rather than provide a positive account of the category 'woman' that category became the repository of everything that isn't 'man'. Irigaray, a French psychoanalyst in the Lacanian tradition, and Chodorow, an American sociologist interested in object relations theory, have both taken steps to rectify this situation. [3] Both attempt--in very different ways--to give a positive rendering of the feminine that goes beyond relegating woman to the inverse image of man. That is, they go beyond doctoring Freudian theory here and there to fit in women in order to present a systematic account of just where Freudian theory fails. Irigaray does this with a radical critique of Freud's approach to femininity that reduces woman into the polar opposite, the specular image, of man. [4] Chodorow does this by addressing the question of gender in the preoedipal stage. Both use psychoanalysis to help account for the inferior status of women--as the sex that is man's specular image (Irigaray) and as the sex that does the nurturing (Chodorow).

The question of woman in psychoanalysis, then, entails not only the question of accounting for the path of female development, but also the question of sexual difference and

the validity of the male model of selfhood as the model. Taking gender into account in a systematic way in the course of developing a theory of self reveals two different strategies for constructing and maintaining a self. All psychoanalysts agree that certain key turning points for the developing child--the discovery of anatomical difference, resolution of the Oedipus complex--present different problems for the different sexes. What hasn't been addressed as fully is just how the solutions to these different problems represent different strategies for evolving a self that have lasting ramifications throughout the individual's life. Freudian theory has tended to presume that the paradigm for normal adulthood must be the same for both sexes--if women are not as "mature" or "adult" it is because certain obstacles, not faced by males, have blocked their development. [5] The possibility that a woman may have faced the problems presented her and overcome them, achieving maturity in her own right, has been underplayed.

A theory of self that takes gender seriously problematizes the norm for "mature" selfhood. If both sexes equally successfully navigate the problems set for them and yet one sex somehow achieves a "maturity" that the other sex doesn't, then is it "lack" on women's part (perhaps biologically based) or a misconstrual of the ideal paradigm of selfhood that's at fault?

In this chapter I will, with the help of Lacanian theory and feminist critiques of Lacan, delineate two positions,

male and female, correlated with two strategies for self-constitution. In section 3.2 I will address the question of gender with respect to Lacanian theory. In section 3.3 I will critique Lacan on the basis of Irigaray's work. In section 3.4, I will balance that critique with Chodorow's feminist perspective on object relations theory. Taking the male and female positions as positions that apply in one's relationship to language and the self-constituting strategies one uses in writing theory, I will argue in section 3.5 that 1) the positions revealed in a text are not biologically determined by the author's anatomy, 2) the male position of a text can be subverted by aspects of that text, 3) these subversive aspects can be read as symptoms of a conflict in self-strategies by a post-Lacanian reading that focuses on the category 'woman', and 4) this conflict could be resolved with a deeper understanding of the female position.

3.2 Lacan and the Gendered Self

As we saw in chapter two, the castration complex introduces the child to sexual difference and the Symbolic realm. The mother/infant dyad is, in a certain sense, static. In the world of symbiosis where nothing lacks, no positioning with respect to difference need take place. The phallic signifier represents sexual different. [6] The mother is not complete unto herself, but desires the phallus. Thus the phallus is the signifier of lack that establishes substitutive Desire. Rather than desiring the mother, the

child first identifies with what the mother wants--the phallus--and then relinquishes desire for fusion in order to take up a position with respect to the phallus. The power of the phallic signifier comes from representing difference and lack which introduces the child into the public realm of individuation and language where exchange and communication occur throughout a complex network of social relations. While identification with the mother provided the infant with a victory over fragmentation, identification with the father reaffirms the split in the human subject. Identificatory fusion with the mother in the Imaginary papered over the primordial gap between the fragmentary experience of prematuration and the gaze of the mother that reflected one back as whole. Identification with the father reaffirms that gap by disallowing fusion, and stipulating the search for the object that will fill in one's gap in accordance with rules laid out by the Symbolic order. Henceforth the child cannot settle for Imaginary "illusion", but must continually defer Desire for fusion by accepting Symbolic substitutions for the objects of Desire.

Thus, in "normal" development, the child will ultimately identify with the phallic signifier--the male embodying it, and the female by associating with it (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 293). That is, both sexes will accept castration. They will accept that they cannot remain in the world of symbiotic fusion with the mother, that they will instead have to take up a position in a network of social positions that are

different from one another. The boy accepts castration with the understanding that he is heir to the paternal law--while now he is subject to it, he will one day embody the phallus himself and have a mother-substitute for his own. The girl accepts castration by turning to the father. Her loss of the mother as a love-object is complete--she will never have the phallus, never have her mother back. Her compensation is to turn to her father who does have the phallus. By association with mean she will vicariously experience some of the power they possess, and may also receive from a man one day the child that can be her phallus.

Feminists interested in developing Lacan's work have emphasized that according to Lacan both men and women are castrated. That is, we are all split subjects with a primordial gap in our being--we all "lack," we are all motivated by the Desire to compensate for our lack. [7] Ragland-Sullivan has argued that the inferior position of women stems from a "secondary castration" (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 298). In addition to acceding to the castration complex, women have been subjected to the myths perpetrated by the Symbol in order that veil man's lack by symbolizing him as the "tout," the whole that can fill in the hole, and symbolizes woman as lack. [8] Thus, the mother symbolizes loss that is relegated to the unconscious--lack, the nether side of conscious existence--while the father is privileged because he symbolizes the opposite of need or loss. But this symbolization of man and the father is based on an illusion

that would veil the primordial gap in our being that we all share as human subjects.

Thus, the truth is that we are all castrated. How we deal with that truth has taken the form of two different strategies that take two different positions with respect to the phallus--the signifier of sexual difference and lack. The "haves" (men) flee that truth in the Symbolic. The "have-nots" (women) deal with that truth in the Imaginary. By further delineating these two strategies we may find some means to transcending the impasse of sex polarization.

We can characterize the male and female positions of Lacanian theory as follows [9]:

Male position: The boy learns that although the paternal law forbids him to fuse with mother, he will one day have a woman of his own if he identifies with his father and upholds the paternal law. That is, he "has" the phallus, he isn't castrated after all, he has what his mother desires. The Symbolic order represents paternal law. It lays out the social hierarchy determined by the Name-of-the-Father. It decides what the relationship of all the beings of the society is according to socially sanctioned codes. As heir to the paternal law he will wield its phallic power--making judgments about the form relationships should take according to his desire. To identify with the father he will deny the loss of his mother--i.e., deny castration--and displace his desire for his mother onto words that represent the objects of desire. he will continually defer the fusion sought by

displacing his desire along the signifying chain in keeping with narcissistic identifications. Through repetition he will maintain the self first precipitated in fusion with his mother. This will compensate him for the loss of that fusion. What was gained in fusion was a sense of wholeness more pleasurable than the feelings of fragmentation that preceded it. It is this feeling of wholeness, of mastery, that he strives to maintain with the repetition of narcissistic identifications. The Symbolic order assures him he can maintain his self through the repetition of positions first established in the Oedipus complex.

The male position thus involves the repetition of a self through the Symbolic that translates and transposes the same self precipitated in early childhood throughout life according to the rules of the Symbolic. In doing so he will deny the (m)Other within in order to find the substitutes for his primordial Desire (the mother of fusion) that are in keeping with the Symbolic order and paternal law.

The female position: The girl learns that not only is she not allowed fusion with the mother, but she will never regain a woman-substitute for the mother. That is, she doesn't "have" the phallus. She is castrated, she lacks, the loss she is currently experiencing is final, her compensations inferior to that of the boy. Instead of identifying with the father, with phallic power, with the wielder of the paternal law, she can only passively enjoy phallic power through association with a man. The paternal

law doesn't interest her the same way it interests a man because it guarantees her nothing. She will never be what is desired by the other and thereby regain the fusion she lost. She can only be the other for some man, can only vicariously enjoy his phallic pleasure at being the whole. Being passive, she can never create the paternal law that orders social relationships. she is an object of exchange, waiting to be exchanged by those who wield phallic power, those who have the right to say where and when fusion can occur. thus, she cannot speak with the same authority as a man. She can only parody a power that is really not hers to wield. The self that she lost with the loss of fusion can only be maintained passively by finding subjects to whom she can be an other. Instead of actively repeating the self she formed in fusion in a layering of identifications according to the rules of the Symbolic order, she will take on the position of the sex that lacks. Instead of maintaining the experience of wholeness she experienced in the mirror stage in a layering of repetitions where she repeatedly plays the phallic whole that is mirrored in others' responses to her, she will find her identity by mirroring others' wholeness back to them, letting them define her by being the lack, the hole, that their "wholeness" fills.

Despite the drawbacks with respect to social power such a position entails, woman does have a certain compensation:

There is woman only as excluded by the nature of things which is the nature of words....It none the less remains that if she is excluded by the nature

of things, it is precisely that in being not all (pas-toute), she has, in relation to what the phallic function designates of jouissance, a supplementary jouissance (Mitchell and rose 1985, 144). [10]

On a Lacanian reading, it is not clear whether or not woman as woman can be a subject, playing out her own desire in the same way a man does. Given that she is of the sex that doesn't have the phallus, she can't want in the way a man does. A man desires objects that are substitutes for the mother. he desires to reconstitute himself by replaying the dialectic of being desired by the other (originally his mother) according to the rules of the Symbolic order. A woman can't, properly speaking, desire at all. Since she is of the sex that lacks, she can't hope to find substitutes for the mother. She will never be able to regain the desire of an other, a substitute for the mother, in some dialectic of identifications that through the transformation rules of the Symbolic represents the other as the other that can reflect her back to herself as a whole. What then, as a woman, can she do?

Ragland-Sullivan says that she is closer to the personal and the narcissistic (1986, 296-297). That is, because she is not allowed to find substitutes for the mother in the same way as a man, she is closer to the primordial Desire of the mother whose messages she received into the unconscious in symbiotic fusion. Lacking the same phallic power the man has to find substitutes for the Desire to satisfy this primordial Desire, she is closer to the loss of the mother, the loss of

the feeling of fusion when mother was satisfied by the infant, and mother and infant were one. Because she is confronted with this loss in a way that someone who "has" the phallus isn't, she doesn't have the male option of reconstituting the situation of fusion in identifications with images that replace objects associated with the mother. that is, she can't maintain the self of fusion by finding others to mirror back to her that she is desired in a way that is analogous to the way she was as an infant.

On the Lacanian view, this means that she has no possibility of subjectivity at all. Unable to find the reflection in an other that will repeat and so confirm her primordial self in a layering of identifications, she is reduced to being the other, the mirror, for the self-representations of men. Unable to wield the phallus herself, she can maintain what little identity he has only by being a screen for the imagoes that men project upon her. By conforming to their desire, responding to their need to see themselves as forever the same, always the same self, she can gain vicarious pleasure in phallic power through association.

While one can assume that Lacan intends the schema L we discussed in chapter two, section 2.3, to represent the self-constituting process of both the men and women that go to him for analysis, it is clear that his notion of pure femininity excludes woman from this process. Rather than projecting her imagoes onto others and thus reaffirming herself through narcissistic identifications, she is man's other. It is thus

that Lacan comes to say that as a category woman doesn't exist [11], that in fact if she were actually to exist there would be no man. For man to maintain himself he must be able to find others that will support the repetitions of self and other needed to provide him with continuity. For this to occur, an other that will conform to his imago is needed.

Woman, having no identity as woman of her own, being defined as lack, is eminently suited for this purpose. To ask what woman wants, then, and be prepared to hear her speak, would actually threaten this whole project of self-constitution.

[12] Because Lacan himself is writing from the male position, using the male strategy of self-constitution, he cannot really ask the question of what woman wants. To hear the answer would undermine his own project of self-construction in a way that would threaten him with loss of mastery and loss of self. Thus, although he asks the question, and although he admits to some perplexity about the answer, he is not, in fact, able to hear the reply.

Since the male position requires evasion of Imaginary fusion by finding Symbolic substitutes for Desire in accordance with the paternal law that veils his lack, any rendering of the feminine could only undermine his own strategy by unveiling it. Male satisfaction does not include the jouissance of a genuine fusion experience because preference has been given to the Symbolic--the other is not the Real other in her specificity, but a projection screen upon which one can play out one's fantasies. Preference is

given to representations that replace concrete objects of desire--abstract images that stand in for what was lost and will be forever deferred through the Symbolic chain. Once the category of woman is unveiled as a different strategy, a different way of dealing with lack, rather than lack itself that only the phallic male can fill, the male strategy of displacing loss and lack onto 'woman' will no longer work. Instead, men will have to find other ways of dealing with lack. Articulation of the female position, while undermining the tenability of the male position, could open the door to a new relationship to origin and lack.

Due to having to mourn the loss of the mother in a way the boy doesn't, the girl is forced to maintain the self formed in fusion in other ways (Ragland-Sullivan 1986, 297). Instead of basing her self on the fiction of whole self-sufficiency--that is, instead of assuming that the self she formed in fusion with the mother can continue without the mother, she accepts the loss of that fusion state and is more open to finding that fusion state, or something like it, elsewhere. That is, she accepts that the self formed in fusion with mother is not her own self--but the two of them as one. Thus, to rediscover that feeling of wholeness, she will need to connect with others the way that she once connected with mother. Instead of deferring substitutions for the mother through the Symbolic chain she will adhere less strictly to the paternal law (which after all guarantees her nothing) and instead allow fusion to occur--other moments

when through connection with another she can feel whole. What she takes away from such fusion is not an identification with an image that is actually outside of herself (and so not actually her at all), but the concrete feelings and sensations of having been close to another. Feelings that she can't necessarily repeat in other interactions à la the schema L, but which reside in her unconscious in a fluid manner, ready to be activated by other encounters that evoke them.

The female self-strategy is thus less subjected to the Symbolic and the paternal law and more inclined toward "Imaginary" fusion. With no promise of inheriting the paternal law to inhibit her, she deals with loss in ways that subvert that law. Fusion is not as taboo for her. She is closer to the primordial unconscious, less afraid that fusion experiences will confront her with castration. She thus has a different attitude toward Imaginary fusion. An attitude that can't be allowed full expression in the Symbolic if the paternal law is to stand unchallenged. Contrary to Lacan's view, however, the feminine does not have to be any more ineffable or mysterious than the masculine. That it has not yet found full expression in the Symbolic does not mean that it can't be expressed. The task at hand is not to veil the "mysterious" feminine in anymore veils than already cover it, but to reveal the feminine as a particular strategy for dealing with the problem of subjectivity that is different from the male strategy. [13]

Thus, Lacan gives a one-sided view of the picture. While his insistence on the castration that we all share is an important feature of his theory that undermines phallic power by rendering its illusions more visible, Lacan has not succeeded in stepping outside of the male position enough to be able to characterize the female position as anything but the negative counterpart, the other, of the male position.

In the next section I will explore a more positive characterization of the female position with a look at Luce Irigaray's book, Speculum (Irigaray 1985a).

3.3 Irigaray: Woman as the Specular Other

Luce Irigaray was excommunicated from the Lacanian community for writing Speculum. Her critique of Lacan and her valorization of the feminine was too radical to be embraced by the Lacanian psychoanalytic community (Moi 1985, 127). I will argue that Irigaray's position with respect to femininity, radical as it is, finally falls into some of the same assumptions she tries to avoid. her work is still useful, however, for delineating the female position.

On the basis of our discussion of Winnicott and Mahler in chapter 2 and of gender with respect to Lacan in the previous section of this chapter, I will make some preliminary claims before amplifying them with an examination of Irigaray's work. My first claim is that the category 'woman' is a projection screen for playing out a male fantasy of wholeness that is finally untenable, as well as a category

representative of the lost joys (jouissance) of fusion experiences. My second claim is that the female strategy involves accepting the original loss and compensating for it by repeating fusion experiences with others.

The male strategy denies the loss of mother-fusion and continues to evade confronting it by finding Symbolic substitutes that forever defer satisfaction. The loss, not being dealt with, is displaced onto woman. 'Woman' is thus a category associated with loss, fusion experiences, and the possibility of confronting that loss along with the threat of complete disintegration of self that that brings. It is the fear of such disintegration that makes confrontation of 'woman' so hard from a male position. And yet even from the male position, the experiences of fusion and the possibility they hold for another way of dealing with lack, still remain in the unconscious. The "deathwork" of Lacanian analysis is one way of unraveling the layers of identification built up on symbolic identifications that lead further and further away from the concrete objects that originally satisfied in symbiotic fusion. But fusion-experiences in the present--saying yes to fusion rather than rigidly adhering to the no of the father--is another.

The principal function of the Symbolic is to mediate between the Imaginary and the Real--that is, to process experience as it is lived into meaningful form given the narcissistic layers of identifications previously enacted by the self. The unanticipated of the Real--the specificity of

concrete experience, that which has not yet been made articulate according to current meaning structures (Juranville, 1984, 84-86)--is continually being made sense of. But the Imaginary has a more important role to play in this process than that which Lacan gives it. Imaginary fusion does not happen just once, and then play itself out in repetition through Symbolic substitutions. Not only do Imaginary narcissistic identifications of the self motivate the speech of the 'I', but fusion can continue to occur at the Imaginary level that allow new gestalts to form, and provide fresh impetus for narcissistic identifications. For self-continuity to be maintained fusion has to be contained within the context of one's past identity. But within given parameters fusion can still occur.

The problem with the female position is that it can remain inert--trapped in fusion, in dyadic experiences where two form the whole and the new relationships this generates with respect to the whole network of positions is lost. Without the male strategy of deferment of desire, the connections made in fusion experiences could not be translated by the exchange and communication the paternal law allows. But the assumption that the phallus is whole is no longer needed. It was that assumption, that illusion of self-sufficiency, that pushed men to leave mother behind and seek their positions in the larger social group. To do so they denied loss, pretended mastery, and drove themselves to seek their desire by spinning out Symbolic chains--exchanging

words and women. [14] Through abstraction, individuation was established--individuals could assert themselves as individuals by seeing one another as signifiers easily assimilated according to Symbolic rules. But as the connections of the Symbolic order are established, the need to fill in the picture with the specificity of concrete (as opposed to abstract) differences that only fusion can bring becomes more pressing.

Irigaray questions the paternal law in a way Lacan doesn't. Instead of assuming that the father's law, the phallus, the Symbolic, represent features of subjectivity that, unfortunately or not, lead to the subordination of women, she valorizes the female position. Her rendering of the female position wrenches it out of the negative role of other to the phallic position in order to give it a positive characterization. I will make use of this characterization to fill out what I believe Lacan has missed. Irigaray counters Lacan's blindspot by depicting the male and female positions in the extreme of their polarization. On the one hand there is male specularization and the logic of the same. [15] On the other, there is female pleasure and heterogeneity. [16] Like Lacan, Irigaray doesn't believe that the feminine can be spoken. Language is male. That is, it operates according to a male economy of representation. For women to speak, language would have to change.

Thus, Irigaray believes that there are two distinct economies--one male, one female. [17] The male economy

disallows the female one because it requires the category of woman to be the negative inverse of 'man' if it is to function. By filling out what Irigaray means by this male economy of representation that operates according to the logic of the same, we can fill out our picture of the male strategy for self-constitution. By examining Irigaray's views on female pleasure, heterogeneity, and the possibility of woman's language, we will get some clues as to how to break through Lacan's impasse of female subjectivity.

Irigaray starts off her book, Speculum, with a discussion of Freud's views on female sexuality. In the style of mimicry she developed to speak the female without reducing it to the logic of the same of typical theory, she questions Freud's rendering of female development as an aberration from "normal" male development. What Irigaray wants to posit is that instead of one strategy for self-constitution, there are two--but the female strategy has been reduced to the male one, due to the blind spot of the male position. According to Irigaray this blind spot is due to the dream of symmetry (Irigaray 1985a, 13-129)--it is due to the nature of the male strategy of self-representation that it is blind to another strategy that takes a fundamentally different approach.

Both Lacan and Irigaray agree that an infant is born from the body of another, and that the primordial self of the infant is first precipitated in symbiotic fusion with the primary caretaker. Where Lacan and Irigaray disagree is on

the nature of each individual's relation to this origin of the self. While Lacan accepts the representation of that relation according to what Irigaray terms the "logic of the same," Irigaray is convinced that there is another way of representing that relation. Because representing that relation according to another, a feminine, logic would disrupt and undermine male logic, it cannot yet be done (Irigaray 1985a, 42-44). Yet Irigaray holds out the possibility that through attempting to speak the feminine in ways that subvert the male logic of language, women could finally dispel the illusions of the male position.

We could thus say that Irigaray's rendering of the logic of the same, of the male economy of representation, is the economy played out in Lacan's schema L. On Irigaray's view, man desires the same, the self-identical. he denies his origin in the mother and determines his relation to origin himself. That is, the origin of his primordial self in fusion with the mother is relegated to the unconscious. The layers of identifications built up on those unconscious representations are linked to that self through the signifying chains of the conscious and unconscious systems, but this primordial origin of the conscious self is veiled. The self is reconstituted in the dialectic of self/other identifications that continue to occur, but man has lost sight of the active role played by a real other that originally helped create him. he projects imagoes that will confirm his identity. To do this, he needs real people upon

which to project those imagoes--people who will not challenge them, thereby threatening his identity. Woman is the socially sanctioned other. By conforming to the man's imagoes, she insures the maintenance of his identity as the same. he is thus free to continue to believe in the illusion that he is whole, that he is the phallus that the other desires, that his identity is not contingent upon the mother that gave birth to him, or the other that reflects him back to himself. The woman has abandoned her own relation to the origin, to her birth, her self, in order to allow men to inscribe upon her their relation to their origin, their desire, their self-representations.

Thus, woman is required by the male position to be silent, to be the other that will support the repetition of his self-representations as the same. The primordial self formed in mother-fusion is translated and transposed into the Symbolic order through a layering of identifications sanctioned by the paternal law. Anything that would upset this economy of representation that repeats man as having the same self is relegated to the unconscious. In this way a stable, socially functioning identity is formed and maintained despite the constant onslaught of chaotic experience that besieges it. Anything that doesn't fit, that can't be ordered according to the Symbolic rules of analogy, resemblance and identity is dismissed. Experience is ordered according to repetitions of identifications that support the self as self-identical. Woman comes to be associated with

the unconscious, the fusion-experiences of infancy and the chaotic flux of experience that the self has mastered through this logic of the same. In the puzzlement men express to one another with respect to the question of what woman wants, lies the dim awareness that the male strategy is based on an illusion--the illusion that he seeks in the other recognition of what he already is. If woman were to speak, to articulate her female desire for contact, the connectedness with an other that represents her relationship to her origin, man could no longer posit himself as self-identical. Instead, he would be forced to realize that he was created in and by contact with another--that the other that recognized him in fusion not only saw him as he was but, at least in part, created him through the contact of that recognition.

According to Irigaray, that women don't have the phallus, that they have instead a "nothing" where there should be something is threatening to men because it represents a hole in men's signifying economy (Irigaray 1985a, 50). She suggests that this "nothing" might have been interpreted as the symptom of an other libidinal economy that would recall heterogeneity rather than the identical or identifiable. Thus, she opposes two economies to one another that we can delineate as her versions of the male and female positions. In choosing to render these positions into the "phallic" language of typical theory, I am flying in the face of Irigaray's insistence on the ineffability of the female position--at least in language as it stands. Irigaray feels

that attempting to represent female desire and sexuality in typical theoretical language can only reduce the feminine to the male logic of the same and so deprive it of its specificity. If there is not system of representations to assist the girl in her conflictual relationship to her mother and to her sex/organ (Irigaray 1985a, 68), it is for a reason. The girl's relationship would have to be expressed in another economy of representations than that of the schema L.

I believe that this is only true given the extreme polarization of the sexes as Irigaray depicts them. Just as there are times when men relate to women as more than their mirror reflection, there are times when women represent themselves according to the logic of the same. If we insist on the two extremes Irigaray describes as the extreme of two positions with room for varying shades of grey in between, we may see beyond the polarization of the sexes. Just as it is helpful to relate Irigaray's logic of the same to Lacan's schema L, it is helpful to relate Irigaray's notion of heterogeneity to my earlier discussion of the deficiencies of Lacan's account of the Imaginary and fusion-experiences. What I would like to do here is characterize Irigaray's version of the male and female positions from that perspective, although this may not be in keeping with her own project.

The male position: Upon discovering that he and his mother are not one and that the self formed in fusion is thus

at risk, he makes "the very place and space of being his own" (Irigaray 1985a, 137). That is, he denies the mother's contribution to the self of fusion and makes his existence as a human being one of his own making. He then "becomes a prisoner of effects of symmetry that know no limit" (p. 137). Barred from fusion-experiences due to his denial of the other's part in the making of his self, he is doomed to forever repeat that same self by setting up narcissistic identifications of self with the other. For man, these identifications must exclude activating any representations of primordial connectedness with an other so that he can maintain a self in separation from others. This means that the other must repeat past identifications. Anything about the other that might subvert these identifications must be relegated to the unconscious. Nothing that would challenge the boundaries of his self can be admitted. Instead the self of the Imaginary will push the 'I' of speech to organize all experience in conformity with the Symbolic rules of analogy and resemblance. Boundaries remain fixed. The Real is made intelligible by repeating the same self/other relationship over and over again according to transformation rules that relate the multiplicity of experience without endangering his layering of self-representations. Thus, "Everywhere he runs into the walls of his palace of mirrors" (p. 137).

In "Plato's Hystera" Irigaray rereads Plato's cave analogy as representative of the male position. The cave is the womb, the empirical connection with the mother, and the

fantasmatic images that lie at the subject's origins. In leaving the cave, the subject is denying these origins lost in "fluid darkness" and the "shimmering imprecision of reflections" in order to replace them with "the neat, clear cut, immutable, unambiguous categories that characterize, divide up, classify, and order everything, every "being," according to rational intuition" (Irigaray 1985a, 281). The subject denies his origins in the mother in order to represent his relationship to his origins as that of the son to the Father. The Father is represented by the sun--"the keystone supporting the whole--phallic--edifice of representation that it dominates, illumines, warms, makes fertile, and regulates by scattering its beams everywhere" (p. 267).

Thus, the shadowy reflections of mother-fusion are relegated to the unconscious and denied, to be replaced with the clearcut categories and interdictions of the Symbolic order. Through the chain of associations created in repetitions of the self that "pivot the scene around axes of symmetry" (p. 259) the most recent layer of self-representation maintains a link with the primordial self of mother-fusion. But the shadows of the subject's origins are denied so that he can maintain the illusion of a self that was never merged with an other, a self that is forever self-identical, able to take its place in the Symbolic order of "being" where everything already is what it is, and everything already has a place.

The female position: Upon the loss of mother-fusion the girl is coerced by the Symbolic order into abandoning her own relation to her origins--which is different from that of the boy. Due to the need on the part of the male for a cooperative other, she is forced into the position of having "nothing" and submitted to the "projects and projections of masculine consciousness" (Irigaray 1985a, 141). Thus:

By resubmitting herself to the established order, in this role of delirious double, she abandons, even denies, the prerogative historically granted her: unconsciousness (p. 141).

The prerogative of unconsciousness is the prerogative of the sex associated with fusion and loss; with representations that are relegated to the unconscious because they are sunk in shadows--dreams and fantasies that don't conform to any of the categories of the Symbolic (the realm of the clear-cut and already-known). It is the specificity of women's relationships to other women that allow this prerogative, something about the nature of a girl's relationship to her mother that is different from that of a boy's. Due to this special relationship she is unconsciousness, "but not for herself, not with a subjectivity that might take cognizance of it, recognize it as her own" (p. 141). thus, she is the "reserve of "sensuality" for the elevation of intelligence," the "matter used for the imprint of forms" (p. 141). Instead of activating unconscious representations by associating them according to the dictates of her own desire, she allows herself to take on the identity of the other that will

fulfill man's desire. That is, the layering of identifications a woman builds up in the self/other dialectic will have more to do with the dictates of some man's own search for lost objects associated with his mother than her own.

What is the special relationship to the mother and her own origins that grants her the prerogative of unconsciousness? What does it mean to have this prerogative? How could it be represented if it weren't coopted by man? Although Irigaray is wary of giving it expression in language which operates according to the male economy of representation, she gives us some clues. In "La Mystérique" Irigaray "mimics" mystical literature to articulate a way of relating that isn't based on the male logic of the same. This kind of relating constitutes a "marriage of the unknowable" where "everything is relentlessly immediate" (Irigaray 1985a, 196). Here two (whether it is a human subject and God or two human subjects is not entirely clear (who have no "possessions" are "wedded only in the abolition of all power, all having, all being, that is founded elsewhere" (p. 196). The ranking of social positions as laid out by the Symbolic order are left behind. Two come together without the attributes assigned them by the place they take as speaking subjects. Rather than placing themselves vis à vis one another according to the self/other relationships laid out by the Symbolic--relationships where the boundaries

between self and other are fixed--"each becomes the other in consumption."

Each will not in fact have known the identity of the other, has thus lost self-identity except for a hint of an imprint that each keeps in order the better to intertwine in a union already, finally at hand. Thus I am to you as you are to me, mine is yours and yours mine, I know you as you know me, you take pleasure with me as with you I take pleasure in the rejoicing of this reciprocal living--and identifying--together (p. 196).

If we take this passage as an attempt to articulate the desire specific to woman, we can contrast this female desire to male desire. Male desire motivates the narcissistic identifications of the schema L. The desire for the desire of the mother is replaced by the desire for the desire of objects offered by the paternal law as substitutes, i.e., recognition from others taken as ego ideals in the self/other dialectic. For the speaking subject, the 'I' of speech has translated the desire of the 'me' of narcissistic identifications into the Symbolic order of language which stakes out the social network of positions. The kind of desire expressed in the above passage has nothing to do with obtaining the desire of an other who has a given place in a social network. In fact, this "female" desire is a desire for another kind of connection where the boundaries of self and other as laid out by the Symbolic melt, and two become one in a fusion-experience reminiscent of mother-fusion.

This passage can be compared to our earlier discussion of fusion-experience based on Winnicott and Mahler (chapter 2). Fusion-experiences involve the melting of self/other

boundaries--a way of relatedness that doesn't abide by the rules of the Symbolic. The desire for the desire of an other from its position as laid out by the Symbolic is not what is at issue. Instead, the desire is for contact, for connectedness--the kind of connectedness where the self/other boundary breaks down and instead two desire as one. Through a reciprocal attentiveness to the specificity of the other--a specificity that defies all categorization by the Symbolic, that eludes any articulation one could give it in terms of attributes, properties and possessions available in the Symbolic order--two merge desire by desiring exactly what the other is in all his/her specificity. This kind of attentiveness is thus an attentiveness beyond language in the sense that it is a reciprocal responsiveness of two bodies that may or may not find expression in conscious thought. Just as the primordial fusion of primary caretaker and child resulted in fantasmatic images associated with bodily sensations eventually relegated to the unconscious, later fusion-experiences based in body sensations can activate such earlier sensations in a dialogue that may not be immediately translatable into language. This reciprocal responsiveness of two bodies allow the self/other boundary to break down and the two to become one organism. Just as an organism instantaneously communicates sensation from one area to another, so do these "two" bodies. Just as an organism acts as one, moving with a single goal or desire, so does the desire of these "two" converge into one. In the desire for

the desire of the other in his/her specificity, the pleasure of the other rather than recognition is the goal. The pleasure of each is instantaneously communicated to the other via subtle body cues, and the desire of the two become one as the mutual goal of pleasuring the other is satisfied and communicated.

Thus, the Imaginary realm is not merely a function of "illusory" identifications with objects outside of oneself. It is a real arena where body-sensations are communicated and where desire is not for a particular "lost" object but for the pleasure of merged desire. The "non-knowledge" of this realm may find partial, and perhaps subversive, translation into the Symbolic in the mode of sensation-ideas--"half" thoughts. Thoughts that are connected with the indistinct meaning of body-sensation and have not yet attained the clarity of the clear-cut distinctions laid out by the positions of the Symbolic. These body sensations are retained in the body (and so activated by experiences that recall earlier experiences that evoked such sensations). That is, body-sensations can be recalled by experiences that reevoke them due to the signifying chains of representations associated with them. These representations of body sensations are part of the unconscious and so are grouped according to the laws of primary process (condensation and displacement) rather than those of secondary process. They are connected with words, images and other representations

that are associated with that earlier experience which they represent.

Body-sensations reevoked in the present can be given conscious significance if attended to. The attunement of another to one's body-sensations can activate them more intensely. Thus, the body has a sort of language of its own--one that is neither distinct from, nor synonymous with, actual speech. Women, with their desire for the connectedness that makes two one organism, are more conversant with the language of the body than men. While men vie for the recognition that will place them within the social network, women attune themselves to the more subtle body signals that each in their specificity continuously send out. Just as the mother learns to "read" her infant's signals--the slight grimace that means they're about to cry, the restlessness that means they'll soon be hungry--she learns to read the body cues of those around her. And due to the lack of representation for the desire for such connectedness, this communication will usually take place on an unconscious level--with neither mother, nor child, nor man, stopping to bring this kind of connectedness to conscious awareness. Furthermore, this kind of connectedness is not peculiar to mothers. Every infant who has desired the desire of its mother has had to learn the same kind of responsiveness to the body-sensations of an other. It is this kind of "non-knowledge" that is so difficult to represent in terms of the logic of the same. For instead of

a placing of two with respect to one another, it involves the fusion of two into an organism that desires the same pleasure. It is this pleasure of connectedness where two become one, and the pleasure of the one is the pleasures of the other, that is the pleasure of *jouissance*--a pleasure that transcends boundaries and revels in immediate, "naive", sensation, a pleasure that is unmediated by the social network of positions of the Symbolic.

Despite the difficulty of translating this kind of connectedness into Symbolic language, however, it has traceable effects. In leaving the cave of his empirical origins in the mother, man has "left the place, still based in the senses, where the traces of his desires were inscribed." But the effects of the body-based connectedness of mother-fusion are still felt:

The wound suffered by being thus torn away might leave scars in the memory. Reminders, rejoinders. Passages, and hemorrhages, between sensible and intelligible. Resulting in sensation-ideas, ideal sensations. Any self-respecting philosopher avoids confusion like that (Irigaray 1985a, 299).

The male position disallows the blurred boundaries of his childhood. Instead, the male subject must leave the cave of shimmering reflections and rediscover his "true" origin in the bright light of the sun. people and things are more or less perfect copies of ideal forms whose boundaries are unambiguous and immutable.

Eclipse of the mother, of the place (of) becoming, whose non-representation or even disavowal upholds the absolute being attributed to the father. he no

longer has any foundation, he is beyond all beginnings (p. 307).

"Sensation-ideas" or anything hearkening back to man's foundation in mother-matter and sense-experience that respected no boundaries, would threaten the logic of the same. To maintain the self/other relationship of separateness where loss of the mother no longer poses the threat of loss of self, experience must conform to fixed categories. A woman, due to her different relationship to her origins, is capable of a different kind of language. When she is not co-opted by masculine speech she has a different way of speaking.

Hers are contradictory words, somewhat mad from the standpoint of reason, inaudible for whoever listens to them with ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand. For in what she says, too, at least when she dares, woman is constantly touching herself (Irigaray 1985b, 29).

The self that motivates the 'I' of feminine speech, due to that self's different relationship to the primordial self of mother-fusion, is not bound by the same need to repeat the same relationship of self and other in layers of narcissistic identifications. Rather than translating that primordial self into the Symbolic network of positions via the transformation rules of analogy and resemblance, she is "constantly touching herself." Identification with an image outside of herself doesn't give her the contact she craves. What she wants is the pleasure of connectedness, the spontaneous response of her body to sensed experience that defies all categorization. Since her identity doesn't depend

on the logic of the same, she uses words differently. The self that motivates her speech is a self with less respect for the paternal law. it therefore makes less difference to her whether or not she upholds it, whether or not her words make "sense" according to the socially sanctioned Symbolic code. her self is closer to the narcissistic self of the unconscious--the self that remembers mother-fusion and connectedness, a self that refuses to accept Symbolic substitutions. Instead of repeating a self/other relationships that hearkens back to a precipitation of self in mother/fusion she no longer remembers, she wants to feel again the physical response of her body to an other or to the discourse of her Other that would reevoke such forgotten responses. When the 'I' translates this self into the Symbolic, it is not with the intention of finding that self's position in the larger network of social positions. The feminine intent is that of representing the spontaneous response of the body to a concrete situation in order to give it a local position with respect to other such responses she may have had.

It is unclear why Irigaray thinks that woman's relation to her origins is different from that of a man's. if both precipitated a primordial self in fusion with a woman, then the origins for both would seem to be the same. From her discussion of the male denial of his origins in "Plato's Hystera" Irigaray would seem to grant this. And yet woman is coerced through submission to the Symbolic order to abandon

female desire and a peculiarly female relation to origins. On a Lacanian account, what makes women different from men is the different position they take with respect to the phallus. Each has to resolve the crisis of the castration complex, but the way of resolving that crisis will differ. On Irigaray's account, woman would already seem to have a different relation to the mother. Because she is unable to represent this relation due to being coerced into playing man's "delirious double" by the Symbolic order, she doesn't know herself the way a man does (Irigaray 1985a, 141). She is denied the economy of representation that would reflect female desire and sexuality. This suggests that female desire and sexuality is essentially different from that of a man's. Although some have argued that Irigaray is not advocating an essentialist view of sexual difference, there are certainly strains in her work that can be given an essentialist reading. Unless some explanation is given of why a girl's relation to her origins is different from that of a boy's one could gather from Irigaray's valorization of female genitals (two lips--the sex which is not one [18]) that sexual difference is based in anatomy. That is, that one has specifically female desire and sexuality due to having female genitals.

The limitations Irigaray points to in the male position are important ones. There are equally debilitating limitations to the female position as Irigaray depicts it. If wielding phallic power involves defining social

relationships, the it's about time women wielded more of that power themselves. If all of us were to take Irigaray's advice, we might experience more of the female jouissance that eludes our grasp from the male position, but we would also have no more power than before. I see no point in valorizing either position over the other. We need to articulate the female position, and to explore the possibilities for that position blocked by the male one. It is my belief that doing so will get us past the impasse that both Lacan and Irigaray leave us with--that is, how to make sense of female subjectivity.

If we read Irigaray in light of Lacan's Symbolic and Imaginary realms, we can find a way of accounting for the difference in male and female desire that is contingent upon the position one takes up with respect to the phallus--regardless of one's anatomy. This leaves open the possibility that not only are both positions open to both, but that they remain open throughout one's life. Both men and women have had the experiences necessary for taking up either position--whether those experiences have been relegated to the unconscious or not. Thus, the question becomes one of why women tend to develop a different strategy for maintaining the self in the face of loss of mother-fusion and what that strategy is.

Chodorow gives us some clues as to why a girl's relation to her mother would be different from that of a boy's that allow us to avoid a biological explanation. While there are

some problems with using her work to fill out Irigaray's story due to differences in their theoretical frameworks, it can be done. In the next section I will discuss Chodorow from this perspective and offer my own view of a female position--one that doesn't problematize the possibility of female subjectivity in the same way that Lacan and Irigaray do. By theorizing sexual difference as a difference in strategies with respect to the problem of subjectivity, as opposed to a difference in anatomy, I hope to pave the way for examining how a conflict in strategies could manifest itself in philosophical texts.

3.4 Chodorow: Woman as Nurturer

Nancy Chodorow, in her book, The Reproduction of Mothering (1978), uses object relations theory in the attempt to answer the question of how women today come to mother. Chodorow is by training a sociologist. her perspective on psychoanalysis and object relations theory is thus that of an outsider using psychoanalysis to answer a question that concerns her as a sociologist. By raising the question of how women come to mother, Chodorow not only opens the question of how the nurturing qualities of the primary caretaker of children is reproduced, but of how women as a gender are socially reproduced with the personalities requisite to mothering, in contrast to men. Thus, the question of the gender difference of selves is introduced,

and the question of the material conditions for the creation of gendered selves becomes important. [19]

That there are two genders and a sexual division of labor point to two kinds of subjectivity, two kinds of possibility for selfhood. Thus far, men have been privileged in cultural accounts and manifestations of self--at least in the dominant discourse. Taking mothering as a legitimate expression of self and exploring the conditions that allows this kind of self to evolve is a step toward opening up other possibilities of selfhood. As long as the male self is taken as the paradigm of selfhood proper, we lose sight of the fact that the masculine self is only one possibility for selfhood--and not the only one. The feminine self as a socially reproduced gender, that is, a socially created category, is a self deserving of a richer and more appreciative account. Women are not "failed" men, but human beings with selves that tend to be socially constructed in a way that is systematically different from that of men. Chodorow's book is one attempt to account for the material conditions of that difference in the context of the family where it is first produced.

According to Chodorow's reading of object-relations theory, the mother acts as an external ego for the infant, providing holding and nourishment. In the earliest stages the infant doesn't experience the mother as separate and uses defensive mechanisms such as introjection to retain primary identification. "Separateness during this early period

threatens not only anxiety at possible loss, but the infant's very sense of existence" (Chodorow 1978, 60).

The self originates in the inner physical experience of body integrity, and the demarcation of that body from the object world. This demarcation is achieved, as we saw in our earlier discussion of Winnicott, through frustration. As the infant is confronted with the mother's failure to anticipate and satisfy its every need, anxiety spurs the development of ego capacities.

The infant internalizes representations of aspects of its mother to counter the anxiety of frustration. It comes to define aspects of its self in relation to these representations. Since the mother must help the child achieve separation, she also evokes the child's ambivalence. The process of separation and individuation thus provokes frustration and anxiety in relation to the mother that the infant must cope with if it is to achieve a stable sense of self.

Chodorow suggests that preoedipal experience is likely to differ for boys and girls. In addition to resolving the castration crisis differently, girls have a different relationship to their mother. This difference is based on the mother's unconscious attitudes toward her same-sex offspring. "A woman identifies with her own mother, and through identification with her child, she (re)experiences herself as a cared-for child" (Chodorow 1974, 47). A mother is more likely to experience her daughter as an extension of herself.

Thus, she discourages her daughter's process of separation and individuation. On the other hand, she is more likely to emphasize her son's masculinity in opposition to herself, thus pushing him to individuate at an early age.

Both girls and boys develop a deep personal identification with the mother during their early years. The girls can maintain continuity with this identification based on daily, on-going, concrete contact with someone who is the same sex as themselves. Boys must replace this early identification with a masculine one. Because fathers usually work outside the home the concrete nature of their day to day activities is a mystery. The boy must identify with a fantasized masculine role. This often leads him to define masculinity as that which is not feminine or involved with women. He tries to deny primary identification with the mother by repressing the feminine inside himself, and by denigrating and devaluing whatever he considers to be feminine in the outside world. The development of a girl's gender identity doesn't involve this kind of rejection of her primary identification with the mother.

Feminine identification is based not on fantasied or externally defined characteristics and negative identification, but on the gradual learning of a way of being familiar in everyday life, and exemplified by the person...with whom she has been most involved. It is continuous with her early childhood identifications and attachments (Chodorow 1974, 51).

Furthermore, taking the father as her primary love-object doesn't mean the girl completely rejects her mother. In

fact, she usually continues her relationship of dependence upon and attachment to her.

The care and socialization of girls by women ensures the production of feminine personalities founded on relation and connection, with flexible rather than rigid ego boundaries, and with a comparatively secure sense of gender identity (Chodorow 1974, 58).

Because the mother was also a girl, she tends to grow up without establishing adequate ego boundaries or a firm sense of self. This leads her to experience the same boundary confusion with her daughter that she experienced with her mother.

These object-relational differences, and their effect on defenses, splits, and repressions in the ego, better explain the important differences in masculine and feminine personality and the important aspects of feminine personality that emerge from the oedipus complex than does the more conscious and intended identification with the same gender parent (Chodorow 1978, 114).

What I take Chodorow to be suggesting here is that from the start, male and female infants learn different ways of handling the emergence and maintenance of self according to the different problems in separating from an opposed-sex or same-sex primary caretaker, in addition to unconscious attitudes of the mother to the different sexes.

The Lacanian reading of psychoanalysis emphasizes the linguistic aspect of the unconscious, thus suggesting that the unconscious is accessible in our speech and writing. American psychoanalysis tends to look to empirical data for confirmation of theories about the genetic development of people. Lacanian psychoanalysis looks at linguistic output

to see how a self that is inherently contradictory and fictional is currently maintaining its fictional unity. Chodorow, with her emphasis on genetic development, misses the revolutionary impact of the repressed feminine that Irigaray makes possible through a radicalized Lacanian reading of Freud. For Chodorow, women are finished products of their past--there is a certain closure to the process whereby their selves were formed. In Irigaray's reading of Lacan and Freud, the self is always provisional, always subject to the conflict within it, thus leaving open the possibility for radical change. It is this questioning of the givenness of selfhood--whether one grants an initial formative period or not--that I find exciting in French psychoanalysis.

Chodorow's analysis is an empirical one. She starts with the question of how women come to be psychologically equipped to be mothers, assumes that there is a social/cultural explanation for this, and pulls together the empirical data as theorized by object-relations theorists to explain it. her question is different from the question of how subjectivity is possible. She assumes the self as unproblematic--it is the formation of a particular kind of self in a social context that she is concerned to explain. She is not looking for the divided subject, but looking to explain why the unified subject we have is as it is.

The self that Chodorow describes is determined in early childhood and forever fixed in place. It develops and

matures over time, but this development will unfold in the social setting according to the dictates of the original situation of early childhood. Instead of a system of signifying chains that can result in a whole new configuration of meaning upon the shifting of a signifier, we have a self whose internalized representations cohere into stable patterns. Thus, once the self is developed, it is not threatened with constant disintegration and the notion of on-going reconstitution of the self in each and every meaningful word or act--with its implications for the possibility of self-transformation--is lost.

This may be one reason why there is a pessimistic tone to Chodorow's polemic for change. She advocates co-parenting, and yet if it is women who are psychologically equipped to become (even want to become) mothers and not men, how are we to bring this change about? Although Chodorow reclaims the unconscious as the aspect of Freud that American psychoanalysis has tended to repress, she is still within the American tradition.

Chodorow, however, does something that Irigaray does not. She attempts to give a story about the material conditions under which two initial situations for internal object relations are formed--male and female. I do not believe that Chodorow's analysis can be used as a universal to explain patriarchy. The conditions she describes are those of the nuclear family under capitalism. But given due restraint with respect to its application, Chodorow's work

could illuminate the structures that Lacanian psychoanalysis tries to analyze.

What I'm interested in taking from Chodorow is not that female selves end up being different from male selves, but that a strategy for maintaining selfhood is put into operation differently according to gender--and that this difference in strategy continues to operate throughout one's life. The interesting questions here are the material conditions under which one initially creates a self--and how those conditions still have ramifications in the way that we recreate ourselves in the on-going process of being selves. Irigaray talks about the repressed feminine, but Chodorow fills out the picture of how that repression is first set into motion--and why it is that if anyone can speak the feminine it is more likely to be a woman.

Developing Chodorow's work to bring it in line with the theory being developed here, we can characterize the male and female solutions to the problem of separation and individuation as two different strategies. Both males and females have to deal with the anxiety of loss of mother-fusion. Our characterization of the male and female positions à la Irigaray gave us some clues as to how these strategies differ. Chodorow allows us to fill out the picture further by giving us some clues as to why and how the girl's relationship to the mother and her origins differs from that of a boy's.

The male position: Due in part to the mother's unconscious attitudes towards him, the boy is pushed toward individuation. Not only does the castration complex confront him with the no of the father, but the mother has already been discouraging symbiotic fusion. In the situation of fusion, two become one in the communication of body-sensation that leads to the fusion of desire for the pleasurable body state of both. Due to the mother's attitude toward an opposed-sex child, she is less apt to prolong this situation. She assumes the separateness of her child from herself at an earlier stage of his development--and thus assumes that the child's desires will be different from her own. She stops expecting the child to pick up on her body-cues as intensely and starts expecting that he'll become more difficult. His desires will no longer seem as accessible to her, or vice versa; she will expect less fluid communication along with increasing conflict in the relationship. With the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the boy will take his position as "having" the phallus. The more subtle communication of fusion already having been discouraged, he will be quick to take up the compensation offered him--identification with the father who upholds the Symbolic order.

Due to the abstract nature of a boy's masculine identity, the male position as we have already laid it out is natural to him. He is more comfortable building up layers of narcissistic identifications in keeping with the logic of the same because he's not entirely sure what masculinity means.

The concrete, body-based contact with his mother is with a woman--the opposite, inferior sex. His experiences of her and mother-fusion cannot, therefore, be validated. Instead he must come to distrust his body-based self and turn to the abstract positions of being as laid out by the Symbolic for guidance. He must "be a man" and learn how to get an other to give him the recognition he needs to repeat his self/other pattern. Because he cannot allow connectedness reminiscent of fusion with his mother or other women, he adheres rigidly to the transposition of the same self throughout the conventional network of meaning encoded in language.

The female position: The mother sees her daughter as the same sex as herself. It is therefore more likely that she will continue to see her as an extension of herself. Instead of pushing her away, she will continue to act as if she and her daughter are one--one organism, communicating body-sensation instantaneously via subtle cues, with one desire. She not only continues to expect that her desires are one with her daughter's, but that her daughter will continue to conform to her desires. Thus, instead of breaking fusion entirely, another kind of connectedness is developed that is reminiscent of the intense body-based communication of symbiotic fusion. To compensate for the loss of fusion the boy learns the strategy of obtaining recognition from others that fit his self/other pattern. The girl compensates for her loss by maintaining connectedness with others. Both feel terror at the prospect of finding

themselves helplessly dependent and alone, cut off from the source of nourishment and the origins of self. The male strategy involves relying on the phallic power to obtain recognition to compensate for this break. The female strategy involves transferring the connectedness once only felt with mother to others as well.

In taking on her position of "not having" the phallus the girl accepts that she lacks, that she has been cut off from the mother, that she thus has a nothing waiting to be filled by another. With that acceptance comes a receptivity--an awareness of the other as subject, as desiring, and the desire to fill in one's lack by listening to the other as desiring subject. Accepting that she is not whole, not self-sufficient, mere repetition of the same self in a self/other dialectic based on recognition is insufficient. She wants more, wants to know what another's desire is, what another wants, and to conform to that desire and satisfy it in order to regain the connectedness that she has lost. She is thus receptive to the other that will form her, that will tell her more about who she is by eliciting her desire to conform to his/her desire, to fit. She needs an other to tell her who she is because she admits that she doesn't yet know. When she can anticipate some unarticulated desire of the other, she also learns something about herself, something about where she fits, due to the response within herself such satisfaction evokes.

Symbolic layers of identification are stripped away in fusion-experience, leaving only the actuality of the moment, of allowing a reciprocity to form that transcends all labelling, all attributes that define one, all signifying chains that conform to paternal law and one's position as laid out by that law in the social network. Instead of traveling all the circuits of one's Symbolic layering in order to place the other with respect to oneself à la the paternal law, there is a breakdown of that circuitry that results in fusion, a merging of positions. Instead of the Desire for contact deferred through the signifying chains that determine one's position, there is the pleasure of immediate contact. In the Symbolic each signifier can signify only through the position it takes up in opposition to all other signifiers. In fusion there is contact. Through a heightened awareness of the other that involves minute adaptations to minute signals--signals that involve body movements, tone of voice, gaps and pauses in speech, etc., that all point to the other's desire, what would constitute the other's other, what would feel like a "fit" to the other, contact is made. While the subject thinks he wants to merely repeat the relationships of identity where he was subjected to the law of the father and its rules of substitutiton, actually he wants to get all the way back to the kind of immediate identity he had with the mother. The mother who helped him articulate his desire by anticipating it and giving him what satisfied before he asked for it.

Fusion can occur without the man realizing it since the woman is conforming to his other--he gets sustenance without having to change his identity. When fusion is reciprocal, both are transformed--real fusion occurs as both realize that they both desire the same thing--to conform to the desire of the other and be one as two. Instead of merely projecting an imago, projection of an imago along with allowing oneself to be imprinted with the imago of another is allowed. There is a receptiveness to being the other for another that, when reciprocated, allows one to transform one another's imagoes. The unconscious, the nether side, the other, holds suspended representational chains that work according to the logic of primary process and heterogeneity. Fusion-experiences allow new meaning to emerge in a different manner than the logic of the same. Instead of translating the self through repetition, transformation is allowed that doesn't overwhelm all meaning structures through mutual shaping--each bouncing off the other, thus mutually grounding one another. Instead of a fixed anchor point for one who repeats a self-representation, there are two beams orienting one another without the need for a fixed anchor. Self-representations become mutually adapting.

In the unravelling of identity layers through careful, reciprocal attention to the imago projected upon you, the patient looking for the point of contact, the point where two imagoes can merge, fusion can occur without destroying self-identity. A point of contact is found where space for new

meaning is made. If too much new material is released from the unconscious then chaos would ensue. But in the space of Imaginary fusion mutually bounded by the Symbolic layers of the other's other, only enough new material is released to become what another desires. Patterning of the logic of the same is maintained, but the self is transformed in the fusion with another's desire.

Just as the extreme of the male position assumes the imposition of a same self onto an other, the extreme of the female position assumes the complete conformity to that position of other. It is this position that Lacan describes. Irigaray fills out what that position means in a more positive way, without being able to make female subjectivity much more plausible. On her view, woman as woman is still unable to make herself understood. [20] I have used Chodorow, with her description of the female sex as the sex with "permeable ego boundaries," the sex that operates on the basis of relatedness rather than opposition, to fill out Irigaray's story in light of two strategies--male and female. I think this can be extended to finding a way of envisioning female subjectivity--a female subject who can articulate female desire and female sexuality. Given that women learn language, that they are subjects--if imperfect ones--who operate according to the logic of the same of language, then the question is, how is their use of the Symbolic different from that of a man's. Irigaray has given us some clues, but

she takes the extreme of the female position as her point of departure. Using Chodorow's notion of connectedness, we can see female subjectivity as a different position with respect to the Symbolic--one that allows the kind of Imaginary fusion that the extreme of the male position cannot tolerate. Thus, the description of fusion-experience I give above is not necessarily of an experience that is and must forever remain ineffable. Rather, such experience involves the ability to suspend the Symbolic as a complete and closed system of signifiers, in order to articulate experience locally--in a way that may contradict and even wreak havoc with the broader realm of positionality.

The female subject who wants the power denied the mute feminine of Lacan's or Irigaray's characterization, in addition to being the other for another, wants her desire taken into account as well. In addition to being shaped by the desire of the other, she wants the other to be shaped by her own desire. She wants a receptivity to her desire, an attentiveness to her other that will allow her to see her reflection as well. Connection is made in the mutual overlap where each is stretching equally, reciprocally transformed, in order to fuse desire. Thus there is a merging of subject and object. One feels both that one is the other for the other and that the other is one's own other. In the space thus created new meaning can arise--room is made in the suspension of old categories for new categories and patterns to form. In the playspace, the rules of the Symbolic order

are suspended and traveling along the path of the logic of the same isn't required.

The process doesn't require a human other. It can happen any time the subject relinquishes the position of imposing objectivity on the other, and allows the object the status of subject--that is, allows the "object" to set the boundaries on meaning. The subject allows herself to be shaped by the object--repetition of self-representations is suspended in order to merge with the object-as-subject. Thus, one's own self of repetitive identifications is left behind, allowing the backlog of unconscious representations not yet brought into the self-system [21] to be activated by the object. The kind of process described in the mirror stage continues throughout life, but not--as Lacan would have it--as a mere repetition, a build-up of layers--but in a build-up of fusion-experiences as well where we are affecting and influencing through connectedness who we are.

Both Lacan's version of the Imaginary and Irigaray's downgrading of the function of the logic of the same need modification. Both the Imaginary and the Symbolic are equally crucial in the maintenance of subjectivity. The Symbolic order is composed of signifying chains that have been exchanged and communicated over the social network of individuals. Adhering to these chains, guaranteed by paternal law that says no to fusion and so insures their stability, thus guarantees stable identity. The nether side of meaning threatens this order and subjectivity. This

netherside is the storehouse of representations that don't fit the current Symbolic order. To lose these meanings would be death, to unleash them would overwhelm. Imaginary fusion recognizes them without having to incorporate them into conscious meaning structures or the Symbolic. The female position allows for a different order of meaning, one that might conflict with the Symbolic order. It allows for a suspension of disbelief, for the nonjudgmental merging of two into one that requires a reciprocal shaping on the part of both in order to fit one another and make contact. This requires a suspension of the Symbolic order--not a "you are like (or unlike) me" but a "I am you and you are me" that takes place simultaneously; an oscillation of perspectives that finally ends in merging both without losing either. The Symbolic holds together representations in patterns that relate them in particular ways--relationships where they are laid out in time and space. The Imaginary suspends such relationships, allowing an "irrational" fusion of representations. The Symbolic sorts things out according to "reason," the Imaginary operates according to more local positionality. It can thus hold representations simultaneously, in a fullness that doesn't overwhelm because no attempt is made to sort it out.

3.5 Self-Construction and the Production of Meaning: Take III

Since both men and women are "castrated", what men project onto the other (woman) to maintain their own unity

gives us a clue to the difficulties that we all face in trying to be subjects. Women are also subjects who have had to develop another strategy to maintain subjectivity. There are structural differences between a quintessentially "masculine" vs. "feminine" perspective. We can characterize the difference as involving a different relationship of the Symbolic to the Imaginary. The quadrature that Lacan describes is that of masculine identity. A "feminine" quadrature would place more emphasis on the Imaginary, allowing fusions to take place that would subvert layering of narcissistic identifications in the Symbolic. We can thus link the "masculine" perspective to the self-strategy that defers satisfaction through the Symbolic chain we discussed in chapter two. In turn, we can link the "feminine" perspective to an alternate self-strategy that seeks fusion-experience.

The theory of self developed here has given some reasons for why a female strategy of creating and maintaining a sense of self might be different from that of a male self-strategy. The problems presented to the female child were different problems necessitating different solutions. One aspect of this difference is reflected by the kinds of experiences that are repressed as inappropriate to the self-image one is attempting to construct. That we can delineate two gender-linked self-strategies in this way presents interesting questions for meaning-productive activity such as the activity of writing theory. One question is how congenial

theoretic language is to the expression of the repressed "feminine." Another question is how this "feminine" realm of experience threatens to emerge and subvert the works of the men who are represented in the philosophical tradition.

Woman as other represents a category that stands in for aspects of experience repressed by both men and women, but particularly by men. This repressed material constitutes a threat to the constitution of selves and to the social order as we know it. And yet repressed material that needs release does get represented through symptoms. A reading of a philosophical text that examines its gaps and contradictions, its blind spots and repetitiveness, what the text says as opposed to what it does, is a reading that attempts to "psychoanalyze" the text. How one positions oneself in one's production of meaning is motivated as much by the need to continually reconstitute one's identity as by the need to communicate information to one's reader. Thus, these gaps and contradictions can be read as conflicts in self-constitution. Such a reading assumes that the self is not a coherent unity, but that any self that is presented on a conscious level is subverted by the unconscious in a way that threatens its very existence.

By attempting to articulate fusion-experiences and a female position that does enable subjectivity, I have delineated a position that contradicts the male one. If, then, a text attempts to speak from both positions, it is bound to run into problems. It will seem contradictory and

"irrational" from the perspective of "correct," i.e., male, theorizing. Fusion-experiences have been relegated to the unconscious and woman in order to preserve order. Through the building up of Symbolic meaning in a social context individual experience is given meaning and selves are formed that can take effective action. If too much of the concrete experiences that evade such meaning structures at any one time were not filtered out via the unconscious, chaos would ensue. To lose these experiences on the other hand would impoverish life, leaving us only abstract categories with nothing to fill them. Fusion-experiences proved a means for releasing some of this unconscious meaning into conscious meaning structures. Women, being less attached to paternal law, are more apt to enjoy these fusion-experiences that tend to subvert the Symbolic order.

The male position involves denying fusion-experience--even though it was through such experience that their primordial selves were formed--and instead takes flight into the Symbolic through the repetition of self in transposition that rigidly avoids fusion. Fusion-experiences have to be denied due to the male fallacy that they are self-sufficient--the phallic whole that is desired by woman because he is whole while she lacks. If her were to uncover his own lack, to confront the fact that he isn't the phallus his mother lacked, and he certainly isn't whole, but in fact is confronted with lack himself, he would face loss of identity. He would be threatened with mother-engulfment and chaos since

the male position involves assuming that the self he had with the mother is his own self (which illusion he maintains in repetition of the self/other dialectic). Women who know they lack, are less threatened by the notion that they are only whole selves in relation to others, that it is in connectedness that they are whole.

An impasse between the two kinds of self-strategies can be shown in the symptoms of a text that speak to what can't actually be said due to the limitations presented by gender categories. Aspects of the text can speak from the female position, thus pushing against the confines of the male position, only to cave in at certain pressure points. Looking at the text's version of 'woman' and the 'other' gives some idea of just how much in the way of fusion-experience the subject signified in the text has relegated to the other. One of the "lures," of the me is 'woman'--not women themselves, but the various ways that women are perceived. Lacanian theory gives us a way of understanding how talk about the other can be revealing of ourselves and our strategies of self-constitution--the repetition of identity fixations that we use to maintain our self-identity. What philosophers say about women can be shown to be more indicative of their own intrasubjective experience than any real truth about women. Woman as other, then, is a particularly interesting category for understanding how these men constitute themselves--the fixations that they repeat, and the aggression that any threat to these fixations

unleashes. This in turn can allow us to analyze what these fixations are trying to veil--the truth that an analysis of the gaps in the text can reveal. Thus, if the identity constituted by a text pushes against the boundaries of the male position, the extent and content of that pushing will be limited by the particular version of 'woman' (which according to Lacanian theory and Irigaray is an unspecified category from the male position that takes the form of male fantasy) which the text represents.

In the next chapter I will explore this interpretative strategy with examples from the work of three male philosophers who take up different versions of a male self-strategy.

NOTES

[1] Although I think psychoanalysis and Lacanian theory has explanatory force for patriarchal, capitalist societies in the Western tradition I will not make "universalizing" claims about its explanatory force for two reasons: 1) I want to avoid imposing my story about the self upon individuals who don't feel it speaks to their experience, in keeping with the feminist sensitivity to experiences that may be alien to one's own (see chapter one, section 1.5) and 2) I think any story about gender is subject to continual change and revision over time since gender categories are social constructions rather than categories based on essential differences between men and women.

[2] In addition to Freud's depiction of the male path to selfhood as the norm (see my discussion of Irigaray's critique of this view in section 3.2), women have been and still are denigrated for being less "developed" than men. There is a long tradition of this kind of denigration in philosophical literature (see Osborne 1979, Mahawald 1978, and Okin 1979) as well as in other forms of culture (literature, popular culture, religious institutions, etc.).

[3] The key works I will be dealing with in the following expositions of Irigaray and Chodorow will be Irigaray's Speculum and This Sex Which I Not One (Irigaray 1985a; 1985b) and Chodorow's The Reproduction of Mothering (1978).

[4] "Disguised as reflections on the general conditions of man's Being, the philosopher's thinking depends for its effect on its specularity (its self-reflexivity); that which exceeds this reflective circularity is that which is unthinkable. It is this kind of specul(ariz)ation Irigaray has in mind when she argues that Western philosophical discourse is incapable of representing femininity/woman as other than as the negative of its own reflection." Toril Moi on Irigaray (Moi 1985, 132).

[5] "...for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men. Their super-ego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men." From "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes" (Freud 1963, 193). I will discuss Irigaray's critique of this bias in Freud's thought in section 3.2.

[6] See Mitchell's "Introduction--I" and Rose's "Introduction--II" in Mitchell and Rose (1985), as well as the essays by Lacan on feminine sexuality that are gathered in this book.

[7] See, for example, Mitchell and Rose (1985) and Ragland-Sullivan (1986, chapter five).

[8] Also, see gallop (1982, 22): "So the man is 'castrated' by not being total, just as the woman is 'castrated' by not being a man. Whatever relation of lack man feels, lack of wholeness, lack in/of being, is projected onto woman's lack of phallus, lack of maleness. Woman is then the figuration of phallic 'lack'; she is a hole."

[9] In the following discussion the male position is derived from the exposition of Lacan given in chapter two and the female position is derived from my earlier discussions of Lacan as well as discussions of 'woman' in Lacan from the following sources: Benvenuto and Kennedy (1986, chapter 10), Freeland (1986), Gallop (1982), Lacan (1975), Mitchell and Rose (1985), and Ragland-Sullivan (1986, chapter 5).

[10] "There is no such thing as the woman since her essence...she is not all" (Mitchell and Rose 1985, 144). Also see Ragland-Sullivan (1986, 297), Gallop (1982, 23) and Irigaray's "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Always Been Appropriated by the 'masculine'" (1985a, 133-146).

[11] Benvenuto and Kennedy make the following comment on Lacan's notion of woman's jouissance (enjoyment): "She has a surplus of enjoyment which cannot be integrated into language, unless it is placed under a prohibition, such as the law of castration. Might the woman, who after all does not risk much when faced by the threat of castration..., be partly exempt from the pursuance of this law?" Also see Freeland (1986) on this point. We will find that Irigaray picks up this notion of female pleasure in positing a logic different from the male "logic of the same" (see section 3.2).

[12] According to gallop (1982, 43) Stephen Heath starts his article (Heath 1978/79) "by informing us that 'Encore, Lacan's 1972/73 seminar (is) devoted to "what Freud expressly left aside, the Was will das Weib? the What does woman want?'" Of course, to devote a seminar to this question implies that Lacan thinks he knows the answer to this, but strangely enough, he's not interested in encouraging women themselves to speak on the subject. For more on this point see Freeland (1986).

[13] Cynthia Freeland, in "Woman: Revealed Or Reveiled?" criticizes Lacan for holding a romantic view of woman and comments that "Lacan leads the way not to women who voice their heart but to women who embrace their inability to do so, rejoicing in their own mysteriousness" (1986, 69).

[14] For more on women as objects of exchange, see Irigaray's "Women on the Market" (1985b, 170-191).

[15] In addition to Irigaray's Speculum (1985a), also see "The Power of Discourse" (Irigaray 1985b, 68-85). Also see Toril Moi's discussion of these concepts (Moi 1985, 131-143).

[16] See Speculum (Irigaray 1985a) *passim*, and "Cosi Fan Tutti" (Irigaray 1985b, 86-105).

[17] See "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" and "The "Mechanics" of Fluids," both in Irigaray (1985b), as well as "Any Theory of the "Subject" Has Always Been Appropriated by the "Masculine"" in Irigaray (1985a).

[18] "Woman "touches herself" all the time, and moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact. Thus, within herself, she is already two--but not divisible into one(s)--that caress each other." From "This Sex Which Is Not One" (Irigaray 1985b, 24).

[19] See my exposition of Harding's account of feminist gender theory in section 1.4 for a reiteration of this point.

[20] "I can thus speak intelligently as sexualized male (whether I recognize this or not) or as asexualized. Otherwise, I shall succumb to the illogicality that is proverbially attributed to women. All the statements I make are thus either borrowed from a model that leaves my sex aside--implying a continuous discrepancy between the presuppositions of my enunciation and my utterances, and signifying furthermore that, mimicking what does not correspond to my own "idea" or "model" (which moreover I don't even have), I must be quite inferior to someone who has ideas or models on his own account--or else my utterances are unintelligible according to the code in force. In that case they are likely to be labeled abnormal, even pathological."

[21] See footnote [10] of chapter two.

CHAPTER 4

SELF-CONSTITUTING ACTIVITY IN PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS:

THREE EXAMPLES

4.1 Introduction

According to one common sense approach to the nature of the self, I am a unique individual with a relatively coherent and unified world-view that I continually refine and correct as incoming "facts" require. Thus, I might think as a child of five that it's the car rather than the driver who knows how to get to where we want to go, but I learn by the age of ten that if the driver doesn't know the directions we'll get lost. I'm the same individual at ten that I was at five, but I know more about myself and the world I live in.

This view of the self posits me as a substance whose attributes, such as bodily appearance and items of knowledge, may change over time, but who endures from the moment of my birth (or some arguable point in time in the womb) to my death. As a child I have relatively primitive categories in which I arrange the incoming data provided by my senses. These categories become more refined (allowing a more nuanced break-down of data) and more sophisticated (with respect to cross-referencing of data) as one becomes older. At five, cars are in the same category of animate objects as cats and dogs and human beings; at ten, they've been moved into the category of inanimate objects manipulated by people. This view of the self assumes that my knowledge of the world will build in a systematically meaningful way--that a subject who

endures throughout time will orient herself with respect to the world which is the object of her knowledge and desire.

One feature of existentialist philosophy is an emphasis on concrete lived experience as opposed to the abstract categories in which we organize and generalize our particular experiences. On this view the self as an enduring substance is cast into doubt--my self is no more than an abstract category I use to organize the whole range of experiences that seem to belong to me. The concrete particularity of experience that can't be contained within our categories becomes threatening since it implies that there's always an excess, as supplementarity, of existence that we can't account for. If there is no enduring substratum to ourselves, if we're no more than the series of concrete experiences located in a body that continually changes, then who are we? What kind of stability and coherence do we have? What kind of meaningful action can we take?

In the face of a growing awareness that we don't have the immediate access to either the world or ourselves that we thought, philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre struggled with the question of who we are and what makes our lives meaningful. With the emphasis of the concrete particular over the abstract came an emphasis on the self as action, rather than a self whose actions are mere attributes of an enduring substratum. The self came to be seen more as an on-going process than as a thing that

processes. As such it was less clear where the self ended and the world began.

Where does the self end and the world begin if the abstract category of 'self' is no more than a construct we invent? How do we distinguish a subject that is a process rather than an entity out of the flux of experience? Instead of a fixed subject processing input, we are faced with the prospect of a self that is no more than a continuous stream of sensation on the verge of melting into a vast sea of sensations--a subject without background, with no means for distinguishing her own outline in a chaos of bodily sensations. In such a chaos there can be no inner or outer, the ability to reflect upon a stable image that provides one a centering point is lost, and subjectivity is swallowed in a ceaseless flood of sensation that is neither controlled nor directed.

The old dichotomies of subject/object and self/other are thus brought into question. In the texts of these existential philosophers a new kind of subjectivity struggles to emerge--a subjectivity that sees itself as the creative process of constituting a self from a superabundance of sensation; a self that is always in question, always contingent, always on the verge of disintegration; a self that cannot be taken as a given but which must be continually chosen; a self that must be held accountable for the choices it makes in choosing itself. But in the struggle to articulate a new kind of subjectivity that leaves behind the

category of substance in order to affirm itself as continually becoming, old categories are used as landmarks. To stabilize a self that might otherwise be threatened with complete extinction, thus rendering human agency impossible, each of these philosophers ends up reaffirming the very subject/object dichotomy that he had been in the process of undermining.

In the last two chapters I have developed the notion that there are two, gender-linked strategies that take two different approaches to the problem of how to organize self and a world out of a chaotic range of sensations. I suggested that one strategy made the abstract categories of a socially sanctioned Symbolic order primary, while the other strategy made the pleasure of connectedness with an embodied other primary. I suggested that in a culture where psychoanalytic theory has explanatory force, the former strategy could be characterized as "masculine" and the latter strategy could be characterized as "feminine." [1] My characterizations of the two strategies have drawn upon the Hegelian idealist tradition as well as a psychoanalytic theory (i.e., Lacan's) and feminist theories that make use of that tradition. Whether these characterizations apply equally well in all situations for all philosophical traditions is a question that I leave open. What I want to explore in this chapter is whether or not the theory of gender-linked self-strategies that I have thus far developed could be brought to bear in an interesting way on

philosophical texts also based in the Hegelian tradition. Attempts to subvert abstract categories in favor of a connectedness that defies self/other dichotomies could thus be read as attempts to more fully incorporate a feminine self-strategy into one's theorizing, while reversions to self/other dichotomies could be read as the effects of a masculine self-strategy.

I have thus far given a polarized version of the difference in two gender-linked, self-constituting strategies. Due to the correlativity of self and world argued for in chapter one, groups of people with fundamentally differing self-strategies will live in different worlds--that is, they will have a different perspective with their own epistemological standpoint. Thus, self-constituting activity is also world-constituting activity. In addition to grounding the emergence of differing self-strategies in the child-rearing practices of Western society, psychoanalytic theory opens up the possibility that we all have both self-strategies available to us. Since masculine identity is the "norm" for full-fledged personhood in Western society, it is the feminine self-strategy that is culturally devalued. We have seen, in chapter three, how this cultural devalorization and the masculine need to repress the primordial self of mother-fusion encourages repression of possibilities for a different kind of self-strategy. Self/world-constituting activity continually strives to make sense of a chaotic array of

sensations and symbolic input. For the theorist who attempts to enlarge his perspective to include as wide a range of his lived experience as possible, it is likely that the alternative, "feminine" self-strategy will be brought into play, and that this alternative self-strategy will create problems for his masculine identity.

In the last two chapters I have delineated masculine and feminine self-strategies. In this chapter I will give examples of male and female positions from which a text can speak. That is, taking the production of theory as a self-constituting activity as well as a meaning-reproducing activity, we can say that the "voice" of a text is situating itself with respect to a whole network of social positions. In the last chapter I characterized what such positioning might mean when it comes to gender. Having characterized "masculine" and "feminine" self-strategies that position one as male or female in the social hierarchy of positions (Lacan's Symbolic order), we can give a philosophical text a gender-sensitive reading. By "gender-sensitive" I mean a reading that will highlight how gender categories inform both the position from which the text speaks (the self the speaking 'I' of the text puts forth) as well as the theoretical perspective the text presents. Given my assumption, taken from Lacanian theory, that any speaker of language is "decentered," I assume that there is no one position from which the 'I' of the text speaks, and that the text will manifest "symptoms" that speak to conflicts in

positioning. "Symptoms"--gaps, contradictions, puzzles--of the text can be read as a conflict between the position from which the 'I' attempts to speak and unconscious forces that undermine or subvert that position. We should be able to resolve some of the puzzles these symptoms present--i.e., explain their presence in the text--by analyzing the gender categories put forth by the text, and by examining the puzzle in light of a conflict between two kinds of self-strategies.

The kind of reading I am proposing here is "deconstructive" [2] in the sense that it focuses on gaps and contradictions in the text rather than assuming textual integrity and explaining away contradictions as mere aberrations in what is presumed to be a coherent whole. It is not deconstructive in the sense that it attempts to explain those contradictions via a coherent theory. That is, I want to explain the "symptoms" of a text in a way that will render them intelligible via a theoretical framework that the author himself lacked. Thus, rather than proliferating the possible meanings of the text into infinity with no way of valuing one interpretation over another, I want to interpret symptoms of the text in light of the broader project of understanding how gender informs our identities and our perspectives as theorists.

On the view being put forth in this dissertation, writing theory is both a self-constituting as well as a meaning-producing activity. In addition to communicating meaningful content to the reader, a text tells the story of a

subject in communication with him or herself. Both positions that I outline here are positions taken up by the text with respect to the other (the reader) and the Other (the site of representations of lived experience not incorporated into the conscious self-system). We can trace the strategy a subject utilizes in positioning him or herself with respect to the reader as well as with respect to his or her unconscious by examining the text that that subject has produced. The two positions I delineate here are related to polarized versions of two self-strategies that I have argued are gender-linked at least in social contexts where psychoanalytic theory can be said to have explanatory force.

Generally speaking, our examination of these two self-strategies has led us to the following schematic rendering of the two positions:

"Male": The speaking 'I' or grammatical subject of the text is positioning itself in keeping with two constraints. On the one hand what is articulated needs to make sense according to socially sanctioned codes. On the other, a self with some sort of continuity needs to be continually reconstituted. On the Lacanian view discussed in chapter two, this means that in addition to stringing together words in a way that will have some significance to other members of the speaking community, the 'I' is motivated by the 'me' to retain self-continuity and self-coherence. The primordial 'me' is the ego originally precipitated out of identification with one's primary caretaker. A male self-strategy maintains

continuity with this ego by seeking objects that will confirm his self by repeating past self-other patterns. that is, the 'me' is looking for the lost "objet a" that is associated with the lost mother of mother-fusion. Through a complicated series of substitutions this lost object of primordial fusion with another has been translated via cultural codes into objects of current desire.

The child originally learned to compensate for the loss of mother-fusion by using symbols to fill in for that loss, and by coming to desire the desire of the other. The boy, being of the sex that is not castrated, had, or rather would inherit, what the mother wants--the phallus, primordial signifier of desire. He can be, or hope to one day be, that which doesn't lack, and therefore that which can fill in his mother's lack. The gaze of the other is the gaze that desires him, the gaze that confirms him as self-sufficient and whole. As upholder of the paternal law, he is entitled to cultural substitutes for the lost mother, the other that originally reflected him back to himself. To maintain self-continuity he will find cultural substitutes that will reflect back a self in keeping with the self of mother-fusion. This means that the speaking 'I' will always be positioning itself with respect to an other that will provide the 'me' with the kind of recognition that it craves, the other that will confirm the same self by repeating a past self-other pattern. Such a self-strategy assumes that the self is self-sufficient--if it weren't, it couldn't be what

the mother desired. This self, being self-sufficient, must deny any dependence on the other and posit the other's gaze as only affirming what is already there--the same, self-sufficient self. For this strategy to work, objects of desire must conform to the other of the subject's self-other pattern. This positioning of self with respect to an other may take many different forms via complicated translation in keeping with Symbolic codes, but the 'me' will strive to maintain the same relationship between self and other.

From this position there is reverence for and rigid adherence to what Lacan calls the Symbolic order--socially accepted categories that generalize and universalize experience. The motivating force of the self-strategy associated with this position is the desire to repeat self/other positioning. Here, one seeks to position oneself with respect to an other within socially sanctioned codes in a way that retains associations with the self formed in mother-fusion. That is, one seeks cultural substitutes for the other originally played by mother that are sanctioned by paternal law within the Symbolic order. The speaking 'I' of the text will position itself with respect to others explicitly or implicitly referred to in the text, to the reader as other, and to the subject's own Other--the unconscious. All such positioning will abide by pre-established categories of the Symbolic order.

"Female": Since the girl is already castrated and therefore doesn't have the same need to deny dependence on

another, she has a different self-strategy open to her. Her relationship to her primordial self assumes that it took two to make the pleasure of mother-fusion possible. Since the paternal law doesn't guarantee her objects to fill in for the lost mother in the same way it does for a boy, she tends toward another kind of compensation. Instead of needing to affirm the same self by finding an other to reflect back a self that she recognizes, she seeks to re-experience the pleasure of mother-fusion. She admits her dependence on the other and remains in a state of receptive responsiveness to the desire of the other. Thus, rather than seeking cultural substitutions for the lost mother in keeping with Symbolic codes, she seeks contact with an other that may require her to violate both the demands of the 'I' that would produce meaning in conformance with Symbolic codes, and the 'me' that would add the additional constraint of conformance to past self-other patterning.

From this position there is a relative lack of regard for the Symbolic order. The socially sanctioned categories which encode experience are subverted, if need be, in deference to a spontaneous response to the specificity of experience that eludes those categories. The subject speaking from this position tends to subvert the Symbolic order--she is more concerned with maintaining responsive attentiveness to the desire of the other than she is with "making sense". What she attempts to communicate will have significance to the specific other she addresses, but this

significance will take the form of shared pleasure with an other rather than positioning with respect to an other in the Symbolic order. The specific others she addresses are the others explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the text, the reader as other and the subject's own Other--the unconscious. Rather than repeating past self/other positioning via social sanctioned categories, the speaking 'I' will attempt to break down categories in order to respond to the other's desire to be recognized/reflected in all his/her specificity.

These characterizations represent two extremes. To follow out the effects of gender categories in a particular text we can examine the specific content the theorist gives to the category 'woman.' 'Woman,' on the Lacanian view, is an empty category filled in by man. [3] She is man's other, what he is not, she who can affirm his self-sufficiency. What he projects onto her is often what he feels he himself cannot be and still be a man. It can thus give us clues as to the particular form the gender categories of the text take.

The "male" and "female" positions I characterized very generally above will be filled out differently by different theorists according to their particular gender categories. Taking the above characterizations as two ends of a continuum, each theorist will be able to conceive of a range of positions in between that will fall under his categories of "male" or "female." The two self-strategies I have

described in a polarized, mutually exclusive form thus turn out to have varying degrees of overlap according to the gender categories that inform a text. That is, I have argued that both self-strategies are available to both male and female persons. How far one can go in conceiving of a man using what I've called a "female" self-strategy or vice versa, and how far one can go in conceiving the possibility of a person who makes full use of both self-strategies, will hinge on the conceptual barrier posed by one's gender categories. How a particular text fills in the category of 'woman' can give us a clue as to where that conceptual barrier for a given text is. This, in turn, can help explain why the attempt to use two self-strategies in a text ran into conflict due to the need of the speaking 'I' to maintain a masculine identity.

I have picked a specific text to focus on for each philosopher to underline the particular way I am linking gender, identity and the production of meaning. I am not trying to psychoanalyze the author of the text--the flesh and blood philosopher who if put on a couch might free-associate far beyond the confines of a particular text. What I am doing is taking a particular text as a particular attempt on the part of the flesh and blood philosopher to both create a self and produce meaning. It is thus the particular identity put forth in the particular production of meaning of a text that I'm interested in. And it is how gender affects this identity and the content of the text that I want to examine.

One could, of course, then correlate the various identities put forth in the various texts of a given author--do all those identities speak from the same position? what factors play into any shifts in position that may occur from text to text?--but for the purposes of this dissertation I will put those problems aside.

For each text I look at I have broken my analysis down into four parts. In the introduction I lay out what I see as the male and female positions of the text--places where the 'I' of the text is using a masculine self-strategy and where it is using a feminine self-strategy--according to the general characterizations of these two strategies given in chapters two and three. This means establishing the particular philosopher's terminology for what I take to be his version of what Lacan calls the Symbolic order, and the "feminine" forces that threaten that order. In the second part, entitled "The puzzle," I lay out the puzzle presented by the text that I want to address. The puzzle will be some problem in the text that challenges our notion that the text was written by a completely unified, rational subject whose intentions and motivations were transparent to him. Rather than explaining the puzzle away as an aberration in order to argue for what the author "really" meant to say, I will use the puzzle as an indication of conflict in the position from which the 'I' of the text attempts to speak.

In the third part, entitled "'Woman,'" I lay out what content the text gives to the category 'woman.' This will

help us to locate the conceptual barrier presented by the particular form gender categories take in the text that prevents the incorporation of the two extreme positions we have characterized into one. I leave it entirely open whether or not we ever could incorporate the two positions entirely (thus leading us beyond gender distinctions entirely?), but I am interested in how far a particular text goes in using both self-strategies and where use of the feminine self-strategy is curtailed due to gender categories.

In the fourth part, entitled "The positions," I make use of the analysis of the text's category 'woman' to fill out specific content of the two positions and their self-strategies according to the particular gender categories of the text. I then explain the puzzle described in the first part as a conflict in these self-strategies. The use of a feminine self-strategy, despite "unconscious" forces that come out in the symptoms of the text, must be curtailed in order to maintain a "masculine" 'I'. Thus, although this feminine self-strategy continues to exert effects (the symptoms of the text) it cannot be incorporated into the self put forth by the speaking 'I.' I then make some suggestions about what kind of self and what kind of theoretical content might have emerged as a solution to the puzzle if the conceptual barrier presented by the particular gender categories informing the text had been broken down.

What I am trying to get at with this kind of reading is how our gender categories affect our identities and our

perspective in the world. Do philosophical texts espouse timeless truths that are gender-neutral, or does the presence of a male-identified voice create certain limitations in perspective that we can articulate and explore?

Characterizing an alternate self-strategy to the typical "male" strategy of our traditional views of theory allows us to release the repressed "feminine" of a text. My contention is that if we took an alternative approach that valued contact and fusion rather than translating desire into the Symbolic, our approach to our own identities and to language would be different. This alternative could then be seen as having a logic of its own just as valid as the male logic.

The following explorations of particular texts written by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre are not meant as a definitive response to the question of how gender categories inform the production of meaning. They are meant, rather, as initial forays into possible approaches to philosophical texts that could take this question into account. I am using these "gender-sensitive" readings as examples of how the account of self-constitution I developed in chapters one, two and three could be applied in the interpretation of philosophical texts. Perhaps the most "radical" claim of my reading is that the theoretical content of the text might have been different if the speaking 'I' had not been motivated by the need to maintain a masculine identity. Once released from the conceptual barrier of the text's gender categories, further development of a line of thought in the

text that was unavailable to its author becomes more apparent. To highlight this particular perspective, I have chosen to relegate references to pertinent secondary literature to footnotes. I believe the interpretations I give here can be supported and complemented by other interpretations extant in the literature. Since my concern with gender categories, however, is not in keeping with most of that literature, I will restrict the main body of my text to clarifying the kinds of questions and insights a gender-sensitive perspective might elicit.

4.2 Kierkegaard: FEAR AND TREMBLING

Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship is particularly interesting in light of my project. In taking on various authorial personae Kierkegaard tries on, and discards, various positions in the spectrum of male positions. In doing so he is underlining the active positing that goes on in taking up any position. In the leap that can come only from a personal decision made in the concrete setting of a particular situation, one takes up a position in the aesthetic, ethical or religious spheres. [4] Kierkegaard does not refer to this positioning with respect to gender categories. But by looking at one of the personae he takes on in light of our discussion, we can relate his positioning with respect to his spheres of human existence to our positioning with respect to the extremes of the male and female positions. [5]

In what follows I will place Johannes de Silentio, the pseudonymous author of Fear and Trembling (Kierkegaard 1983), in the spectrum of male positions. I will look at his position as a rendering of a male position pushing against the gender barrier. Although the whole question of the relationship of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works to himself is an interesting one [6], I am here interested in what I will take to be an exploration of a possibility in male positioning.

Silentio's perspective in Fear and Trembling is that of an ethical man with enough understanding of the religious sphere to attempt to articulate its perspective. [7] He is thus striving to articulate a perspective that he knows is beyond his own. The exact nature of the relationship between the perspectives of the ethical and religious spheres is debated in the literature on Kierkegaard, but it is generally agreed that Kierkegaard considered the religious perspective more "advanced" than the perspective of the aesthete or the ethicist. To approach this perspective beyond his own Silentio makes use of two terms that we can correlate to our polarized schema of male and female positions. First, there is the "universal"--the universal, socially accepted categories that encode values and communicate experience in a way that is readily understood by other members of society. [8] This term can be correlated to Lacan's symbolic order--both concern socially accepted categories of thought to which members of the society must defer in order to position

themselves with respect to others. The ethical realm, for Silentio, is the realm in which one situates oneself with respect to others in regard both to one's ethical responsibility and to one's production of meaning. [9] This can be compared to Lacan's use of the term "Symbolic order" to refer both to a hierarchy of social positions that involve taking up certain responsibilities to others who occupy other positions in that hierarchy, as well as to the order of language and the communication of experience. [10]

Second, there is the "paradox of faith"--a movement of faith that takes one out of the ethical sphere into a religious realm where the categories of the universal can be suspended due to the demands of faith. This constitutes taking up what I call a female position. That is, the person in this position will defy Symbolic categories in the concrete context of a relationship with another. This paradox can take one not only beyond the duties encoded in the universal, but can take one beyond language itself as socially acceptable categories become inadequate for expressing the experience of the religious person in this paradox. We can correlate this terminology to "feminine" forces that defer to concrete relationships and experiences that cannot be captured in the general categories of language.

Silentio himself, of course, does not qualify these terms with adjectives like masculine or feminine. What I hope to show in the following pages is that correlating his

terminology with two gender-linked self-strategies in this way in light of an examination of his category of 'woman' will help us resolve a puzzle in this text in an interesting way.

The puzzle: In Fear and Trembling Silentio discusses the paradox of faith in the context of the story of Abraham and Isaac. In this story God commands Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Abraham proceeds to do so, only to be reprieved by God at the last moment. [11] While most accounts of the story emphasize Abraham's willingness to obey God's incomprehensible demand [12], Silentio emphasizes the double movement of Abraham's faith. Not only does he resign himself to Isaac's death in obeying God, but "by virtue of the absurd" he never stops believing that God will keep his promise of making him the father of nations through Isaac.

Silentio repeatedly says that Abraham's movement of faith is beyond him: "I cannot make the movement of faith, I cannot shut my eyes and plunge confidently into the absurd" (p. 34). He can only marvel at Abraham's greatness without making the movement himself. To help us, his readers, do the work of understanding just how great Abraham was, he presents some poetic sketches in the Preliminary Expectoration and in Problema III that intimate the incomprehensibility of Abraham's faith. None of the stories are meant as analogies to Abraham. They are told "only in order that in their moment of deviation they could, as it were, indicate the

boundary of the unknown territory" (p. 112). In these sketches Silentio explores the difficulties of relationships that would take one beyond the universal of the ethical realm. The single individual has the ethical task of annulling his singularity in order to express himself in the universal that applies to everyone (p. 54). Asserting himself in his singularity before the universal is a sin. The impulse to do so puts the individual into a spiritual trial "from which he can work himself only by repentantly surrendering as the single individual in the universal" (p. 54). In each sketch a lover feels the impulse to defy the universal due to a relationship with a loved one. [13]

Why is it that Silentio digresses in order to give a series of sketches of unconsummated male/female relationships before returning to his discussion of Abraham's God-relationship? One could respond that the comparison of love-relationships and God-relationships is a "natural" one due to its history in the Christian tradition and due to the deeply personal nature of such relationships. But in the context of my concern with the importance of the other to self-constituting activity, Silentio's use of these sketches to intimate Abraham's faith bears further attention. First, there is the series of self/other, lover/beloved relationships that Silentio abandons one by one with no solution. A God-relationship is the only one with a solution to the problem of connection--even if Silentio still despairs of understanding how such a connection was effected. In his

struggle to understand a position (i.e., the religious one) beyond his own, he struggles to understand positions vis à vis embodied others that are also beyond him. What kind of struggle with respect to his own self/other positioning is Silentio engaged in here, and why is it only in the context of a God-relationship that he can articulate the successful connection of a self (i.e., Abraham) with an other (i.e., God)?

Silentio, in his insistence on the lack of analogy between these sketches and the story of Abraham, wants to put the God-relationship in a class by itself--it is only in the context of a God-relationship that a suspension of the ethical is justified. But the puzzle of why Silentio chose these particular sketches to help us understand Abraham, remains. I will argue that Silentio's reading of gender categories makes it problematic for him to conceive of taking up the feminine position with respect to anyone except God. On the one hand, he wants to move away from the masculine position of appealing to fixed categories as the ultimate justification for meaning and action. On the other hand, he cannot allow the chaos that would result if those categories were permitted to crumble. He is thus caught in the dilemma of wanting to maintain both positions at once. He does this by maintaining a masculine position with respect to other human beings, and positing the possibility of a feminine position with respect to God. If his gender categories had not prevented him from doing so, the kind of connectedness he

posits in a God-relationship could have been posited in connectedness with other human beings as well. This kind of connectedness, in turn, could allow new meaning to be translated into the universal that could result in social change.

In the rest of this section I will present five sketches from the Preliminary Expectoration and Problema III with the following questions in mind: When does Silentio feel that the impulse to assert singularity against the universal is justified? and How do the male/female relationships he looks at relate to Abraham's relationship to God?

The situation of the sketch in the Preliminary Expectoration is as follows:

A young lad falls in love with a princess, and this love is the entire substance of his life, and yet the relation is such that it cannot possibly be realized, cannot possibly be translated from ideality into reality. (p. 41)

Silentio doesn't say why the relation can't be realized. He only says that upon examining the conditions of his life, the thoughts the lad convenes and scatters come back and "explain that it is an impossibility" (p.42). The lad is thus presented with the dilemma of desiring something his rational understanding tells him he cannot have. [14] Not being a "frog of the swamp" he doesn't merely give up his love, but undertakes the movement of infinite resignation.

In this movement he concentrates "the whole substance of his life and meaning of actuality into one single desire" (p.42). This focuses him so that his soul isn't dissipated

into multiplicity. [15] He will recollect his love in pain, but his infinite resignation will reconcile him with existence:

His love for that princess would become for him the expression of an eternal love, would assume a religious character, would be transfigured into a love of the eternal being...(p.43).

Although his desire is denied fulfillment in actuality, the knight of infinite resignation makes consummation possible by expressing it spiritually. Thus, the "desire that would lead him out into actuality but has been stranded on impossibility is now turned inward" (p.44). From this point onward it no longer matters what the princess actually does, although if she too chooses to become a knight of infinite resignation these "two will in all eternity be compatible" despite the failure to actually consummate their relationship. [16]

If the lad were to make the double movement of the knight of faith, he would make the additional movement of affirming that he would get the princess by virtue of the absurd. The absurd lies beyond the proper domain of the understanding. It defies human comprehension:

So I can perceive that it takes strength and energy and spiritual freedom to make the infinite movement of resignation; I can also perceive that it can be done. The next amazes me, my brain reels, for, after having made the movement of resignation, then by virtue of the absurd to get everything, to get one's desire totally and completely--that is over and beyond human powers, that is a marvel. (pp.47-48)

Silentio presents this sketch to give a concrete example of the difference between the knight of infinite resignation

and the knight of faith. The movement of the former he can follow, it is the movements of the latter that bring us to the border of the unknown. The lad of the sketch loves a princess that he cannot have. He feels the impulse to defy the universal since it thwarts his desire. Having the spiritual strength of a knight of infinite resignation, however, he submits his singularity to the universal and renounces his love, only to give it expression in spiritual inwardness. Thus, he converts action that would defy the universal into spiritual expression that leaves the universal untouched.

It is only once this movement involving submission of the individual to the universal is made, that the further movement of faith could justify the suspension of the ethical that would allow actual consummation of the relationship. But since such a movement defies rational understanding or any attempt to communicate its justification in words, Silentio can only marvel at the possibility. The knight of infinite resignation demonstrates his spiritual power by refusing to give up his love at the same time that he adheres to his ethical task of remaining within the universal. In exercising this power he has, however, gone beyond the ethical by developing a spiritual inwardness that allows him to maintain the love denied him by the universal. Thus, his love for another has led him to assert his singularity by taking a first step in achieving a relationship with the absolute that is higher than the ethical. It is not until he

can make the movement of faith that the lad is able to translate his impulse into the universal by marrying the princess, despite the fact that according to his rational understanding such a union is forbidden.

This relationship of the knight of faith to the princess intimates Abraham's relationship to God. Just as the lad manages to translate his love for the princess into actuality by virtue of the absurd, so does Abraham translate his love for God by believing God will keep his promise. Both put the relationship with another above the universal, believing that the connection with the other would be consummated despite all rational evidence to the contrary. It is in the context of this relationship that they assert the singularity of their experience against the universal that mediates individual existence in society. Silentio grants that if the lad were a knight of faith, he could have the princess in actuality, but he can't himself conceive such a happy ending. We will see in the four sketches of Problema III that he continues to explore the assertion of singularity against the universal within the context of male/female relationships. He will increasingly emphasize the difficulty of determining when one is justified in consummating a relationship that brings one in conflict with the universal. In the first ideal case of the Preliminary Expectoration, Silentio assumes for the purposes of illustration that the knights described actually make the movements of infinite resignation and faith that justify asserting singularity to varying degrees. In

the sketches I will now explore, the individual's justification will be more problematic.

In the first sketch of Problema III:

The bridegroom, to whom the augurs prophesied a calamity that would have its origin in his marriage, suddenly changes his plans at the crucial moment when he comes to get his bride... (p.89)

The bridegroom must decide what to do. To remain silent and get married would be an offense to the girl since she would never assent to an alliance that would cause him harm. To remain silent and not get married would also be an offense against the girl. Ethics demands disclosure of the individual; it therefore demands that he speak. [17] If the pronouncement of the augurs was public property he could speak because the suspension of his commitment to the girl would be superceded by a higher ethics. Everyone would be able to understand that the consummation of their relationship had to be viewed in light of the higher ethical consideration of a divine sign. To be silent in such a case would be to place himself as a single individual higher than the universal, and so to forsake the individual's ethical task to "work himself out of his hiddenness and to become disclosed in the universal" (p.82).

If, however, the will of heaven had come to his knowledge privately, then he could not speak. In being put into a purely private relation to the will of heaven he would have been placed as the single individual in an absolute relation to the absolute (p.93). Here again we approach the

unknown territory of the paradox in the context of a male/female relationship. The groom wants to consummate his love for the bride. The will of heaven would seem to frown on the union. The groom's impulse is to gratify his desire. This could mean defying the universal (if the information came through an augur) or it could mean complying with the universal at the expense of his relation to the absolute (if the information was private knowledge).

In the sketch of the lad and the princess the question was how to make the ethical relative to the absolute. It was assumed that both knights had some sort of relationship to the absolute. But this relationship could not obviate the need for a relationship to the ethical. Justification of asserting oneself against the universal could come only after submitting to the universal and making the movement of faith that put one in an absolute relationship to God. In this sketch we have the additional problem of one's ethical commitments to others. The groom has already pledged he would marry the bride. It is thus not merely a matter of consummating his love, but of a promise made to his beloved. It would put him outside the universal to break such a promise unless there is a higher ethical consideration that supercedes that promise. [18] If, however, the information was private knowledge, then doing his duty to the absolute places him outside of the universal. he cannot hope to make the singularity of his experience understandable, and the bride will feel wronged. This gets us closer to Abraham's

dilemma whose faith put him outside the universal when God requested what was, in ethical terms, murder. Here a relationship with the absolute puts the groom in conflict with a relationship that is in the ethical.

In the second sketch, a merman sees Agnes standing on the shore and wants her as booty. That is, he wants to seduce her and make her one of his conquests--"he cannot give himself faithfully to any girl, because he is indeed only a merman" (p. 95). He calls to her and elicits what's hidden in her. She "trusting with all her soul,...gives herself to the stronger one" (p.94). Because of the power of her innocence--the absolute confidence with which she entrusts her whole destiny to him--he is crushed. He cannot seduce her; he can never seduce again. Instead he struggles with repentance and his desire for Agnes. Due to his guilt about having wanted to seduce Agnes a love-relationship with her is outside of the universal. Agnes fell in love with him in all innocence, thinking that he loved her. The merman agonizes over what to do. Silentio lists some alternatives opened to him. [19] 1) He could tear Agnes's love away from her by belittling her and making her love ludicrous. He would remain silent about his anguish at treating her thus with the assistance of the demonic, putting himself as the single individual higher than the universal:

The demonic has the same quality as the divine, namely, that the single individual is able to enter into an absolute relation to it. This is the analogy, the counterpart to that paradox of which we speak. (p.97)

2) He could return to the universal, becoming a tragic hero by speaking and crushing Agnes with the knowledge that he could never make her happy. 3) He could remain in hiding (e.g., by going into a monastery) and hope that Agnes would be saved by taking an absolute relation to the divine. Or, 4) he could be saved by Agnes, become disclosed and marry her. For the last option he would have to have the spiritual power to make the movement by virtue of the absurd after having made the infinite movement of repentance (p.99).

Silentio assumes that the lad and the groom share the desire to carry out the ethical task of translating themselves into the universal. [20] Their dilemma is how to go about that task and when that task should be suspended in the interests of an absolute relation to the absolute. [21] Here Silentio adds the dimension of guilt. The merman is guilty of wanting to seduce an innocent girl and take her outside the universal--for he had no intention of making the ethical commitment of marriage to her. Her loving trust that he is good and will keep them within the bounds of the universal disarms him. [22] He feels guilt and tries to find a way to right his wrong. [23] She fell in love with him in all innocence. The ethical way to translate that love is marriage. But marriage means disclosure of his guilt which could crush her if he doesn't have the spiritual power to first make the movements of repentance and faith.

The merman comes to realize that his original impulse to seduce Agnes was wrong. He repents having wanted to take

Agnes outside of the universal. He wants to save her, even though he's not sure he can save himself. Saving the both of them, and in addition consummating their relationship, seems to him (and Silentio) a miraculous act. Thus, just as God moves Abraham to assert his singularity against the universal in a relation to the absolute, Agnes moves the merman to assert his singularity by consummating a love within the universal when he is outside of it.[24] Both Abraham and the merman would defy rational understanding by asserting their experience of connectedness with another against the universal that denies comprehensible translation of that connectedness. If Abraham were to disclose his singular experience in the universal he could only say "I'm murdering my son." If the merman were to disclose his experience he could only say "I'm seducing her." The difference between the two is that Abraham was originally in the universal and the merman outside of it. But both are faced with the dilemma of when it is justifiable to consummate a relationship that requires asserting oneself against the universal.

In the third sketch,

The young Tobias wishes to marry Sarah, the daughter of Raguel and Edna. But his girl has a tragic background. She has been given to seven man, all of whom perished in the bridal chamber.
(p.102)

The evil demon who loves Sarah has killed all seven of her previous bridegrooms on the wedding night. Due to no fault of her own, Sarah has been "defrauded of the highest

bliss...unlimited, unbounded, uninhibited devotedness"

(p.103). She has been unable to give herself to a lover and unable to express herself in connectedness with another in the universal by getting married (p.106).

Silentio says that although many would say Tobias was the hero of this story for having the courage to brave the danger of the evil demon, he thinks Sarah is the hero:

what love for God it takes to be willing to let oneself be healed when from the very beginning one in all innocence has been botched....What ethical maturity to take upon oneself the responsibility of permitting the beloved to do something so hazardous! What humility before another person! What faith in God that she would not in the very next moment hate the man to whom she owed everything! (p.104)

Despite the fact that a situation beyond her control has placed her outside the universal, making it impossible for her to consummate a relationship, she is still willing to let herself be "saved"--to receive the love of another in all humility trusting that that love would bring her back within the bounds of the universal.

While Silentio grants this to be a heroic act in a woman, he seems to feel that it would be even more problematic for a man:

Imagine Sarah to be a man, and the demonic is immediately present. The proud, noble nature can bear everything, but one thing it cannot bear--it cannot bear sympathy. In it there is a humiliation that can be inflicted on a person only by a higher power, for he can never become the object of it by himself. (p.104)

The man who chooses the demonic closes himself up within himself. Instead of translating himself into the universal,

mediating himself into the idea of society (p.106), he remains silent, hidden, undisclosed. He is lost in the demonic paradox in which he takes an absolute relation to the demonic. People such as Sarah are in the paradox by virtue of being set outside the universal by nature or a historical situation:

they are by no means more imperfect than other people, except that they are either lost in the demonic paradox or saved in the divine paradox.
(p.106)

Due to being outside the universal and the difficulties for translation this poses, they feel the impulse to assert their singularity by taking a relation to the absolute. They could refuse translation, remaining undisclosed to any other including God, thus losing themselves in the demonic. They could also make an infinite movement that maintains their singularity in spiritual inwardness at the same time that it submits them to the demands of the universal, and then through the movement of faith be saved in an absolute relation to the divine. In the latter case, it would be due to a belief in connectedness with another that defies rational understanding that they would be brought back within the universal. In Sarah's case, it is her humble willingness to receive love from a man despite the knowledge that she is outside of the universal, that allows her to believe she could be saved. Although, in imagining Sarah as a man, Silentio seems to be saying that this kind of receptivity to a human other is also possible for a man, he qualifies this

with the notion of the demonic. If Sarah had been a man, it is much more likely that he would become demonic and refuse to disclose himself.

In Abraham's case, it is the same humble willingness to receive love Sarah shows to a man that Abraham shows to God that allows him to believe God will keep his promise despite his violation of the universal in murdering his son. As in the last sketch, both Abraham and Sarah defy rational understanding by putting connectedness above the universal. Again, the difference between the two is that Abraham was originally in the universal while Sarah was outside of it. This time, however, it is not due to sin but due to circumstances beyond her control that Sarah is outside the universal. Thus, there is an even closer parallel in the dilemma faced by both of asserting connectedness above the universal.

In the fourth sketch, Silentio introduces his version of Faust, "the doubter (par excellence), but he has a sympathetic nature" (p.108). The security and joy men live in are not grounded in unreflected bliss rather than the power of the spirit. Thus, Faust, as a doubter, is able:

to rouse men up horrified, to make the world totter under their feet, to split men apart, to make the shriek of alarm sound everywhere (p.109)

But due to his sympathetic nature:

he remains silent...he tries as much as possible to walk in step with other men, but what goes on inside himself he consumes and thus brings himself as a sacrifice to the universal (p.109)

Because doubt has destroyed Faust's actuality for him, and because he would rather remain silent in order to sacrifice himself to the universal than throw everything into disorder, he does not tell Margaret of the love he feels for her. Margaret is innocent. To express his love in the universal he would have to disclose himself. This he cannot do without wreaking havoc with the universal, due to his doubt. If he remains silent about his doubt, ethics condemns him for evading the task of translating his hiddenness into the universal. He can only get authorization for his silence by becoming the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute. To do this he must make his doubt into guilt.

Here we have a man who is tempted to defy the universal neither due to sin or to circumstances. Faust is in the throes of an infinite passion that pushes him beyond it. The question here is whether or not he can justify expressing his doubt and thus pushing others beyond the universal as well. Since the ethical demands disclosure, it would seem he must speak. But if he can make his doubt into guilt and make the infinite movement that would both maintain his singularity in spiritual inwardness and submit him to the universal, he could get authorization for his silence.

Faust's relationship with Margaret is less at issue in this sketch than the others we've looked at. But here again, the question is of connectedness versus the maintainence of the universal. Consummation of a relationship with another

would mean disclosure of his doubt. Such disclosure would not only put him outside of the universal, but would put the other outside of it as well. Making an infinite movement would authorize his silence by putting him into an absolute relation with the absolute, but it would also make consummation of a relationship with another human being impossible. Here again we approach Abraham's dilemma. Abraham maintained connectedness with God, but at the expense of his ability to communicate with the human beings closest to him about what he was doing. Abraham's God-relationship justified the suspension of the ethical, but by virtue of the absurd, by his faith in God, Abraham believed he would be brought back within the universal. With the substitution of the ram for Isaac, God did. Without such assurance that only the divine can give, Silentio seems to imply, it is better to be silent.

In all the sketches I have looked at, the lovers have agonized over how to justify action that puts oneself or another outside of the universal, the ethical standards that one can rationally understand as being applicable to all. Silentio grants the possibility of such justification in only one case--the context of a God-relationship where one will be brought back within the universal by virtue of the absurd. That is, in humbly receiving love from an often incomprehensible God, one opens oneself up to possibilities for being brought back within the universal beyond rational understanding.

In the following section I will briefly comment on the category of 'woman' that emerges in these sketches. This will orient us for a discussion of the male and female positions of the text laid out in the next section.

'Woman': Silentio makes no general comments about 'woman as such,' but by looking at the position of the five women of the sketches we will be able to establish the parameters for the conception of 'woman' at work in Fear and Trembling.

In the sketch of the young lad and the princess woman is seen as a focusing point. The lad's love for the princess becomes the "substance of his life" (p.42). If the lad is a knight of infinite resignation or a knight of faith (as opposed to a slave of the finite), he will "have the power to concentrate the whole substance of his life and the meaning of actuality into one single desire" (p.42). Thus, it is desire for a woman that gives the lad the focus necessary for making a movement of the infinite that will promote his spiritual growth. In the following sketch, the bride awaits her groom in maidenly modesty and humility as he agonizes over whether or not to tell her about the calamity prophesied by the augurs. The merman elicits what's hidden in Agnes, thus enticing her to entrust her whole destiny to him in absolute confidence (p.94). Sarah has the humble love for God that allows her to love the man willing to let her give herself to him despite the danger presented by the evil

demon. Faust views Margaret in "all her adorable innocence" (p.109).

In all the sketches the woman is the focal point for the man's agony in deciding whether or not the relationship should be consummated. The woman, in her love for the man, surrenders herself to his decision. She is innocent, or at least more innocent than the man. He evokes feelings in her, and she responds without reflection. She is prepared to receive the man's love without any agonizing over whether or not consummation of the relationship is outside the bounds of the universal. And she will accept the man's judgment about such matters without question--despite the pain it may cause her. The man has full responsibility for making an ethical judgment about the appropriateness of consummation. He will weigh her pain in making his decision, but finally it is up to him to decide. Thus, the 'woman' that emerges from these five sketches is a woman prepared to give herself absolutely to the man she loves. She is also incapable of judging ethical boundaries and depends on the man to guide her behavior in accordance with the universal. This may not be Silentio's final position on 'woman as such,' but we will see that the degree of responsibility each of the men in the sketches we've looked at takes in coming to a decision about the relationship, and his unwillingness to share any of that burden with the woman involved, indicates an inability to take up a feminine position with any but a divine other.

Positions: For Silentio, the duty marriage presents is a weighty one. If one is married, one is bound to disclose oneself to one's wife, and one is also bound to honor the institution of marriage and the social relations that go with it as those relations are laid out in the universal. 'Woman' presumably has an easier time with honoring the commitments of marriage since she is willing to sacrifice everything in love for her husband--she lets him determine the parameters of her commitment, and she trusts that he will set those parameters according to the universal. It is the man's duty to uphold the universal so that his wife can unfold and expand within an appropriate space, one in keeping with the universal. Thus, if he is going to go beyond the universal, he has to do it on his own. It wouldn't be fair of him to subvert her when she was trusting him to evoke responses from her that were in keeping with social parameters.

Although Silentio recognizes a "higher" calling than the universal, each and every subversion of the social categories that make it up must find its agonizing justification in the deep soul-searching of a God-relationship. In such a God-relationship, all one's actions are scrutinized to determine whether one is willfully trying to put the single individual before the universal. It is only if, after submitting oneself to the universal, one discovers that one is faced with an incommunicable ordeal (where the ethical poses the temptation to subvert one's absolute duty to God) rather than

a spiritual trial (where singularity poses the temptation to subvert the ethical), that such a subversion is justified.

To maintain connectedness with God Abraham needed to suspend the ethical. Just as the men in the sketches discussed earlier were faced with the dilemma of confronting women they loved with suspension of the ethical, so did God confront Abraham with suspension of the ethical. The women would have subverted the universal in their love of the men--just as Abraham did in his trusting acceptance of God. The problem for the men was in whether or not they could ask such a thing of their women. And whether or not they could receive new parameters themselves by playing the feminine position with respect to God. In the sketches of Agnes and Sarah, Silentio intimates the possibility that a woman could save a man, just as God saved Abraham. If man could receive woman the way that Abraham received God, he could, perhaps, have overcome the dilemma presented to him by the universal. This intimation is subordinated to the discussion of a relation to the divine, however. And these stories are not meant as complete analogies. They only hint at the difficulty that Abraham faced in accepting new parameters from God that involved suspension of the ethical. Thus, what Abraham could do with respect to God, the merman, or Sarah "imagined as a man" (cf. p.104), perhaps would have liked to have done with respect to their women, but couldn't. That is, they wanted to be able to take up a female position with respect to their women. They wanted to put aside their role

as maintainer of the ethical, and subvert the ethical by allowing the women to play the role of subject to their other. Through trusting acceptance of the other, they could believe that even though the relationship didn't make sense according to the universal, their desire for connectedness would be granted by virtue of the absurd. And she, not being bound by the universal in the same way as he, would, due to her love for him, grant him his desire in connectedness despite the restrictions of the universal encoded in rational understanding.

Silentio's dilemma is that his conception of masculine identity dictates that 'man' can only play the role of other to God. He can't play woman's other since as a man his role is to play subject, to make others his other according to the Law of the Father which he has inherited. The only one who can subvert that Law is God--a greater father who can reteach him the Law according to his dictates. Only to one "higher" than himself can 'man' subject himself as a 'man', and the only one higher than himself is God. Silentio can't support the idea that another human being could provide him with parameters that would subvert his current conceptual and ethical categories and provide him with new, more fitting, categories for the specificity of his experience, because as a man his role is keeper of the law.

Silentio expresses his male allegiance to the Symbolic and his sense of duty towards it, in his characterization of the ethical. One does not subvert the Symbolic without cause.

And the only cause that can sanction the subversion of the Symbolic is God the Father above, the creator of the Law. Thus, he allows for a way of subverting the Symbolic, a way of finding categories more in keeping with the specificity of life, without incurring "disrespect" for the Symbolic, that we will see exemplified in Nietzsche. He grants an irrational element to life in the form of the commands of a divine father. But, in his allegiance to the subjectivity of God, he is not willfully creating new values, rather he is playing the other to God's subjectivity. he is playing the dutiful son. He is obeying God even though in all humility he doesn't comprehend God's wishes. He doesn't expect to be able to understand according to his rational and limited human understanding. Instead he responds with the same faith a woman shows her man when she takes on the form he gives her, conforming to his desire rather than insisting that he take on the form of her desire. In that way she is stretched beyond her own understanding and creates new meaning in her attempts to understand his desire.

On this reading, the paradox Silentio discusses is the receptivity of man to another, the taking on of the role of other by man. The dilemma of all five sketches is that the universal in the normal sense of the word cannot be maintained. New meaning has to be found. The relationship can only be consummated if a new context for it can be formulated. In all these sketches there is something that makes the relationship unacceptable according to the

standards of the Symbolic. In all these sketches Silentio only has contempt for the suggestion that such an anomaly should render the beloved unlovable. Instead one is presented with the paradox of the unsuitability of the lover according to the parameters of the Symbolic, and the question of how a solution is to be found to allow the concrete specificity of the love expression despite the constraints of the Symbolic that forbid it. For the relationship to occur the Symbolic must be subverted. The question is, when is such a subversion justified and how must it be carried out?

In all cases--including Abraham's--it is due to love of another whose desire is not in keeping with that of the Symbolic that one is tempted to subversion. Only Abraham is really justified in subverting the Symbolic. The problem of the others is that they are trying to play God to a woman, they want to subvert an other to leave the parameters of the Symbolic behind. This is not justifiable. In a human to human relationship one or the other must play the subject. And whoever does so must do so in keeping with the Symbolic. Just as a man would have to forsake his role as maintainer of the Symbolic to let a woman save him, so would a man have to forsake that role to let himself conform to God's desire in faith. I would suggest that it is here that Silentio believes the analogy between the sketches and Abraham's faith ends.

In playing the female role with respect to a human beloved, Silentio believes that 'man' would be undermining

himself as a male. This is the only way, however, that he can subvert the Symbolic. He presents us with the intriguing suggestion that the only justifiable way to create new values is in the context of a relationship where one takes on another's desire. But in delineating this way out of complete conformity to the Symbolic, he has to posit this feminine position with respect to another as a relationship with one higher than himself, a Father higher than the Law, one who creates that Law--God himself--before he will allow the possibility of man taking on such a role.

Due to his conception of gender categories and his need to maintain a masculine identity, Silentio has to make the dissimilarities between the situations of the sketches and Abraham's situation more striking than they actually are. Silentio delineates a way of subverting the Symbolic within the context of a love-relationship that would keep the chaos of complete disruption of all universal categories at bay, but he limits his insights in keeping with his need to maintain masculine identity by limiting the possibilities of such subversion to a God-relationship. This limitation destroys the possibility for such subversion within the context of human relationships that respect the concrete specificity of connectedness over the categories laid out by the Symbolic. It also closes off the possibility of translating new aspects of human experience disclosed in connectedness with human others into the Symbolic. As long as one believes one can have one's desire by virtue of the

absurd only with respect to a divine other, the status quo of the Symbolic is safe. What is incomprehensible will remain untranslatable and hence nonsubversive. It is only when such faith is taken with respect to human others that the possibility emerges for generating new meaning in connectedness.[25]

4.3 Nietzsche: BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

For Nietzsche, the concepts we use to communicate our experience and the values by which we live are human creations imposed upon a chaotic flux in order to give ourselves ballast. [26] We can correlate Nietzsche's values and concepts to Lacan's Symbolic order. Life in all its concrete fecundity is a Dionysian chaos that is completely beyond the generalizing scope of language. [27] Here nothing is like anything else and there is no way of distinguishing one "thing" from another. [28] It is only via a system of values and concepts encoded in language that some stability can be imposed upon this chaos and that one can take on both an identity and a position vis à vis other things and other human beings. Unlike Lacan, Nietzsche emphasizes a creative moment in which the will to power subverts old moralities in order to create new ones. [29] Thus, rather than being structured by language in the way a Lacanian subject is, Nietzsche's "free spirit" subverts conventional language in keeping with his will to power.

Thus, we can correlate Nietzsche's notion of the will to power that would defy the Symbolic order to a feminine self-strategy that doesn't prioritize the Symbolic. While the feminine self-strategy I characterized in the last chapter, however, sought fusion-experiences--contact with an other through the fusion of desire--Nietzsche's notion of the will to power makes no reference to desire for contact with an other. It does make contact with the subtleties of experience that would defy conventional categories. In listening with the "third ear" the "free spirit" attends to aspects of experience that a less noble soul ignores in his reduction of experience to that which can be communicated to others. [30] The free spirit attempts to capture this experience in language despite the risk of being misunderstood by, or incomprehensible to, others. he thus puts language at the service of subtle nuances of bodily sensations and feelings rather than ignoring aspects of his experience that don't fit into a preconceived world-view:

Our eye finds it more comfortable to respond to a given stimulus by reproducing once more an image that it has produced many times before, instead of registering what is different and new in an impression. The latter would require more strength, more "morality" (From Beyond Good and Evil, #192 Nietzsche 1968b, 295). [31]

Nietzsche emphasizes a creative aspect of human existence that Lacan tends to overlook, but he cannot finally account for the creation of new meaning he claims is possible. The will to power, being an irrational force,

cannot of itself impose order. [32] If the concepts and values encoded in language stabilize our identities and our world, then the destruction of the old moralities can only lead to nihilism. [33] And yet, the old moralities were, according to Nietzsche, human creations. How could we now go about creating a new, more life-affirming, morality? I will suggest in what follows that Nietzsche took up a female position in Beyond Good and Evil in that he refused to give the Symbolic order the reverence granted it by a more masculine self-strategy. But I will also suggest that it was the inability to assert the alternative strategy of seeking fusion-experience with others that led to his nihilistic conclusions. Nietzsche, like Silentio, feels the need to respond to something in experience that pushes one beyond conventional language. Part of what characterizes a female self-strategy is the need to respond to nuances in concrete experience that defy generalization. Significance is given to these nuances in the shared pleasure that comes from satisfying another's desire. Nietzsche had as much difficulty as Silentio in taking up a female position with respect to an embodied other. Unlike Silentio, however, he had no recourse to a divine Other. His attentiveness to aspects of his experience that eluded categorization thus lacks the parameters set by an other's desire. [34]

Although he could talk of attending to nuances of experience not accounted for in the categories of language, he could not account for how such nuances could be given

meaning. I will suggest that such new meaning that brings new aspects of experience into the self one posits as well as into one's view of the world, can only come about through the responsiveness of an other. For new meaning to emerge, one needs the mirroring response of an other that brings that meaning into the relational structure of the self. That is, a self can only exist in relationship to others, in a position with respect to other selves. This means that the self has meaning only with respect to others, and thus that only those aspects of experience that have some relationship to others can be incorporated into the subject's sense of self. Those aspects of experience that remain unrecognized and unattended to by others will not be brought into the subject's sense of self since it will not relate to the positioning of that subject with respect to others. Once such aspects have taken on meaning for others, however, they also take on meaning for the subject. Thus, meaning cannot be generated in a vacuum since it is the by-product of a positioning process that determines the subject's place with respect to the world.

The puzzle: In Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche wants to push us past the old morality that would oppose good to evil. In Nietzsche's revaluation what is normally considered "evil" is the "free spirit's" "good." The Christian ethic of "all equal before God" and democratic egalitarianism are both aspects of a slave morality that would reduce everyone to the

level of the common man and so prevent the evolution of the human race. To counter this disease, Nietzsche wants us to go beyond the old dichotomy that would label anyone who inspires fear as "evil" (#260). We need to encourage a new type to appear, a higher, nobler man who will create a new, more life-enhancing, morality:

The noble type of man experiences itself as determining values;...it is value-creating....In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow,...the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow (#260).

To prepare the way for this higher man, Nietzsche ("ourselves who are their heralds and precursors, we free spirits" #44), wants to reveal any and all moralities as human creations at the service of the will to power. Far from being a code of unchanging ideals that hold "true" for all time, moralities are sets of concepts and values created by human beings to promote life. [35]

To understand human beings we need to "descend into the depths" (#23) and understand psychology as the doctrine of the development of the will to power. The body is "but a social structure composed of many souls" 'willing is a question of the rank of commanding and obeying within this structure; and morals is "the doctrine of the relations of supremacy under which the phenomenon of "life" comes to be" (#19). One's morality bears witness to who one is by determining "what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to one another" (#6). The strong

spirit will be that spirit who due to his morality is more able to discharge his strength (#13). Rather than splintering his strength in a conflict of competing drives his values will discipline those drives to come together in an upsurge of strength.

Thus, instead of the old dichotomy of good and evil, Nietzsche introduces the new dichotomy of "strong" and "weak." Along with this new dichotomy go the dichotomies of noble/contemptible, higher/inferior and healthy/sick. Nietzsche hopes to prepare the way for a new kind of human being, one who can break the constraints of a morality that has grown too restricting and therefore life-denying. Such a higher man would create the new morality necessary for developing as yet undreamed of aspects of human potential. [36] In the place of the old concepts of good and evil Nietzsche hopes to create if not the new morality, at least transitional concepts and values that will facilitate the evolution of man he envisions.

The puzzle I want to explore here is why Nietzsche introduces these new dichotomies as if they work better than the old dichotomy of good and evil. In what follows I will argue that the dichotomy of strong and weak is undermined by the text. We could say that this is no surprise since Nietzsche is trying to get us beyond all dichotomies. Instead of explaining away discrepancies in his text by positing an author behind the text who "intentionally" undermined himself, however, I'd like to return to the text

itself. In light of my project, an 'I' that confidently proclaims a clearcut distinction between the strong and the weak is also attempting to position itself as a subject with respect to those categories. That those categories shift in conflicting ways speaks to a conflict in positioning of the speaking 'I' of the text. Exploring this conflict in light of the theory of self thus far developed could thus give us insight into difficulties encountered in attempting to move beyond such dichotomies.

By distinguishing between the strong and the weak, the noble man and the herd animal, Nietzsche attempts to distinguish those who represent the higher hope of humanity from those who should be sacrificed to that higher hope. The question is, do these new dichotomies that Nietzsche introduces do the work he wants them to do? I will argue that they don't. In making these distinctions Nietzsche seems to shade his concept of the will to power in different ways. At times the strong manifest a will to power that is a procreative life force that affirms and reveres all life:

the ideal of the most high-spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms with whatever was and is, but who wants to have what was and is repeated into all eternity, shouting insatiably da capo (#56).

At other times the strong manifest a will to power that is an appropriating life force that is intrinsically and inevitably domineering and exploitative:

"Exploitation" does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect and primitive society: it belongs to the

essence of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will to life (#259).

Which interpretation of the "strong" and the will to power we take will have repercussions for our interpretation of Nietzsche's higher man. Can there only be one such higher man--the one who manages to overpower everyone else and is therefore doomed to solitude? Or can we envision a community of higher spirits who can live in peaceful co-existence? [37]

Nietzsche would seem to want the latter. he talks of the reverence in which a noble soul will hold his equals--"it honors itself in them and in the rights it cedes them" (#265)--and ends Beyond Good and evil with an Aftersong that appeals for new friends that he, as a precursor of the higher man, can so revere. But the search for others that are equally "high," "free," or "noble" as himself is fraught with peril. The distinctions he so boldly makes in some places are undermined in others. In contrast to a clear-cut distinction between the strong spirits that will naturally come to command the inferior human beings whose place is to obey, Nietzsche distinguishes a noble soul that needs cleanliness and solitude from the herd that would corrupt him. In an odd reversal it becomes the herd who is strong. The herd have the same words for the same species of inner experiences; "those more select, subtle, strange, and difficult to understand, easily remain along, succumb to accidents, being isolated, and rarely propagate" (#268). This points to a conflict in Nietzsche's thought. The noble

soul is playing a dangerous game. he is a lover of the great hunt who would probe the human soul and its limits, its unexhausted possibilities (#45) and yet, "it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish" (#39). Thus, strength comes to teeter on a fine line between the spirit who can command due to the self-discipline of drives that results in an up-surge of will-to-power, and the spirit who dares to break down his internal ranking of drives to probe the "truth" that he is:

in which case the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the "truth" one could still barely endure--or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would require it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified. (#39)

If one were to probe all the "heights, depths and distances" of the range of inner human experiences (#45) one risks the danger of perishing--losing one's ability to act, one's meaning, one's identity in an overwhelming multiplicity of experience he can no longer control with his fictions. Although we need a new morality more in keeping with the demands of the will to power, in leaving the old moralities behind we run the risk of oblivion. Thus, at the same time the noble soul is strong--strong in his attentiveness to the pulse of life which pushes him to discard old values--he is also weak--weak in his inability to leap up in new strength before destroying his old foundations for action. This weakness makes it impossible for him to command, and turns his health into a sickness that dooms him to solitude. The

noble soul who loves the great hunt and would pass through the "whole range of human values and value feelings" (#211), who would look down from the advantage of this perspective and create new values, is forced into silence. To speak in the words suited for common experiences, the experiences shared by the many, would destroy what was rare, strange and subtle in him. The very pulse of life that moves him beyond those words also proves to be his weakness. In isolation to avoid corruption of his delicate rareness, the noble soul shrinks from contact and awaits the new friends who will strengthen his new and higher perspective in the community of shared experiences.

The question is, how is this community to be formed? Again, we come back to Nietzsche's notions of "strong" and "weak." If the strong spirit is the spirit who creates new values, the spirit who commands, who imposes his values on others, then won't the "true" higher man be the higher man who manages to impose the values he creates upon the rest? if such is the case, then each noble soul must sit in solitude, struggling to create his new values alone, and finally brave the corrupting influences of the common man in the attempt to impose his creations on the world.

I don't think Nietzsche had this vision. And I think he was aware of the conflict at work here. Towards the end of Part Nine the subsections strike a more personal mode. In #278 the wanderer calls out for "Another mask! A second mask!" and in #280 he says, "He is going back like anybody

who wants to attempt a big jump." In the following sections I will explore Nietzsche's concept of 'woman' in Beyond Good and Evil and give an analysis of the female and male "positions" of Nietzsche's text on the basis of our earlier discussion of those terms. It will be my contention that Nietzsche goes a long way toward breaking down old subject/object dichotomies but that his introduction of new dichotomies is an attempt to save the oppositional self-strategy of masculine identity. An examination of his concept of 'woman' will demonstrate how his reading of gender categories relates to this attempt. I will then explore other alternatives he might have taken given he could have freed himself from gender categories entirely and adopted a new self-strategy.

'Woman': Towards the end of Part Seven, Nietzsche devotes eight subsections to "a few truths about "woman as such"" with the stipulation that one keep in mind "how very much these are after all only--my truths" (#231). Throughout his words, Nietzsche goes further in deconstructing the category of 'woman' than either Kierkegaard or Sartre. [38] In the Preface of Beyond Good and Evil he asks "Supposing truth is a woman--what then?" with the implication that the attack he proceeds to make on those who assume there is an absolute Truth waiting to be unveiled and possessed goes for those who would win 'woman' as well. [39] He is thus far from unaware that the role that man would have woman play is

based on illusion. If there is an absolute Truth behind the confusing array of appearances waiting to be revealed, then man has a focus point, a goal by which to orient his search for knowledge. If there is the essential 'woman,' the not-man, behind the veils she hides herself in, waiting to be possessed, then man has the ultimate answer to all that he feels himself to lack. Truth will heal his ignorance, woman will make him whole--the problem was to find them both. Once found they could be possessed and man would finally want no more. On this view, at least man knew what he was looking for and could even measure his progress on the way to his goals. But what if both Truth and 'woman' were illusions, illusions that he himself had invented? Then he is set adrift upon the sea of appearances with nothing to guide him--no goal, no direction, no meaning. [40]

To compensate for the loss of the illusion of Truth as a realm of eternal ideals men could strive to reflect ever more perfectly, Nietzsche introduced the will to power and emphasized man's ability to play the creator himself. [41] The old ideals had always been illusions anyway. We need fictions to orient ourselves and our actions, to organize our drives into a unified upsurge of life. [42] The trick is to compensate for the loss of an anchor in Truth with a new awareness of our will to power and our ability to create the fictions that would best enhance that will to power. What then of 'woman'? Is she free to abdicate from her role as Holy Grail, free as well to play the creator, to create the

illusions that will best serve her own will to power? Yes and no. On the one hand, Nietzsche gives woman credit for having always seen through the illusion of 'woman' and put it to their advantage: "what is truth to a woman?...--her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty" (#232). On the other, to take the next step and discard the illusions given her by man for illusions more to her liking will lead to her degeneration:

As she...takes possession of new rights, aspires to become "master" and writes the "progress" of woman upon her standards and banners, the opposite development is taking place with terrible clarity: woman is retrogressing. (#239)

Because Nietzsche has equal disdain for the scientific man who remains bound by conventional "truths" rather than letting himself go and flowing with the great currents of a free spirit (#206), one could argue that he only wants to make sure woman doesn't do herself the same disservice. But a careful reading of Beyond Good and Evil points to more than that. Not only does Nietzsche not want woman to make the same mockery of herself man already has, he wants woman to continue to play her role of being man's illusion:

Let us men confess it: we honor and love precisely this art and this instinct in woman--we who have a hard time and for our relief like to associate with beings under whose hands, eyes, and tender follies our seriousness, our gravity and profundity almost appear to us like folly. (#232)

And he exhorts man to make sure she continues to play this role:

A man...who has depth, in his spirit as well as in his desires...must conceive of woman as a possession, as property that can be locked, as something predestined for service and achieving her perfection in that. (#238)

In #194 he distinguishes three types of men according to what they take as really possessing a woman. The third type incorporates the first two's signs for "having": 1) the use of the woman's body; and 2) the knowledge that "the woman does not only give herself to him but also gives up for his sake what she has or would like to have"; with : 3) the knowledge that "when she gives up everything for him, (she) does not possibly do this for a phantom of him," because:

He wants to be known deep down, abysmally deep down, before he is capable of being loved at all; he dares to let himself be fathomed.

Thus, a woman's desire for self-reliance is one of the worst developments of the general uglification of Europe (#232) because it is in the best interests of man's will to power that she renounce her own will and desire. It may be an illusion that there is a "something Eternally-and-Necessarily-Feminine" (#239), a "something more refined and vulnerable, wilder, stranger, sweeter, and more soulful...something one has to lock up lest it fly away" (@#237a), but if this illusion is necessary for the development of the higher man, then it is an illusion we should keep.

Again we are returned to Nietzsche's notions of "strong" and "weak." If the higher man is to be a creator of values then to distinguish himself from those inferior to him he

must not only create those values, but impose them on those he has subjected to his will. On this reading of the will to power as domination only the one who imposes his morality will have the opportunity to manifest an upsurge of strength. Those around him--such as women and slaves--must be sacrificed to his superior ability to create and impose on others the values that will expedite his own will to power:

to a being such as "we are" other beings must be subordinate by nature and have to sacrifice themselves. (#265)

It is only when such a being has settled whether or not another being is of equal rank that:

it moves among these equals with their equal privileges, showing the same sureness of modesty and delicate reverence that characterize its relations with itself (#265).

The same problem of determining one's rank with respect to woman arises as did earlier with respect to the "weak." If woman is to be possessed, her desire subsumed by man's, her illusions put in man's service, then presumably she is "weak." She is not part of Nietzsche's "we free spirits." Her reasons for shame (such as superficiality and petty presumptuousness) should continue to be kept "repressed and kept under control by fear of man" (#232). Clearly it is not to her that we look in our watch for the higher man. Thus, to allow her to attempt the creation of values could only lead to retrogression. Woman can and should chase away worries, fathom man's depths, and play into his faith that within her lies concealed a "basically different ideal" that

must be maintained and protected (#239). All these roles are based on illusions that will give him some relief from his struggles and even help him on his way. But only he is capable of the great hunt that will lead the human race to its higher glory. [43]

With this discussion of 'woman,' we obtain some additional clues to the problem of distinguishing the "strong" from the "weak." According to Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power, all who can should, and must, struggle to manifest as much of their will to power as possible--such is life. The only constraints on that struggle are the need to maintain orienting fictions and the mastery of others stronger than oneself. Thus, far from surrendering her desire for the sake of man, woman should be struggling for as much self-reliance and self-mastery as it is in her power to achieve. If man can keep her in his service, then so be it--but to ask her to sacrifice her own will to power voluntarily is not in keeping with Nietzsche's conception of will to power. That is, it is one thing to suggest that the noble souls will come to command due to a superabundance of energy, but it is another thing to suggest that a group of human beings (i.e., women) should prefer to help man find the fictions best suited to his will to power rather than attend to the pulse-beat of her own. Presumably, it is the desire to render such service that Nietzsche is thinking of when he worries about her unlearning her fear of man. "She unlearns her fear of man: but the woman who "unlearns fear" surrenders

her most womanly instincts" (#238); "what is the meaning of all this if not a crumbling of feminine instincts, a defeminization?" (#239).

This brings us to another point. If Nietzsche's "strong" spirit turns out to be not so strong, and if sacrifices need to be made by the "weak" if the "strong" are to become stronger, just what is the relationship between the strong and the weak? Why does Nietzsche want woman to continue to play her womanly role? Why wouldn't it be better for the whole human race to struggle for self-reliance and self-mastery, letting the best man win--the higher man being he who was the culminating achievement of the struggle of a multitude of wills to dominate? Or is something else needed for the "strong" to become strong, something already hinted at in the previous section, something that would undermine the distinction between strong and weak entirely?

In the next section I will relate Nietzsche's text to the two positions I laid out in the last chapter. I will argue that Nietzsche's notion of the will to power represents an attempt to speak from the female position. In his attention to the pulse of life that defies categories, to the continual becoming that can't be contained, he attempts to take into account aspects of experience denied by the extreme of the male position. [44] This attempt brings him up against the limits of masculine identity. If woman is to exercise her feminine instincts in his service, then he must be man enough to subject her to his service, to command. And

yet how can he command when faced with the danger of the great hunt--his own dissolution?

My contention will be that despite his breakdown of the category of 'woman' Nietzsche still cannot allow himself to exercise what he refers to as "feminine instincts." What, for him, falls under the category of "feminine instincts" indicates his version of gender categories. That what he puts in that category is what he is not--what's forbidden to him as a man--indicates an oppositional self-strategy at work. By laying out the elements of the text speaking from the two positions, and examining the conflict already alluded to in the last section and this within this framework, I hope to go beyond Nietzsche's new dichotomy of strong and weak. Questions motivating my analysis are, what constitutes "feminine" or "weak" instincts for Nietzsche, m instincts he won't allow himself; and how would these instincts enable him to surrender his solitude for a community of free spirits?

The positions: In Part One, Nietzsche undermines the notion of a fixed human essence by looking at human beings as a process that makes use of concepts and values to enhance the development of will to power. Out of the vast range of possibilities open to a human being, who that human being is, her identity, is an effect of her morality--that which ranks her instincts so that the order of command is clear, conflict between instincts is reduced, and action is facilitated. By undermining Truth, dogmatism and Platonism he intends to

challenge the belief that there are eternal, transcendent, road-maps in the sky by which to guide our identities and our actions. For Nietzsche, not only are there no such road-maps, but our real guide is the surging process of life itself, the will to power in whose service we create our concepts and moralities rather than vice versa. [45]

Nietzsche's concept of will to power can be seen as a way of representing the source of individual life in chaotic flux. As such, it can be seen as his version of the origin--not a gift from God the Father above who beckons us onward, but the underground turbulence of life in all its bewildering multiplicity. Phenomena are not the pale reflection of an eternally unchanging realm, but the result of a chaotic, irrational upsurge of life forever struggling to surge ever higher and more forcefully, taking the most expedient, rather than most "rational," forms for getting there. Thus, there is no such thing as a "soul," a "motive," a "law," a "right" or a "wrong"--there is only the will to power that creates the concepts and values that will feed its continual need to grow and expand.

The recognition that all rankings, all boundaries, all categories, are created undermines and subverts the authority of the Symbolic order of social meaning in favor of the concrete specificity of life. The recognition of the guiding force of the will to power is the "feminine" recognition that life is growth and becoming and that the Symbolic order should be subordinate to becoming--life-enhancing rather than

life-denying. Nietzsche speaks from the female position in his attentiveness to the pulse of life that defies all categorizations and that says no more than "I want to live." It is that pulse of concrete living things that the feminine responds to--the "indiscriminate" response she makes to enhance the chances of any living thing simply because it makes that appeal. [46] In valuing the will to power over morality itself, in saying that the latter should serve the former, Nietzsche is taking the female position of putting the concrete specificity of actual living things before the preservation of eternal ideals. he is advocating the destruction of an outmoded Symbolic order that impedes rather than fosters the growth of the human beings subject to it. In doing so, he is listening with a "third" ear, an ear that can tune into the subtleties of experience that elude the symbolic--experiences that would take humanity higher if given the nourishment they deserve. it is this kind of sensitivity a woman gives to her loved ones, attending to the inarticulate longing of each, giving them a hearing, and through her mirroring, giving new aspects of experience, of life, the response it needs to give itself form.

But this attempt to incorporate aspects of the female position into his work put Nietzsche into a quandary. The oppositional strategy of masculine identity relies on the repetition of fixed relationships for continuity. the Symbolic order is a static order of fixed positions by which one can place one's self and others. To maintain self-

continuity one must have a certain group of people (i.e., women and subordinates) flexible enough to conform to the other of one's self/other pattern. To navigate the broader realm of social relations one builds up layers of identifications that replay one's self/other pattern through inversion and analogy according to the Law of the Father. Thus, defying the Symbolic Nietzsche is defying the very order that sustains his identity. Nietzsche is referring to just this dilemma in speaking of the dangers of the hunt. How can he defy the mechanical repetition of fixed patterns and sterile concepts for the subtle richness of experiences that elude it without perishing in the attempt? His response is to brave the danger of chaotic flux "like a man." Single-handedly he must boldly go forth, leaving the charted realm of the Symbolic order behind, and create a new order all on his own. he will be "strong," he will be "noble," he will play the "creator" all on his own, making his own map of positions as he goes.

Thus, Nietzsche's new dichotomies and his order of rank can be seen as aspects of the male position. They are attempts to maintain identity through the imposition of one's own creations, the imposition of a new self/other pattern that one can repeat in the same way one could repeat the old one. That this strategy cannot work is attested to by the contradictory nature of these dichotomies. In a world of flux and becoming how can any fixed self/other pattern hold? If one is to navigate this new realm of life experience that

follows no rules and adheres to no order, one needs a new strategy. We all know of such a strategy--we've all experienced a time where each and every moment was new and there were no patterns to repeat--and yet we managed to create an identity from a realm of chaotic flux that served to order the whole of our existence. I'm referring, of course, to infancy. To create a new identity, one more responsive to the subtler aspects of life that elude the Symbolic order as we know it, one might take some hints from that earlier experience. In his fresh responsiveness to elusive aspects of experience I think Nietzsche has, but in his need to maintain the male illusion of self-sufficiency he has overlooked another self-strategy and the vital role played by connectedness in that strategy. To brave chaotic flux "like a man" requires overlooking that self-strategy because it requires exercising those "feminine instincts" Nietzsche is so loath for women to give up.

The extreme of the male position would have us ignore chaotic flux in order to crank out mechanical patterns based on the repetition of pre-fixed categories. The extreme of the female position involves surrendering to that flux to the point of losing all sense of self, of things, of continuity or order at all. Nietzsche, by trying to incorporate more of the female position into the male one is struggling to bring order to flux--to maintain an identity and meaning while being faithful to every last nuance of concrete life. Finally an impossible task, and he knows it. But at the very

least he wants us to do a better job of it than we're doing. he wants us to leave behind some of our old guideposts to find a morality in keeping with a new range of subtleties, aspects of human experience that once attended to could allow new forms of life to flourish. The "man" with the masterful and domineering will to power imposes order upon flux. He is the great hunter who leaves the Symbolic behind to play creator in an uncharted realm. it is the woman with her "feminine instincts" who has no wish to impose her will. Instead, she surrenders the desire for order and mastery and gives herself up to the life around her--not a surrender of her will to power, but a surrender to the responses life evokes from her, responses that defy all order and all categorization. A woman who finds her perfection in service to a man is a woman who has forsaken the repetition of a self/other pattern to let a man evoke whatever response comes forth. it is thus that a man can feel himself fathomed to his depths, his every move, his every thought, reflected in her responsiveness to him as if she were his mirror.

It is this same responsiveness that is a crucial feature of the mother/infant dyad from which the infant's original self is precipitated. Here, the reciprocal responsiveness of the two form a whole in which meaning is generated in the interest of life. The infant, rather than repeating a self/other pattern of its own, conforms to the other of the mother's self/other pattern. If the mother is reasonably nurturing, the self/other pattern she imposes will not be

that of the extreme male position, but one that is responsive to the infant's cues and bodily needs. Thus, although she structures her experiences via the Symbolic order, she will ignore or subvert that order in the interest of enhancing the life of the infant. A man who finds a woman to possess will obtain some of the benefits of the infant/mother relationship. her responsiveness will mirror him the way his mother did, allowing him a similar feeling of connectedness, of being known ("fathomed"). But if he cannot leave aside the need for repetition of a fixed self/other pattern, if he cannot brave the terrors of flux within the safety of another's embrace, he will never be able to leave the restrictions of the Symbolic order behind.

What Nietzsche has overlooked in his call for the higher man is that the only way the human race can evolve is together. No one man can do it alone--no matter how "strong" or "noble." There's a simple reason for this. Human beings form and maintain their identity in connectedness. The only way for them to change that identity is in connectedness. Thus far men have been able to veil that fact by denying their dependency as infants as well as their continuing dependency on the others in their lives willing to give them the attentive responsiveness they need. If we all desired only to make others conform to our fixed self/other patterns we would starve for human contact and lose the richness of life. If we all desired only to conform to another's self/other pattern we would lose all stability. In trying to

find a meeting ground for flux and order, Nietzsche, I believe, was struggling to create a new identity, a new subjectivity for himself--one that could both respond to the nuances of life as well as make sense of it. On the way to that new subjectivity his need to maintain a masculine identity ran him into an impasse. Narrowing the distance between the poles of male and female threatens not only any neat categorization of gender but also our tried and true strategies for maintaining self-identity. In braving that task Nietzsche has shown us some of the pitfalls involved--as well as given us suggestions for where to go from here. Although Nietzsche himself did not achieve the evolution to the higher human beings he envisioned, he has indeed helped to pave the way for their coming.

4.4 Sartre: BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

In Being and Nothingness (Sartre 1956) Sartre also emphasizes a creative moment that determines a Symbolic order rather than saying we're structured by the Symbolic. He thus moves away from a male position that would revere the Symbolic as is. Instead he emphasizes the free acts that give rise to Symbolic orders--categories that order experience in light of an individual project. [47] Sartre also talks about the way one's free acts are given social meaning by the other who externalizes one's acts. here he is also approaching a female position by recognizing that others play a role in the creation of meaning (versus a male

position that would deny the part played by the other). He sees this as a completely negative moment, however.

I will suggest that although Sartre takes a female position insofar as he refuses to defer to a socially sanctioned Symbolic order, he has not managed to substitute a desire for fusion-experiences for the masculine self-strategy of revering the Symbolic order. Instead he tries to substitute individual Symbolic orders. Like Nietzsche, he expects each individual to create a law unto himself--a Symbolic order of his own that may or may not conflict with the socially sanctioned Symbolic order. Unlike Nietzsche, however, Sartre doesn't advocate receptivity to new feelings and bodily sensations that may subvert one's categories. Instead he assumes that subversion of socially sanctioned categories must be done through the assertion of categories structured by one's fundamental choice of being. [48] Thus I will suggest that Sartre proposes that the law of categories represented by the Symbolic order should come from each individual.

The puzzle: Sartre ends Part Four of Being and

Nothingness with the following passage:

Each human reality is at the same time a direct project to metamorphose its own For-itself into an In-itself-For-itself and a project of the appropriation of the world as a totality of being-in-itself, in the form of a fundamental quality....Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is

contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion (p.784).

Sartre's pessimistic conclusion that humanity's fundamental project is contradictory and therefore unachievable stems from his view that consciousness cannot be its own foundation. Humans want to transform the negating activity of the for-itself (consciousness) that distinguishes them from inert matter into a self-causing substance. Mere for-itself is nothingness--it gives the in-itself (brute existence) meaning by revealing it in the light of an end that has not yet been achieved. [49] Thus, it introduces possibility into the fullness of being that is sufficient unto itself. But in so doing, human reality also posits itself as a lack--as a being that is not yet what it is. [50] Its fundamental project is to retain the freedom of making choices between its possibilities, and yet to attain the self-sufficiency of a complete being that no longer lacks. Hence, Sartre's alternate description of this project as the project of being God. [51]

The puzzle I propose to investigate here is the question: why is the Sartre of Being and Nothingness so drawn to a project that he claims to be doomed to failure? Through a careful reading of Part Four of Being and Nothingness we will find that Sartre overlooks a fairly obvious way in which human consciousness can be its own foundation. In the remainder of this section I will sketch out his views on for-itself, being-for-others, and the project of becoming in-itself-for-itself in order to highlight the dilemma as Sartre

sees it. In the following section I will relate his discussion of appropriation and the quality of 'slimy' to the category of 'woman' that emerges from his text. In the final section I will argue that it is his rigid adherence to gender categories that blocks him from resolving the dilemma he depicts, despite the suggestions implicit in his text for just such a resolution.

Sartre posits a split between for-itself and in-itself. Human consciousness is consciousness of something. This something is transphenomenal being. [52] That is, consciousness reveals phenomena in light of the possibilities it projects before it. Thus, phenomena are revealed only in light of a concrete, individual project. But the being of such phenomena is beyond all individual projects. This in-itself:

is an immanence which can not realize itself, an affirmation which can not affirm itself, an activity which can not act, because it is glued to itself (p.27).

It is beyond all negation or affirmation, passivity or activity, transition or becoming:

It is full positivity. It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as other-than-another-being. It can support no connection with the other. It is itself indefinitely and it exhausts itself in being (p.29).

For-itself, on the other hand, is an escape from the in-itself that gives the latter meaning:

It is only because I escape the in-itself by nihilating myself toward my possibilities that this in-itself can take on value as cause or motive.

Causes and motives have meaning only inside a projected ensemble which is precisely an ensemble of non-existents. And this ensemble is ultimately myself as transcendence (p.564).

Human reality perpetually puts its being into question. It thereby opens a hole in the heart of being by considering itself in the light of non-being. That is, by nihilating what it is by projecting itself towards possibilities that it isn't, it gives meaning to itself and its situation. My place, my past, the things around me, are all interpreted in light of the end toward which I project my possibilities. Each human project has its own empirical shape, but all share the fundamental project of becoming in-itself-for-itself. this fundamental project can take different forms according to the type of relation to being a for-itself adopts. That is, the for-itself projects an ensemble of non-existents in light of its initial choice of a particular kind of relation to being. Choices of concrete objects of desire are integrated as secondary structures into this totality. Although the initial choice can be changed, such a change can't be achieved through mere reflection. In fact, merely willing a change would be in bad faith. [53] It is action taken in the spontaneous upsurge of the for-itself that most accurately reflects one's project in its totality.

Each for-itself finds itself in a world that includes others. These others also have the freedom to nihilate what is in light of their possibilities. [54] When I see an Other in the distance:

suddenly an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me. Everything is in place; everything still exists for me; but everything is traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object (p.343).

When there is no Other in my vicinity the world stretches out around me according to my project, things are understood as obstacles or as helpful in light of the possibilities I am reaching for. I am the center of my world. But when I see an Other on the horizon I become aware that my perspective is not the only one. The Other has his own perspective, one that, for example, places the bench that's 30 feet from me as 2 feet from him. Furthermore, the for-itself is responsible for revealing the Other's conduct in the world as techniques (p.668). [55] As I watch the Other sit on the bench I turn what he lives as a free project into a technique that exists outside of him. The world:

is revealed to me...by collective and already constituted techniques which aim at making me apprehend the world in a form whose meaning has been defined outside of me (p.657).

By manifesting certain techniques, I manifest my membership in various collectivities such as the human race, a nation, or a professional or family group. But in choosing my acts I always go beyond the internal technical organization that expresses my memberships, toward myself--the transcendent me of my individual project. Thus, although the for-itself gives the Other an exterior that make objective rules of human conduct, this conduct is always grounded in the free acts of individuals with individual projects.

As a for-itself living with other for-itselfs, I am aware of other freedoms that create perspectives different from my own, and that can exteriorize my behavior in light of their own projects. Giving an outside to another's behavior gives that behavior meaning that can form techniques I can choose to take on or reject in living my own project. Thus, a new dimension of being arises--being-for-others:

by means of the upsurge of the Other there appear certain determinations which I am without having chosen them....All this I am for the Other with no hope of apprehending this meaning which I have outside, and, still more important, with no hope of changing it. Speech alone will inform me of what I am (p.671).

The situation that I reveal in the free choice of my project is alienated from me and comes "to exist as a form in itself for the Other" (p.673). Because I exist as a for-itself for other for-itselfs, I can be freely apprehended by them in light of ends that are not my own. Because the Other apprehends me as an Other-as-object, reducing my free conduct into an objective form, he limits my freedom. The Other tells me who I am and although there are an infinity of attitudes I can assume with respect to what I am told, I cannot not assume some attitude. The things others say I am (e.g., ugly, brilliant, a coward, a Jew) cannot actually refer to me since I am a free nothingness which projects itself toward its possibilities. But I can choose to interiorize such "unrealizables" by incorporating them in the structure of my free projects (p.678). These unrealizables

can't be realized because as a being that lacks and is always projecting itself toward what it isn't, I am never a completed being that can see myself from the outside.

Instead, I am always waiting for a "repose which would be being and no longer a waiting for being...that is, evidently, a plenitude of the type "in-itself-for-itself"" (p.688).

Death, far from enabling me to attain this repose, is the triumph of the Other's point of view over my own:

Death reapprehends all this subjective which while it "lived" defended itself against exteriorization, and death deprives it of all subjective meaning in order to hand it over to any objective meaning which the Other is pleased to give to it (p.696).

As long as I am alive I can escape what I am for the Other.

I can demonstrate that whatever the Other discovers about me can be surpassed by projecting myself toward other ends.

Thus, I can prove that "my dimension of being-for-myself is incommensurable with my dimension of being-for-others"

(p.695). But once death has cancelled out my possibilities, I exist only through the Other. I can no longer nihilate my outside with the absolute, subjective positing of a freedom that interprets itself and its world in the light of its own, freely chosen, project.

The ultimate goal for the for-itself is not death, but being as for-itself (p.723). That is, it wants to be a being which is what it is (rather than always be projecting itself toward what it lacks), but it also wants to be this as

consciousness. The fundamental value guiding this project is:

the ideal of a consciousness which would be the foundation of its own being-in-itself by the pure consciousness it would have of itself (p.724).

Thus, the for-itself wants to be an in-itself that founds its existence by constituting that existence in the free choice of itself. Like the in-itself such a for-itself would be complete, lacking nothing, a full positivity. But unlike the in-itself, such a for-itself would choose to be exactly what it is and constitute its very existence in the making of that choice. Like God, such an in-itself-for-itself would be a self-causing being, completely free and always choosing, yet already realized and always complete.

For Sartre, the project of becoming in-itself-for-itself is doomed from the start. Since "(C)hoice and consciousness are one and the same thing" (p.595) and since in-itself is an immanence which can not realize itself, the two realms of being are radically opposed. Consciousness can't found itself because it must choose itself by projecting itself toward non-existents. Once it failed to pose such transcendent ideals it would lapse into the inert immanence of an in-itself that cannot choose. The only way to escape the in-itself is to negate it. The only way to escape the Others that would give it an objective form not of its choosing is to negate that form by continuing to engage in a project of its own choice. And yet, if for-itself can give others an outside meaning, revealing an Other in the same way

it reveals in-itself, then a natural solution to the project of in-itself-for-itself emerges. Although an individual for-itself may not be able to found its own consciousness, perhaps an interlocking network of human consciousnesses could. Obviously Sartre did not see this as a possibility. [56] In the next section I will explore how his conception of gender may have precluded such a possibility, and in the final section I will explore it further in light of the male and female positions revealed in his text.

'Woman': Like Kierkegaard, Sartre doesn't discuss "woman as such," but he mentions women and the feminine in enough places for us to reconstruct what 'woman' means to him, at least within the confines of this text. The sections most pertinent to our present topic are found in chapter two of part four. In this chapter Sartre introduces his conception of "existential psychoanalysis." Unlike traditional psychoanalysis, Sartre does not propose understanding human behavior by tracing its origins to sexuality or the will to power. Instead, he proposes understanding human behavior in light of the original way in which each individual has chosen his being. Since the fundamental human project is to become in-itself-for-itself, desire of what I lack can be understood in the light of this project of being that which no longer lacks. An empirical study of concrete desires will indicate various approaches to this project. A "thousand empirical examples" (p.736) show that desire comes in three categories-

-to do, to have, to be. "To do" reduces to "to have" (p.742) which reduces to "the desire to be related to a certain object in a certain relation of being" (p.751). [57] Thus, a discussion of appropriation reveals various ways of approaching the ideal of in-itself-for-itself.

Sartre discusses various kinds of appropriation. In all forms of appropriation, for-itself attempts to become its own foundation by appropriating an object that is indifferent to consciousness (thus an in-itself) at the same time that it represents for-itself by belonging to it (thus an in-itself-for-itself). A thing that is mine is me, because possession of a particular object means "to have for myself; that is, to be the unique end of the existence of the object" (p.752). Because possession means I have exclusive rights on utilizing the objects I possess in light of my own project, I found my possessions in their being by creating their meaning. Since this creation is an emanation of the transcendent me of my chosen possibilities, the object is me. Thus "(I)n possession, I am my own foundation in so far as I exist in an in-itself" (p.755).

In the appropriation of objects of knowledge:

What is seen is possessed; to see is to deflower....The unknown object is given as immaculate, as virgin, comparable to a whiteness. It has not yet "delivered up" its secret; man has not yet "snatched" its secret away from it.

I transform the known into me by appropriating it in the form of a thought that receives its existence from me. And yet

because it is also an objective fact that will never lose its form, at the same time that it is "assimilated, transformed into myself, and...entirely me" it is also "impenetrable, untransformable, entirely smooth, with the indifferent nudity of a body which is beloved and caressed in vain" (p.740).

In the appropriating activity of the scientist, the artist and the sportsman, the object of appropriation (knowledge, artistic medium or physical environment) appears "simultaneously to be a kind of subjective emanation of ourselves and yet to remain in an indifferently external relation with us." In such activity we attempt to found the existence of an in-itself that is me because it is mine:

The "mine" appeared to us then as a relation of being intermediate between the absolute interiority of the me and the absolute exteriority of the not-me. There is within the same syncretism a self becoming not-self and a not-self becoming self (p.751).

Furthermore,

Each possessed object which raises itself on the foundation of the world manifests the entire world, just as a beloved woman manifests the sky, the shore, the sea, which surrounded her when she appeared. To appropriate this object is then to appropriate the world symbolically (p.760).

In the drive to become that which doesn't lack, for-itself wants to appropriate not only a particular object, but the world. As long as I am choosing myself by negating what I am in order to project myself toward what I am not, I cannot be in-itself. But if I can appropriate the whole world, I can found my own existence in the in-itself. That is, I can reveal all that is in light of the free choice of a

transcendent me that turns out to be exactly what the in-itself is.

But appropriation is merely symbolic. The objects I make mine are only symbolic representations of me. No matter how many objects I appropriate, I am still only nothingness--a free for-itself that must be what it is not. Appropriation of others in sexual relationships is as doomed to failure as the appropriation of knowledge of things:

the lover's dream is to identify the beloved object with himself and still preserve for it its own individuality; let the Other become me without ceasing to be the Other (p.740).

This "impossible synthesis of assimilation and an assimilated which maintains its integrity" (p.739) can never come to pass. As long as for-itself can choose itself only by negating itself in light of what it isn't, for the Other to become me, (s)he would have to become the nothingness of a for-itself.

The attempt to attain in-itself-for-itself through appropriation takes an interesting twist in Sartre's discussion of the "slimy." [58] In the third and final section of chapter two, Sartre proposes a psychoanalysis of things (p.765). Things have qualities that reveal being in certain ways. If we bring out the ontological meaning of qualities, we can understand how particular qualities symbolize being. We can then better understand an individual's original choice of being by noting the particular attitudes he takes with respect to particular

qualities. To give us an idea of how such an ontology might work, Sartre explores the meaning of the "slimy." Here, appropriation fails, and the "mine" that related absolute interiority with absolute exteriority turns into "a possibility that the In-itself might absorb the For-itself" (p.776). That is, the project to attain in-itself-for-itself is reversed into the attack of an in-itself on the for-itself that would "draw the For-itself into its contingency, into its indifferent exteriority, into its foundationless existence" (p.776).

Just as Sartre's discussion of appropriation was laced with references to women as objects to be possessed, his discussion of the slimy is laced with references to the feminine that would engulf one. Both discussions refer to a realm of being between the absolute freedom of the for-itself and the absolute immanence of the in-itself. Making something "mine" was a symbolic attempt to bridge the two realms that led to failure. The "slimy" symbolizes a being "in which the for-itself is swallowed up by the in-itself" (p.783). This ambiguous substance is "between two state" (p.774). Ironically, while attempts to bridge the two realms in an appropriation that would lead to in-itself-for-itself are doomed to failure, attempts made by the in-itself to swallow up the for-itself seem more likely to succeed. While references to women and the feminine in the discussion of appropriation refer us to the ideal, if doomed, project of becoming in-itself-for-itself, references to women and the

feminine in the discussion of the slimy refer us to dangerous aspects of an ambiguous being between two states. In the former 'woman' was in the appropriate relationship to for-itself, in the latter 'woman' threatens to derail the for-itself's project entirely. In possession the for-itself remains the assimilating and creative power:

It is the For-itself which absorbs the In-itself. In other words, possession asserts the primacy of the For-itself in the synthetic being In-itself-For-itself. yet here is the slimy reversing the terms; the For-itself is suddenly compromised....It is a soft, yielding action, a moist and feminine sucking....I am no longer the Master in arresting the process of appropriation (p.776).

Thus, "(S)lime is the revenge of the In-itself. A sickly-sweet, feminine revenge" (p.777).

The slimy offers a horrible image because we are haunted by the image of a consciousness become slimy. Such a consciousness would be held back from the freedom of a for-itself projecting itself toward its possibilities. It would:

be slyly held back by the invisible suction of the past and...would have to assist in its own slow dissolution in this past which it was fleeing, would have to aid in the invasion of its project by a thousand parasites until finally it completely lost itself (p.778).

This type of being doesn't exist anymore than the in-itself-for-itself, but just as the latter is an ideal toward which I project myself, the former is an "Antivalue" from which I flee. This antivalue represents the kind of being I don't want to become, "a threatening mode of being which must be avoided" (p.779).

Through these discussions we can begin to make sense of Sartre's refusal to explore the possibility that human consciousnesses could found one another. It is one thing for a for-itself to attempt to appropriate the in-itself. It is entirely another for it to allow itself to be appropriated. The moment for-itself allows itself to be held back by a "moist and feminine sucking," to allow its free project to be invaded by a "thousand parasites," it is compromised. The only acceptable way for a for-itself to approach the project of becoming in-itself-for-itself is by retaining mastery throughout. Such a reading of the project naturally dooms it from the start. A for-itself that is forever fleeing in-itself by insisting on its freedom to negate everything that is, will never be able to repose in the objective form granted it by another. And yet, in his description of the Antivalue, Sartre himself suggests the form that such repose could take. In the next section I will set the ultimate value of the in-itself-for-itself against the anti-value of the slimy by relating them to the male and female positions of our interpretive framework. I will argue that incorporation of the anti-value of the slimy with the value of the in-itself-for-itself could resolve the dilemma presented by man's "useless passion."

The positions: Sartre's concept of the transphenomenality of being moves him away from the extreme of the male position and brings him closer to a female one.

The in-itself exceeds all categories since there are as many ways of illuminating it as there are for-itselfes to illuminate it. Reality exceeds the social categories used to define it. The specificity of my life goes beyond those categories. The human conduct of particular for-itselfes is given objective forms by others who perceive that behavior from the outside. Such exteriorization of what were free acts gives rise to a Symbolic structure of techniques and characteristics with social significance. But all that can be said about another's conduct is an exteriorization of that conduct. It distorts it by giving it an outside meaning that cancels out the free upsurge of an individual project. In taking various attitudes to the Symbolic, the various techniques and meaning structures available to one, each person surpasses the Symbolic in choosing his or her own particular relation to being. The original choice of one's relation to being sets the parameters for all one's other choices. It is not a rational choice in the normal sense of the word. There are no possible grounds for making such a choice since it is the choice itself that constitutes one's end and thus one's situation in light of that end. That is, it is this choice that reveals the in-itself and gives it meaning.

Sartre's emphasis on one's absolute freedom of choice challenges the Symbolic's authority to tell me who I am. I do not create a self by taking up a position granted me by the Law of the Father--I create a self by projecting myself

toward my own possibilities. I reveal and interpret the positions laid out in the Symbolic in light of an end of my own choosing. It is because I'm making the choice I make that the positions of the Symbolic appear to me as they do. Sartre rejects any transcendental source of values. My values do not come from God, the Father, Platonic ideals, or others. Even though meaning structures may exist outside of me, I surpass them in living out my own choice of being. The transcendent me I project in light of the fundamental relation to being I have chosen informs my attitudes to these meaning structures. Thus, in choosing or rejecting the positions the structures that embody social relations offer, I pass beyond them.

My freedom can only be experienced from the inside. Any attempt to characterize it from the outside can only cancel it out by freezing my choice of being into a technique with an objective form. It can not capture the moment of choice in which I hurl myself toward a future of my own making, or the possibility that my relation to being could be transformed at any moment, given my next act, my next choice. Thus, my interior life defies all description in the Symbolic. The moment that one's life is exteriorized from the viewpoint of the other, my possibilities are extinguished. The only thing one cannot choose is whether or not one is free. I am condemned to freedom. When I try to evade my freedom I am in bad faith. To avoid bad faith, I must accept that the choices I make are finally beyond

rationality and beyond the comprehension of others. I must accept a freedom so absolute that it has no foundation, no final court of appeal for the fundamental choice of being it makes. [59]

Sartre moves away from the male position of someone enthralled by transcendental ideals that come from above, to a female position with respect to one's own freedom. In both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard there is the feminine element of letting go and allowing themselves to be formed--Nietzsche in his receptivity to the subtlety of experience, to new feelings and sensations that would subvert categories, and Kierkegaard in his receptivity to an incomprehensible God. Sartre emphasizes nothingness, the nothingness that distinguishes the for-itself from the in-itself and thereby saves it from being meaningless matter. [60] Sartre thus narrowly confines his move toward the female position. All three grant a lack of rational foundation for ultimate values, but while Nietzsche confronts a seething array of conflicting forces and Kierkegaard confronts the incomprehensible will of God, Sartre confronts nothingness. We do not simply take up a position in the Symbolic, we choose one. And in choosing such a position we authorize it in light of our fundamental project. We have nothing to guide us in choosing our project. We reject the security of being inheritors of the Law of the Father, only to assert that it is our freedom that creates that Law. Thus, Sartre

rejects the authority of the Symbolic in order to assert the authority of each individual to create a Law unto himself.

There is a price to be paid for making this move. In fact, far from feeling supremely confident with this new position of power, Sartre is terribly burdened with the responsibility that goes along with it. [61] Now, being a person means not only upholding the Law of the Father, it means creating it. He must continue to stake out an identity, but with the understanding that the Symbolic given him as aid and support is a fraud. It cannot tell him who he is or how to be because no matter what position he takes up in it, his choice surpasses it. Sartre has reoriented the project of subjectivity by saying that each one of us must posit our own ideals, posit our own transcendence--and take complete responsibility for it. But, it is still non-existent ideals that pull us away from the in-itself, that allow us to escape the in-itself by negating it. On Sartre's view, each one of us must become the Father of the Law on our own. Having granted a transphenomenality to being that ever threatens to overflow the categories of thought, and having done away with the possibility of a transcendental grounding from above (God), or an instinctual upsurge for grounding from within (such as the will to power), Sartre is left staring straight in the face of a world that threatens to absorb him entirely with only the negating power of nothingness to protect him. [62]

The slimy is ambiguous, soft, between two realms. It threatens to appropriate the for-itself, to turn the for-itself into the in-itself. It is a feminine sucking that lures the for-itself into forgetting tis freedom and its responsibility for creating a Law unto itself. If the for-itself allows the slimy to trap it, it will fail to attain its ideal of in-itself-for-itself, and instead it will be drawn to the anti-ideal of a being in which the foundationless in-itself has priority over the for-itself (p.778). Both ideals involve an intermediate being between two realms of being. And yet Sartre sets them at opposite poles--one is an ideal to be attained, the other an ideal to flee. The question is, how different are the two ideals? Feminine slime is soft and leechlike. It wants to be an individual, and yet allows itself to be dissolved into its past. It invites the for-itself to appropriate it, but then compromises the for-itself's appropriating activity. the anti-value of the slimy draws the for-itself into a realm of being where the for-itself's freedom is put into doubt. It is no longer creatively appropriating an object in light of its own project, it is being appropriated. Its freedom is contaminated and the radical split between in-itself and for-itself is compromised. The value of the in-itself-for-itself draws the for-itself into a realm of being where the for-itself's freedom remains intact and the radical split between in-itself and for-itself is maintained. [63]

Sartre undermines the authority of the Symbolic and moves toward a female position. 'Woman'--soft and leechlike, tending toward dissolution--beckons him to receive her, but he must refuse the invitation. She may accept the ambiguous status of being between two realms, of being both appropriator and appropriated, but he cannot. He can take up a position of receptivity that goes beyond all rational categories only with respect to his own freedom. The pull to forsake his male role is apparent, but he resists the temptation by setting up the slimy as an anti-value. Instead, he heads resolutely toward an ideal that will allow him to keep his oppositional self-strategy intact. Leech-like sucking is feminine. Letting one's project be invaded by a thousand parasites is feminine. In rejecting such feminine strategies Sartre closes out the possibility of a new approach to the ideal of in-itself-for-itself.

If I could accept such feminine strategies, I may not be able to achieve the status of the in-itself in my continual projection of myself towards a transcendent me. But I could freely choose to be founded by other consciousnesses. In receptive attentiveness to another's desire I could allow myself to be appropriated, to be the in-itself that fulfilled that other's current lack. I could appropriate an other by giving him or her meaning in light of my own project. At the same time I could allow myself to be appropriated by him or her by taking on the meaning (s)he gives me in light of his or her project. If both for-itselfes involved remained true

to their original choice of being, but allowed the concrete form secondary choices take to be shaped by the other, they could form a reciprocal relationship. Both would be in-itself for the other, but both would also exercise their free choice as for-itself. Two individuals could find the meeting point between two free projects that could grant both repose, if both were receptive to conforming to the desire of the other within the parameters set by their own projects. Each would then be an "emanation" of the other, at the same time that they remained in an "indifferently external relation" with the other due to having a project of their own that remains unaffected by the other's project. Together they would be in-itself-for-itself--all consciousness, yet complete and self-causing. Obviously, such a state of repose could not last for long. But if one took Sartre's project of becoming in-itself-for-itself as a project for humanity as a community rather than for humanity as individuals, we resolve Sartre's dilemma. A community of consciousnesses each with a unique perspective, each revealing various aspects of other for-itself and fulfilling various lacks, could conceivably achieve a state of self-causing repose. It may not be a "realistic" project, but it is not the hopeless deadend of a "useless passion."

4.5 Conclusion

In the next chapter I will delineate two poles that represent the extremes of male and female positioning and the

self-strategies correlated with these two poles. To do so I will make use of the discussion of alternate self-strategies of chapter three, as well as of insights gleaned from my readings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre. Here I will draw some tentative conclusions from the readings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre given in this chapter.

Kierkegaard: We saw that for Silentio, subverting Symbolic categories involves deferring to the desire of an other. That means using a feminine self-strategy that values satisfying the desire of an other over maintaining Symbolic categories. A masculine self-strategy would sacrifice connectedness for maintaining a self that was positioned in the Symbolic.

Once we relate the universal to the Symbolic and the position of Abraham to a female position that values deferring to the desire of the other--being what that other desires--over maintaining the Symbolic, we can go on to say that such a priority can lead one to be "taken out of the universal," and fill out what that means. Thus, we can see how the female position can jeopardize one's standing in the Symbolic order and therefore jeopardize one's identity. Letting another's desire inform one can take one beyond the universal without destroying one's identity if one receives the desire of the other with faith that one will be returned to the universal.

Nietzsche: While Kierkegaard doesn't address the question of how one goes about changing Symbolic categories,

Nietzsche does. Correlating Nietzsche's values and concepts to the Symbolic, we can take the female position as one that chooses to prioritize something other than those values and concepts. Symbolic categories are created not through attentiveness to the desire of an other, but through receptiveness to subtle messages of the body. This relates to the desire for body connectedness and responsiveness discussed in chapter two as well as our discussion of Irigaray's "sensation-ideas" in chapter three.

Sartre: Our reading of Sartre revealed a characterization of a masculine self-strategy that is afraid of losing its legitimacy. If he can't maintain a masculine self-strategy with respect to woman, he will become what she wants and so lose the ability to position himself. Unlike Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Sartre doesn't take up a female position to either God or body-sensations. he needs to impose categories upon the world. He thus can't see the feminine self-strategy as a viable alternative, which means that any break-down in the masculine self-strategy will lead to a failure of identity.

NOTES

[1] Again, I am deliberately leaving the applicability of my characterization of "masculine" and "feminine" strategies open. I believe that Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is the best theory we have to explain how selves are formed and maintained. This does not mean, however, that it is "correct" in any universal sense of the word. Just as feminists have taken issue with other feminists for purporting to have the story about women's experience (see chapter one, section 1.5), feminists have taken issue with psychoanalysis for purporting to have the story about how human beings become socialized persons. Just as purporting to have the story about 'woman' cancels out important differences among women, so does purporting to have the story about self-constitution cancel out important differences in self-constituting activity.

I believe that Freudian and Lacanian theory is an important and effective tool in trying to understand the constitution and maintenance of selves in patriarchal, capitalist societies with some form of the nuclear family (i.e., family positions that include a father, a mother, and children). but I do not want to close out the possibility that it may work better for some cultures than others, some time periods than other time periods, and that in some times and places it may not work at all. I do not have space in this work to investigate that possibility further, but I do not think that possibility detracts from the appeal of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis was developed in Western patriarchal, capitalist culture from the 19th century onward, and despite any reservations I might have about proclaiming anything approaching universal applicability before further investigation, I feel it has received adequate confirmation of its applicability in and by the culture that developed it to warrant endorsing it.

Also see my footnote ([1]) on a similar point in chapter three.

[2] A "deconstructive" reading is a reading that is in the post-structuralist tradition, especially as exemplified by Derrida. I use this term here because it speaks to a new kind of interpretive strategy more in keeping with the Lacanian view of the self as radically contingent and "decentered" that I have been developing here. For more on deconstruction and its influence on the interpretation of texts, see Derrida (1978), Dews (1987), Felman (1982), Harari (1979), Leitch (1983), Moi (1985), Silverman and Inde (1985), Sturrock (1979) and Taylor (1987).

[3] Mark Taylor, in commenting on a paper I gave on the Kierkegaard section of this chapter, said that the Lacanian notion of 'woman' is inseparably bound to the Real and that which eludes binary oppositions. To understand the Lacanian

notion of 'woman' we would thus need to think through the Lacanian notion of the Real. Woman as the Real is the Goddess, the figure for what can't be figured, that which is the condition of the possibility of sexual difference as such, an other of a more radical sort than the other of a male/female opposition--an other that is always already excluded from the Symbolic order and yet always speaking through that order. Taylor's comments on 'woman' lead him to posit Kierkegaard's God as a Goddess; Kierkegaard's divine Other is the maternal Other rather than the transcendent father.

As I mentioned in chapter two, footnote six, I have not had the space in this work to do Lacan's notion of the Real justice. Although I find Taylor's comments suggestive--especially in light of the ambiguity of positioning with respect to female and divine others that I will be exploring in Fear and Trembling--I feel that they enhance rather than challenge the interpretation of Fear and Trembling I give in this chapter. To suggest, as Taylor suggested, that Lacan and Kierkegaard are more interested in the moment of the Real that is irreducibly other, a moment that can't be domesticated in self/other relations, and to assert that the Real is irreducibly other (as Taylor did), speaks to the male positioning of all three. Woman as the Real, as Goddess, as irreducibly other--the maternal Other that is not oneself--this is precisely the kind of opposition I am challenging in positing both the possibility of connectedness between embodied others as well as the possibility of generating new meaning in the playspace of such connectedness.

[4] It is misleading to say decisions in Kierkegaard's sense are made in the aesthetic sphere since the aesthete prefers to reflect on possibilities, but Kierkegaard also thinks that at this stage there is no actual self to take a position up. See Taylor (1975, 128-130).

[5] Discussions of the differences among the three spheres, their interrelationships, and the positions taken up by various Kierkegaardian pseudonyms, that I have found useful in writing this section include: Dunning (1985), Mackey (1971), Malantschuk (1971) and Taylor (1975).

[6] Thompson (1967) suggests that Kierkegaard in writing his pseudonymous works was engaged in a form of self-therapy designed to provide him relief from the misery of his life. Others (e.g., Croxal 1956 and Taylor 1975) have emphasized Kierkegaard's characterization of these works as a form of "indirect communication" designed to enable the reader to come to a subjective understanding of possibilities for existence. Although Thompson's reading strikes me as a bit crass (reducing Kierkegaard to a patient on the couch), the idea that Kierkegaard was engaged in his own process of self-transformation in the act of writing, at the same time that

he was encouraging his readers to engage in that process, is in keeping with my claim that the production of meaning is also a self-constituting process.

[7] Dunning claims Silentio's point of view is an ethical interpretation of how the religious stage differs from the ethical (1985, 124).

[8] For discussions/characterizations of the two Kierkegaardian concepts, the 'universal' and the 'ethical' that I have found useful, see Robert Perkins' "For Sanity's Sake: Kant, Kierkegaard, and Father Abraham," Merold Westphal's "Abraham and Hegel," Paul Holmer's "About Being and Person: Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling," and C. Stephen Evans' "Is the Concept of an Absolute Duty toward God Morally Unintelligible?" all in Perkins (1981).

[9] This reading of the ethical realm as involving duty as well as communication is borne out in Fear and Trembling by Silentio's emphasis on revealing oneself: "his [the single individual's] ethical task is to work himself out of his hiddenness and to become disclosed in the universal" (Kierkegaard 1983, 82). See also David Wren's "Abraham's Silence and the Logic of Faith" and Mark Taylor's "Sounds of Silence," both in Perkins (1981).

[10] See Lemaire (1977) for a discussion of Lacan's 'Symbolic' as a term referring to both a hierarchy of social positions as well as symbolic/linguistic codes. Some have argued against any such "facile" correlation. Since I am arguing here that a social position is the function of taking up a position as a grammatical subject within symbolic/linguistic codes, however, I feel the correlation is warranted.

[11] The story of Abraham and Isaac is given in Genesis 22:1-18. Biblical comments on it include Hebrews 11:17-19 and James 2:21-23.

[12] For a historical discussion of some interpretations of the Abraham/Isaac story preceding Kierkegaard's see Louis Jacobs' "The Problem of the Akedah in Jewish Thought" and David Pailin's "Abraham and Isaac: A Hermeneutical Problem Before Kierkegaard," both in Perkins (1981).

[13] The positioning of the beloved as the other in the following discussion is not entirely unproblematic. I am primarily interested in the analogy/disanalogy of lover/beloved relationships with the Abraham/God relationship. It is due to loving someone the lover cannot have according to the strictures of the universal that he feels the impulse to defy the universal, just as it is Abraham's love for and desire to maintain connectedness with

God, that lead Abraham to defy the universal. As we will see, however, in the discussion of the sketch about the lad/princess relationship, the lad as the knight of faith can get the princess "by virtue of the absurd," just as Abraham can get his son back "by virtue of the absurd." Here the lover/beloved relationship is more in keeping with the Abraham/Isaac relationship than the Abraham/God relationship. That the only sketch Silentio gives which suggests any possibility for consummation of a male/female relationship involves the ambiguity of situating the beloved in the Isaac-position rather than the God-position undermines that possibility. Just as Abraham can't communicate his connectedness with God to Isaac, the lad can't communicate his connectedness with God to the princess. This leaves full translation of their union into the universal an impossibility.

[14] On the terms of the theory of self I'm developing here we could put this situation as follows: Given who he is and who the princess is, connection between the two is forbidden. The self/other patterning the lad uses to maintain self-continuity doesn't allow him to have the princess as an object that can satisfy his desire. For the connectedness of satisfied desire, either the lad or the princess would have to shift positions. Such a shift of position would involve a rupture in identity that would defy rational self-understanding. And yet, he loves the princess as an embodied other in a way that defies all such positioning.

[15] Again, on my terms, we might put this thus: He constitutes himself as a self that desires this other, the princess. Instead of cancelling out his felt response to the princess by denying his love, he chooses to remember her, despite the disruption this causes his self/other patterning.

[16] On my terms: His self/other patterning vis à vis embodied others remains the same, but he retains the self created in contact with the princess by maintaining a spiritual inner self distinct from the outer self that navigates the universal of social positionality.

[17] Mark Taylor argues in "Sounds of Silence" (in Perkins 1983) that while silence is a necessity in the immediate moment of the aesthetic sphere and in the religious sphere, the ethical person must speak: "The absence of individual selfhood and the inability to use language necessitate the silence of aesthetic immediacy....The direct, unmediated radically privatized individualized relation of the believer to God cannot be conveyed in the universal categories of thought and language" (p.186); "the ethicist argues that a person is duty bound to speak, to come out of concealment and to reveal publicly the ground of his deeds. Silence is a moral transgression in which one refuses to

express himself in terms of universality and clings to particularity" (p.180).

[18] This point is made by Silentio's sketch of the story of Agamemnon (Kierkegaard 1983, 87). Agamemnon is a "tragic hero" rather than a knight of faith because his actions are readily intelligible to us. It was tragic he had to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia. Killing her is not in keeping with the ethical commitment to love one's daughter. But since he did it due to the "higher" ethical consideration of saving a whole city, we can accept his act as an act of sacrifice.

[19] For a discussion of the merman's four alternatives in terms of silence see Taylor's "Sounds of Silence," in Perkins (1981).

[20] In my terms, such translation comes down to taking up a position as a subject that is intelligible to oneself and others.

[21] Again, in my terms, the interests of an absolute relation to the absolute would be the desire for the pleasure of connectedness with an other that defies the possibilities for positioning available to one in the Symbolic.

[22] As an aesthete the merman is engaged in poeticizing the woman to be the other that will satisfy his lust. Her innocence disarms him into wanting to make a commitment to her. This takes him into the ethical sphere.

[23] C. Stephen Evans (1983) argues that the ethical person committed to maintaining commitments and living up to an ethical ideal is doomed to failure and thus doomed to feel guilt for being unable to become what she's taken responsibility for becoming. Such guilt pushes the ethical person into the religious sphere due to the realization that the only way toward salvation from sin (one's inevitable failure to be all one could be) is through the grace of God--i.e., through recognition of one's dependence on an Other.

[24] As an aesthete, the merman has no self. He's at the mercy of fleeting desires. His positioning is that of one who attempts to avoid all positioning entirely. For discussions of this kind of positioning of the aesthete in terms of a failure to achieve selfhood, see Taylor (1974).

[25] Dunning (1985) demonstrates that self-development from one sphere of existence to the next can be traced in the pseudonymous works as a complicated dialectical development of inner and outer natures and of self and other that (ideally) ends up in the sphere of existence Kierkegaard calls religiousness B. On his view, one's inner and outer natures are furthest apart in the aesthetic and religious

spheres of life, and are closest together in the ethical sphere. Commentators on Kierkegaard have criticized him for stressing the inwardness of religiousness B (the ultimate goal of selfhood) in a way that renders any prospect for community problematic. For example, Mackey comments: "the existence of other men presents him [the religious man] not with a public in which he is firmly set as a part sustained by an organic whole, but only with further possibilities--beckoning, tempting, or threatening--that he must take into the gamut of his inner life....His own inwardness is the only reality...with which he is properly occupied" (1971, 190).

[26] This comes out most clearly in the Birth of Tragedy (Nietzsche 1968b) where Nietzsche draws a distinction between the Dionysian and the Apollonian. In this work he seems to suggest that the Dionysian is the primal state of existence--a state of pure undifferentiated flux ("...the objectification of a Dionysian state...represents...the shattering of the individual and his fusion with primal being" (65); "...the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity...beyond and prior to all phenomena" (55)). It is therefore real in a way that the Apollonian attempts to organize that flux are not: "For Apollo wants to grant repose to individual beings precisely by drawing boundaries between them and by again and again calling these to mind as the most sacred laws of the world, with his demands for self-knowledge and measure" (72); "...the Apollinian tears man from his orgiastic self-annihilation and blinds him to the universality of the Dionysian process, deluding him to the belief that he is seeing a single image of the world" (128).

[27] With the renewed interest in Nietzsche there have been updated readings that argue that Nietzsche went beyond an Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy. That is, although Nietzsche, in his earliest work, The Birth of Tragedy, seems to argue that "reality" is ultimately chaotic and anything we say about it no more than a dream or illusion, his later works go beyond even this appearance/reality split to assert that there is nothing beyond appearances. Thus, people like Nehamas (1985) and McGill (1985) argue that Nietzsche's perspectivism comes down to an aesthetic theory of truth.

Nietzsche associates Dionysian chaos with the "feminine": "...by the mystical triumphant cry of Dionysus the spell of individuation is broken, and the way lies open to the Mothers of Being, to the innermost heart of things." From The Birth of Tragedy (1968b, 99-100). Also see Kelly Oliver's discussions of the "feminine" in Nietzsche (1984, 1988). In keeping with my reading of the female position as a position that attends to bodily sensations of the other in order to satisfy the other's desire, I am taking Nietzsche's concept of Dionysian chaos as life-experience beyond the generalizing scope of language. Thus, my notion of Dionysian

chaos is not something beyond appearances, a reality out of our reach. Rather, it is intrinsic to human experience. Also see Jean Granier's "Nietzsche's Conception of Chaos" and "Perspectivism and Interpretation," both in Allison (1985).

[28] See the section of "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" published in Nietzsche (1968a) and Hinman's article on Nietzsche's view of metaphor. Hinman argues that Nietzsche felt all concepts were metaphorical since no two experiences are the same. Thus, Nietzsche breaks down the distinction between literal and metaphorical language: "the categories and concepts in terms of which we order experience have no more epistemic justification than other metaphors, except for the fact that we have forgotten their metaphorical origins and let them harden into normative measures of reality itself" (Hinman 1982, 189). Also see Kofman (1972).

[29] "With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their "knowing" is creating, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is -- will to power." From Beyond Good and Evil, #211 (Nietzsche 1968b, 326). Also see #260 of Beyond Good and Evil and "On the Thousand and One Goals" in Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

[30] See Beyond Good and Evil, #246. Schutte comments: "one might say that the self engaged in authentic understanding of itself needs to have a fine ear for the tunes that the body and the unconscious are playing in it and for it" (1984, 46). In a talk Kofman gave at a Nietzsche conference (U. Mass., Amherst, spring, 1986) she referred to Nietzsche's "third ear" as the intuitive ear of woman that situates itself beyond metaphysical oppositions of truth and error, good and bad, clarity and obscurity. See Lorraine et al (1986). Also see Derrida's discussion of Nietzsche's "ear" in Otobiographies (1984).

[31] All quotes from Nietzsche in the text are from Beyond Good and Evil (Nietzsche 1968b). I will cite section numbers from this work rather than page numbers from now on.

[32] For a discussion of the irrationality of the will to power, see Alphonso Lingis' "The Will to Power" in Allison (1985).

[33] For discussion of Nietzsche's nihilism see Deleuze (1983) and Maurice Blanchot's "The Limits of Experience: Nihilism" and Eric Blondel's "Nietzsche: Life as Metaphor," both in Allison (1985).

[34] We could say that although Nietzsche doesn't explicitly address the desire of an other in the text, the speaking 'I' of his text subverts conventional language in

order to attentively respond to the desire of his own Other. That is, repetition of the same self/other pattern is thwarted in order to attend to and attempt to reflect the barely audible, barely intelligible signals of an Other not yet incorporated into such patterning. This Other, being all aspects of his experience not yet incorporated into his self-system, is a bit more amorphous than Kierkegaard's God who at least desires specific things of his creations.

[35] "Whatever makes them rule and triumph and shine, to the awe and envy of their neighbors, that is to them the high, the first, the measure, the meaning of all things." From "On the Thousand and One Gaols" in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Nietzsche 1966, 58).

[36] "Your love of life shall be love of your highest hope; and your highest hope shall be the highest thought of life. Your highest thought, however, you should receive as a command from me -- and it is: man is something that shall be overcome." From "On War and Warriors" in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Nietzsche 1966, 48).

[37] Schutte argues that there are two uses of the will-to-power notion in Nietzsche: "In one case, power is used in the sense of domination, whereas in the other it is used in the sense of recurring energy" (1984, 76). She relates the former to Nietzsche's notion of the higher man of Beyond Good and Evil who overcomes morality and the latter to the overman of Thus Spoke Zarathustra who engages in the self-overcoming of morality: "Self-overcoming involves the overcoming of the Apollonian principle of individuation and drive to permanence in favor of the greater reality of the Dionysian flow of existence in which the boundaries between subject and object, time and eternity disappear" (1984, 86). Schutte feels that Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism wasn't radical enough to get him beyond the dualisms of strong versus weak, master versus slave (p. 190). She further claims that this failure manifests itself in his depiction of love between the sexes (the sex drive seen as an instinct of domination -- p. 177) and in his tendency to distrust the human need for community (p. 180).

[38] For discussions of Nietzsche's "deconstruction" of 'woman' see Derrida (1979), Krell (1986) and Oliver (1984, 1988).

[39] See Derrida's Spurs (1979) and Oliver's rendition of Derrida's position (1984).

[40] Of course, man, in his attempts to assume self-sufficiency, must evade this feeling of lack through mastery. It is woman, or Truth, that is dependent on him and his mastery and not vice versa. It is he who possesses them. By

mastering the both of them he will finally be the whole man that he is supposed to be. Despite Nietzsche's "deconstruction" here of the notions of 'truth' and 'woman' we will see that he is still drawn to the notions of mastery and possession.

[41] "The "world," "essence" are themselves texts written by a particular type of will. The idea of an original music of the world is replaced by an original text of which human texts function only as metaphors: all text becomes correlated with an interpretation that constitutes a determined sense, provisional, symptomatic of the domination of the world and other types of life by a certain type of life" (Kofman 1972, 121 -- my translation). Also see Kaufmann (1968) and Nehemas (1985).

[42] "In effect all construction is the expression of an internal architecture, that is, a certain hierarchization of instincts, the subordination of a multiplicity of instincts to the strongest instinct that thus serves as a provisional center of perspective" (Kofman 1972, 90 -- my translation).

[43] In Spurs (1979), Derrida refers to three kinds of women in Nietzsche: "Woman, inasmuch as truth, is scepticism and veiling dissimulation" (p. 57); "Feminism is nothing but the operation of a woman who aspires to be like a man....Feminism too seeks to castrate....Gone the style" (p. 65; and "In the instance of the third proposition...woman is recognized and affirmed as an affirmative power, a dissimulatress, an artist, a dionysiac....She affirms herself, in and of herself, in man" (p. 97), and comments: "He [Nietzsche] was, he dreaded this castrated woman. He was, he dreaded this castrating woman. he was, he loved this affirming woman" (p. 101). Krell (1986) picked up on this Derridean view of Nietzsche as the deconstructor of 'woman' who moved beyond gender categories by taking up feminine positions in his text. On this reading, Nietzsche's misogynist comments refer to social constructions of 'woman' rather than women themselves. This view is more sophisticated than Kaufmann's view (Kaufmann 1968) that we can simply bracket Nietzsche's misogynist comments as aberrations of Nietzsche's time. I am in agreement with Oliver, however, when she says: "Nietzsche does not, as both Derrida and Krell suggest, want to become woman" (1988, 28); "rather, he desires to possess woman. Nietzsche's desire, then, is not a feminine desire. It is not the desire of a woman. Rather, it is a masculine desire (the desire to possess through impregnation)" (1988, 25).

[44] The true, undissembled voice of Dionysian art cries: "'Be as I am! Amid the ceaseless flux of phenomena I am the eternally creative primordial mother, eternally impelling to existence, eternally finding satisfaction in

this change of phenomena!" From Birth of Tragedy, section 16 (Nietzsche 1968b, 104). Oliver comments: "Nietzsche repeatedly uses metaphors of biological reproduction--'womb of being', 'mother eternally pregnant', 'procreative life' -- to describe the Dionysian force. Nietzsche's Dionysian type is continually be reproducing. The biological metaphors which Nietzsche uses to describe the will to power are metaphors of reproduction, procreation, motherhood" (1988, 26). Also see Eric Blondel's "Nietzsche: Life as Metaphor" (in Allison 1985) for a discussion of Nietzsche's "central" image of the "vita feminia."

[45] See Kaufmann (1968).

[46] Deleuze refers to life-enhancing and life-denying forces of life as becoming-active and becoming-reactive forces: "Becoming-active is affirming and affirmative, just as becoming-reactive is negating and nihilistic" (1983, 68). Schutte, however, feels that Deleuze's distinction "remains conceptually tied to the old notion of the struggle for power between the forces of good and evil" (1984, 90). She distinguishes two versions of Nietzsche's will to power: "The Übermensch who symbolizes 'the ability of human beings to be at one with the process of life and death without building up walls and mental barriers against it. It is a Dionysian symbol reminding one of the dynamic continuity of life' (p. 124).

[47] "(T)here is a situation for consciousness to the extent it views existent things in their totality and in their relation...to itself, arranging them as a world around itself" (Jeanson 1980, 123). Also see Warnock (1965, ch. 5).

[48] For discussions of how one's fundamental choice of being affects one's relationship to the world and others, see Catalano (1980, 196-202), Hayim (1980, 50-58) and Jeanson (1980, 180-187).

[49] "(T)he For-itself is not a person, nor a substance, nor a thing; it is merely revelation of the In-itself" (Desan 1954, 10). I have been influenced by Catalano (1980, Part Two), Desan (1954, 10-56) and Jeanson (1980, ch. 1-4) in my rendering of the "For-itself."

[50] "Consciousness, in general, is a desire for 'things'; it is at all times aware of an object, with the realization that it can never coincide with that thing which it desires or with that which it is conscious of....it is a mere desire or lack..." (Hayim 1980, 12-15). Also see Catalano (1980, 103-106), Grene (1980, 126-136) and Warnock (1965, 42-43).

[51] "What it [the For-itself] lacks is being, which would make it a totality, a self, i.e., itself an In-itself....The For-itself is a failure. A Being-for-itself can never be a Being-in-itself without losing, ipso facto, its most characteristic feature of consciousness [i.e. freedom or nothingness]. If such a being could be hypostatized, realizing this utopian identification of For-itself and In-itself, it would be God" (Desan 1954, 32-33). Also see Jeanson (1980, 140).

[52] "(T)he phenomenon of being is being as revealed to consciousness, encountered by it, while the being of phenomenon [transphenomenal being] is apprehended by it as the objectivity that inevitably overflows and grounds any knowledge that consciousness has of it" (Jeanson 1980, 112). Also see Catalano (1980, Introduction) and Grene (1980, 114-119).

[53] For discussions of Sartre's notion of bad faith, see Catalano (1980, 78-91), Hayim (1980, 24-26), Jeanson (1980, 127-135) and Warnock (1965, 50-62).

[54] "Ontologically, the Other appears as an alien freedom, as the upsurge of another subjectivity with its own consciousness as well as with its own desire for a human world" (Hayim 1980, 32). Other commentators that have also influenced my reading of Sartre's "other" are: Catalano (1980, Part Three), Desan (1954, 65-95), Grene (1980, ch. 5), Jeanson (1980, ch. 5) and Warnock (1965, ch. 3).

[55] Also see Desan (1954, 116).

[56] It's important to remember that I am restricting my discussion to the Sartre of Being and Nothingness. Although it would be interesting to compare this Sartre to the later Sartre of say, the Critique of Dialectical Reason, especially on this point, I will not do that here.

[57] For discussions of this trio (to do, to have, to be), see Catalano (1980, Part Four), Desan (1954, 121-131) and Hayim (1980, 61-63).

[58] See Margery Collins and Christine Pierce's article on the sexist nature of this discussion (Collins and Pierce 1979). Also see Warnock's comments on the 'viscous' (her translation of slimy) (1965, 99-107).

[59] As Desan puts it: "His extreme notion of freedom needs a For-itself which is void, completely void. he thinks that the slightest granule of being would provide something for deterministic influence to take hold of and that the freedom of his pure and translucent consciousness would thereby be destroyed (1954, 158).

[60] "...because it is not a fixed attribute with a certain nature, consciousness as the for-itself is also characterized by Sartre as nothingness....In contrast to the for-itself,...the in-itself possesses no lack or desire....every act of consciousness is an instance of negation, that is, of breaking away from the in-itself" (Hayim 1980, 14-15).

[61] "The Sartrean individual is utterly alone, wholly responsible, making himself as the negation of a barren field of being, in itself wholly devoid of meaning" (Greene 1983, 92). Also see Hayim (1980, 17).

[62] "It is...inevitable that the nihilating power of consciousness, unable to indefinitely sustain everything and remain present to everything, will allow phenomena to be reabsorbed one by one into the in-itself from which consciousness had made them emerge for itself" (Jeanson 1980, 151).

[63] Many commentators have criticized Sartre's conception of human freedom and his insistence on the radical split between the for-itself and the in-itself (see, for example, Desan 1954 and Greene 1983). Judith Butler comments on the repercussions of this dualist thinking in the context of de Beauvoir's reading of 'woman' as 'other': "Women are 'Other' according to Beauvoir insofar as they are defined by a masculine perspective which seeks to safeguard its own disembodied status through identifying women generally with the bodily sphere" (1986, 8); "...From this belief that the body is Other, it is not a far leap to the conclusion that others are their bodies, while the masculine 'I' is a non-corporeal soul....Beauvoir's dialectic of self and Other argues the limits of a Cartesian version of disembodied freedom, and implicitly criticizes the model of autonomy upheld by these masculine gender norms" (p.9).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This dissertation is a response to the puzzle of gender--what function do gender categories serve, and why is it such a tricky business to challenge their legitimacy? My goal in writing this dissertation was twofold. First, I wanted to develop a theoretical framework for addressing the puzzle of gender. Second, I wanted to affirm philosophy as an activity of human self-understanding that continues to provide satisfying answers to current social dilemmas. Just as each individual needs a self-identity that integrates the fullest range of her experience, thus allowing flexibility without sacrificing passionate commitment, responsibility, or effective agency, so do we, as a world community, need a self-identity that integrates the fullest range of human experience without trivializing or cancelling out the experiences of those who live on the "margin." [1]

I believe that the struggle of each and every individual or larger collective for recognition is crucial to the development of a new worldview. To avoid totalitarianism, no one should give in until they're satisfied that the aspects of their experience that would be liquidated by hegemony are incorporated into the dominant discourse. [2] If we are struggling for a new world-view--one that will nurture us as a whole species, a world community, rather than blight us with the disease of social categories that distort or cancel

out the rich detail of human experience--no one must allow their voice to be shut out. All must demand to be heard.

Philosophy has the task of providing individual and collective struggles for recognition with a framework flexible enough to incorporate new viewpoints without bringing the whole edifice down, a world-view that will respect multiplicity and allow new categories to multiply without threatening to destroy any possibility of categories at all--a framework that values and respects all life and experience, rather than just the small range manifested by a particular group of people.

This new vision is already coming to life as people grapple with the contradictions facing us. The contradiction I have attempted to address here is that of gender--why do we persist in clinging to categories that attempt to box the multi-faceted nature of human existence into two, mutually exclusive, categories? Obviously any conception of man vs. woman cannot possibly hold. Even if one restricts oneself to human anatomy alone, hermaphrodites as well as other sexual "anomalies" attest to the inadequacy of a two gender system.

[3]

In chapters two and three I developed a theoretical framework from which to approach philosophical texts, using Lacanian psychoanalysis and feminist critiques of psychoanalysis. Lacanian theory brought out the contingent nature of a self that is not a given, but a construct that needs continual reconstitution via self/other relationships

if it is to be maintained. A look at object relations theory and feminist critiques of psychoanalysis brought out aspects of this self that Lacanian analysis--due to its own male bias--overlooked. With the help of these psychoanalytic theories and the background of a philosophical tradition that places the self in a social context, I developed a theoretical framework that delineated two different self-strategies for creating and maintaining self-identity. By exploring three versions of masculine self-strategies I have underlined the ideal nature of "masculine" and "feminine". Even as self-strategies the two poles of the male and female positions are no more than abstractions from the myriad ways self-strategies actually play themselves out in the interconnecting field of human relations. By choosing to look at philosophers I felt were pushing against the boundaries of "masculine" self-strategies, I underlined the possibility of collapsing male and female self-strategies into one, more flexible, strategy that could reap the advantages of both. [4]

I have argued that the philosophers I looked at could not make this move to incorporate the two strategies due to the conceptual barrier of their gender categories. I have also suggested that there is a critical point for each and every individual--a point of no return--when they are faced with the dilemma of the collapse of gender categories, and that this dilemma is not a trivial one. Until we take this

dilemma seriously we will not be able to go beyond gender categories, and we will not be able to resolve the current power struggles that face us. Truly reciprocal relationships require the abandonment of a rigid, mutually exclusive, two-gender system. Although such reciprocal relationships may require something approaching "androgyny," I do not use that term here for two reasons. One, despite my belief that we need to move toward a "new" kind of subjectivity, one which incorporates the two self-strategies without the conceptual barrier of rigid gender categories, I want to avoid the connotation that there should be a uniform self-strategy for human subjects. It is not difference between men and women that should be eradicated--but restrictions on differences in self-strategies due to gender categories. Self-strategies should evolve out of the context of a particular individual's life experience in response to that individual's particular problems in creating and maintaining subjectivity. As we saw in my readings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre, they could not resolve certain problems due to their own reading of gender categories. I am interested in what kind of solutions we might find for such problems if we could get past the gender categories that restrict us.

Two, "androgyny" is too easily read as effeminate masculinity. That is, because the masculine self-strategy is the accepted "norm" for personhood in dominant Western culture, any attempt to envision a new kind of human subject tends to take this norm as its basis and throw in a few

"feminine" aspects for good measure. Before we can articulate what the incorporation of two self-strategies in a way that breaks the conceptual barrier of gender categories might entail, we need to be able to articulate and valorize the "repressed" self-strategy--the feminine. [5]

In the third section of this chapter I will compare Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre (or, to be more precise, Silentio, Nietzsche and Sartre) as representatives of variations of a male position. In the fourth, I will explore suggestions for a new kind of self-strategy I see emerging from their texts. And in the fifth section I will discuss further possibilities for the theoretical framework developed here in light of philosophy as an enterprise and a feminist project.

5.2 Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework I am developing here is a restricted one. I have generated it using Lacanian psychoanalysis, critiques of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and the idealist tradition of Western continental 19th and 20th century philosophers. Whether this framework could apply cross-culturally is a question that I leave open. I am here interested in seeing how these traditions can be brought to bear on the question of gender in the context of philosophical texts that are a part of this tradition.

My interpretive framework stands as follows: We can characterize two poles that represent "pure" femaleness and

"pure" maleness. That is, we can characterize two modes of being that are so radically distinct from one another that they are opposed and mutually exclusive in the strictest sense of those words. No one could actually personify either one of these poles. Briefly, we can characterize the two poles as follows:

The female pole: The purely and eternally feminine is chaotic flux. It is life in its concrete specificity--so concrete that it escapes any and all attempts to characterize it via general categories. The eternally feminine mode of being takes each and every aspect of life as completely unique and unrepeatable--so much so that the attempt to characterize this mode of being in words immediately falsifies it. It is beyond language, beyond all attempts to label, describe or even point it out. Even to say that "each and every aspect of life is unique" is false, since without names or any kind of generalizations to help us distinguish one aspect of life from another, all aspects flow into one another and there is only an overwhelming chaos within which no distinctions can be made and in which no selves or perspectives can distinguish themselves. This pole can only be a limit because a self at this position is a contradiction in terms. There can be no purely feminine self since such a self would be completely unable to distinguish itself from the life around it. It would be dissolved into a chaotic flux of life that pulsed along with no beginning, middle or end.

The male pole: The purely and eternally male is changeless, eternal, harmonic order. It is a complete, self-sufficient, completely rational, changeless map of the universe in which everything and everyone has its unique place plotted out for all time. It contains all categories necessary for capturing every nuance of life. It is the real rendered orderly. That is, it is the real with everything in its proper place, the proper order toward which the universe is striving, the only order where absolutely everything and everyone has the place that is in harmony with all other places. The harmony of the whole where all of life is finally brought into harmony, all things follow their appropriate course and nothing is in conflict. It is life made perfect, rendered completely intelligible and rational, where all connections are clear and intelligible, and everything is connected to everything else. It is completely characterizable via the perfect language that reflects all the categories it has. Everything has its boundaries and definable ways of relating to everything else. Nothing is muddled, confused or blurred. All is complete clarity and distinctness. This pole can only be a limit because a self at this position is also a contradiction in terms. There can be no purely masculine self since such a self would be motionless. Being perfect, it would not need to change. It would remain in a state of suspension in the only place in which it truly belongs. All would be known, desire would be sated, and all would remain fixed in their positions with no need or desire to move, no

lack to push them to reach for what they don't have. Thus, no change, no movement, no life.

Having set up these two poles, we discovered that we could characterize two self-strategies, each related to one of which took one of these poles as its guiding ideal:

The female self-strategy: This self-strategy is based in connectedness. The feminine self who makes predominant use of the female self-strategy is a self who maintains self-continuity by maintaining connectedness with others. She must always be connected to an other who informs her, gives her her meaning and her function, by demanding her to play the role of other. That is, she takes on the shape that will satisfy the desire of a self. She reflects back to this self the image that self desires to see. She conforms to the self/other pattern set by another. She conforms to this self/other pattern by responding to that self's desire with no self parameters of her own to hold her back. She becomes whatever self will fit the form provided by the "other" of the other's self/other pattern. She gives first priority to connectedness, to the fusion experienced by fitting so closely to the desire of an other that she feels that other's desire as her own and so desires what the other desires--that she be the "other" that will affirm the other's self. She cares very little about the pattern of social positions laid out by the Symbolic. Instead, her attention is completely on the specificity of those others in her life whose "other" she plays. She cares very little about the "rational" code for

translating and transposing a particular self-identity through the positions of the Symbolic. She attends instead to the concrete specificity of the particular individuals in front of her in order to take on whatever shape they give her. If this is within the socially acceptable parameters of the Symbolic, fine. If not, she is perfectly content to subvert those parameters. Her priority is satisfying the concrete desire of a particular other for an "other" that will satisfy that other's self/other pattern.

The male self-strategy: This self-strategy is based on opposition. The male self who maintains himself with a male self-strategy must always oppose himself to those around him. He takes the self of a self/other pattern created in early childhood, and he attempts to translate and transpose this self through the social positions of the Symbolic by finding others to play the "other" of his self/other pattern that will repeatedly confirm and so maintain a recognizable form of his original self. Unless the other is willing to conform to his self/other pattern, he must establish a connection with the other by using his self/other pattern as a guide to staking out the Symbolic positions between them. He can thus build up the layers of his identity to fit various situations and social contexts by using the logic of the same--rules of analogy and similarity--to translate his identity with the help of the Symbolic categories available to him. Through the various meaning structures at his disposal, he can find the self/other pattern suitable for a situation he has never

before encountered by ordering that situation via socially acceptable categories and finding his appropriate position vis à vis those categories. By finding others in the situation that take the same positions vis à vis him that his self/other pattern specifies, he can maintain self-identity, even though specific people and events have changed. His priority is the laying out of a clear self/other pattern via clear categories that can be related to one another in an orderly and "rational" fashion. Everything has a category, a place within the Symbolic. This place could be found by tracing out through rules of similarity and analogy, a logical deduction of categories, the implications of one's original self/other relationship. Any messiness must be cleared up and properly categorized in order to allow the transposition of self/other patterning through the network of already established categories. Ordering of experience through already established categories makes transposition and translation easier by clearly labeling, clearly defining, the boundaries of things. Then all one has to do is maneuver through those positions via the transposition of one's self/other pattern.

We have delineated these two self-strategies as extremes approaching the limits set by the two poles. A self that only used the female self-strategy would be a self that was so pliable she would take on absolutely any form some other in her vicinity desire of her. She would be so dependent on others to determine her form for her that she would take on

whatever shape was given her with no questions asked. A self that only used the male self-strategy would be a self that so rigidly adhered to his own fixed conception of himself that he could never change, but would have to continually repeat the same self/other pattern with no variation. He would thus need an other who was very pliant, changing to fit his need in whatever new situation presented itself, or he would need a very stable external situation with rigid Symbolic categories. As we have seen it is more likely that the particular position between the poles taken up by an individual would combine the two self-strategies in some form or other. As we have also seen, there would be a critical point for each individual, representing their own conception of gender categories, that would be the point of "no return" for these individuals when it came to incorporating any more of the opposite-sex self-strategy than they already had. Testing a particular text for this critical point has given use useful insights into the conceptual barriers preventing an author from making use of his own suggestions for getting himself out of dilemmas he himself confronts. By analyzing a text's category of 'woman', we have been able to suggest new ways of getting beyond certain impasses of the text the author couldn't due to his conception of gender categories. Such an analysis suggests an internal critique of the gender categories of the text. Reworking gender categories can resolve problems presented by the text. The "deconstruction" of gender categories a gender-sensitive reading of

philosophical texts can provide could, in turn, have ramifications in the broader realm of social relations between men and women.

5.3 Variations in a Male Position

The positions taken up between the two poles, with a critical point different for each individual, mean that each individual divides humanity into the two groups of "male" and "female" a bit differently. It also means that many of those individuals may divide the two groups up with a greater or lesser overlap of the male and female characteristics that both sexes can share without putting their gender into question. But as long as there are gender categories there will always be a point where a person of one sex cannot manifest characteristics of the other sex. That is, there is what I will call a "critical point" where if I, as a man, say, were to go any further toward the female pole, I would no longer be a man. The same is true for a woman, coming from the female pole, and going towards the male pole.

I would further argue that this critical point has to do with the need for two strategies that are complementary. A purely "feminine" self would get lost in the broader realm of social positions. Since her priority is connectedness with an embodied other, she acts in responsiveness to another rather than on the basis of social acceptability. To the extent that she takes on a masculine self-strategy she can position herself in a socially acceptable way. To be

guaranteed a position in the broader social realm, she is to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon a masculine self to position her. In her responsiveness to this self she takes on the role of other that will guarantee her a position in the social realm.

A purely "masculine" self would lose the richness of his embodied experience. Since his priority is positioning himself vis à vis Symbolic categories, he orders his experience via categories in accordance with the self/other pattern that will maintain his identity. Like any theory that refuses to respond to data it hasn't yet been able to explain, such a self-strategy would soon lead to falsification of one's experiences by reducing them to inadequate categories. To incorporate new aspects of experience into one's self/other pattern, however, one needs a responsive other. It is only through the responsive mirroring of an other that anticipates one's desire that as yet meaningless bodily sensations can be incorporated into one's self/other pattern.

Each individual has their own sense of when a strategy would no longer be complementary and so threaten their own selves with extinction. Depending on one's upbringing and cultural background, this critical point would come at various places between the two poles. Thus, the critical point for each person would represent that point at which they can no longer conceive of the kind of response necessary for maintaining their self-identity, the point where their

own strategies would fail because there would be no strategy out there to complement it.

As we have seen this critical point can take different forms. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Sartre all have different conceptions of gender categories--that is, the critical point, or conceptual barrier, past which they cannot push incorporation of two self-strategies further, differs for the three of them. I will now characterize the critical point for each of them, relating that critical point to what we learned about their particular category of 'woman.'

Kierkegaard: Kierkegaard could conceive of a woman taking a female self-strategy with respect to a man. That is, he could conceive of a woman being receptive enough to a man to allow an experience beyond her conceptual categories to occur. The princess waited for the knight of infinite resignation or the knight of faith (depending on how it turned out) to make up his mind about how to deal with the unsuitability of their match. The bride waited in all modesty for the groom that never came. Agnes was ready to entrust her destiny to the merman. Sarah was ready to let herself be saved by Tobias. All the women characterized by Silentio in Fear and Trembling were either innocently receptive--waiting for someone to take them by the hand--or actively entrusting themselves to the judgment of another. Thus, all these women were willing to receive another, to entrust themselves to the judgment of another even though to

them that other's reasoning may have seemed irrational according to their own sense of the Symbolic. Because they were women, willing to take the female position with respect to another, they put connectedness with another first. That is, they were willing to override their own sense of the Symbolic in order to satisfy the desire of the other.

The man who won this woman's trust, on the other hand, had the weighty responsibility of respecting that trust by keeping the woman within the bounds of the Symbolic. Silentio's conception of 'woman' was of someone who utilized a female self-strategy of surrendering herself to the form given her by the "other" of another's self/other pattern, and who took no responsibility for maintaining Symbolic order. This, in turn, necessitated that the man take all responsibility for maintaining Symbolic order. It was next to impossible, and inconceivable as far as Silentio was concerned, for a man to let go of his self/other pattern enough to let himself be informed by the female's "other". Since the responsibility of maintaining the Symbolic order was his and his alone, and since overflowing his own self/other pattern to receive another could subvert Symbolic categories, he could not "indulge" in a female self-strategy. And yet, Silentio felt the restriction of Symbolic categories. He granted a kind of experience beyond all categories, beyond the universal, within the context of a God-relationship.

Silentio could more easily justify taking up the female position with respect to God. That is, of conforming to God's desire by playing the role of "other" in God's self/other pattern. he could not, however, conceive of taking up this role with respect to women. For someone in a God-relationship, someone who attended to the will of God, who had a faith in God that went beyond all Symbolic categories, there were feelings and acts that went beyond the Symbolic, beyond what could be communicated in language, beyond the rational. Thus, man could take up a position of innocent receptivity with respect to God, without forsaking his role as upkeeper of the Symbolic order.

Social relations were protected from an exploration of inwardness that included opening oneself up to the desire of the other and letting it inform one. Silentio allowed the possibility of individual transformation, but stopped short of social transformation. The external demeanor of a knight of faith remained the same, social categories remained the same, the traditional male/female complements of self-strategies remained the same. It was only in inwardness that one could explore the possibility of breaking down traditional ways of dividing the task of self and other that maintain subjectivity. But the new kind of subjectivity Silentio posited in the inwardness of the knight of faith could not be translated into the outwardness of social relations. The receptivity with respect to God that defied all categories was a realm of inward experience that man

would not introduce into the Symbolic. He would keep it to himself, knowing that his actions could not be expressed via any available categories. Man could take up a female position with respect to God, just as woman could, but Silentio could not conceive of man taking this position with respect to woman or other men.

Silentio's critical point, then, did not come in positing a man in the female position. It came in determining the "other" with respect to whom this position could be posited. Silentio could not conceive of a man who would risk subversion of Symbolic categories, because it was the male sex that must preserve those categories. Since women weren't responsible for maintaining the Symbolic order, if men gave up that responsibility, then the Symbolic would be threatened with dissolution and chaos would ensue. To counter this possibility, man had to make sure that he did not forsake his role. Silentio maintained the possibility of getting beyond restricting Symbolic categories by positing the possibility of a different kind of self-strategy carried out in an inwardness that would not effect one's external relations with the world. Thus, he could conceive of the incorporation of the two self-strategies into one as long as the Symbolic order itself could be kept safe from tampering.

Nietzsche: Nietzsche went further than either of the others in questioning the boundary between the two self-strategies. His free spirit could make use of both. But he still felt

that different self-strategies had to be divided between different groups of people. he recognized the importance those with "feminine instincts" had for the "strong," but he failed to see that if the "strong" were to incorporate two self-strategies into one, other individuals of the human community would have to make corresponding changes. Nietzsche's critical point comes in his failure to recognize the interdependency of self-strategies. The free spirit should be able to impose his self/other patterning on others, and yet challenge Symbolic categories by overflowing any and all categories that do not respect the specificity of his own experience. Thus, Nietzsche's free spirit would impose a patterning that requires the support of the Symbolic, at the same time that he should respect life's specificity in a way that would subvert Symbolic categories. he should create the categories that speak to his own experience, but he should be able to create these categories with no help from another. Thus, Nietzsche overlooks the complementary nature of what I've called "male" and "female" self-strategies in his attempt to incorporate them. Silentio recognizes that an attempt to subvert categories needs to be contained within the context of a relationship. Nietzsche doesn't provide this context, thus leaving him much more vulnerable to being overwhelmed by chaotic flux.

Nietzsche's conception of 'woman' is that she should stick to her feminine role so that man can perform his task of incorporating the two self-strategies. But he fails to

recognize that an incorporation of the two self-strategies would require a change in the other that played another's "other". Since human identity is created and maintained in interdependent relationships, and since self-strategies must be complementary, a change in one self-strategy necessitates a change in the other. For Nietzsche's new vision of subjectivity, of the free spirit, to work, all must change to support this new kind of subjectivity in the complementary and interdependent network of human relations. Nietzsche's critical point comes in failing to recognize that the change he envisions cannot be of one individual or an elite group of individuals--it must be a whole community of individuals. Thus, while Silentio's conception of a new kind of subjectivity takes into account its relational nature, Nietzsche's critical point leads him to believe that a new kind of subjectivity can be imposed on others in the same way that the old, male identity was.

Sartre: Sartre recognizes that there's no particular reason that any particular group of people should take on one or the other of the two self-strategies. But he could not conceive of incorporating the two strategies. If there weren't a group of people to play the other, if the distinction between self and other was not complete, then identity, and human agency, would fail completely. He could not tolerate any overlapping of the two strategies, although the possibility of such an overlap comes out in his work. His critical point

comes in conceiving that a man could make use of a female self-strategy. He concedes that others may refuse to don the female self-strategy--but this only makes it harder and more unlikely that one will find an "other" to fit one's own self/other pattern. The task of being a man is thus harder than ever, but it is still the same task. One can't count on the Symbolic since it turns out not to be sanctioned the way that one thought. One cannot count on the Law of the Father to preserve one's identity. If one is to preserve an identity, one must continually impose one's self/other pattern. With the legitimacy of the Symbolic in doubt, this task is harder than ever, but at the very least one must make sure that one doesn't become an "other" for another's self/other pattern.

Thus, Sartre's critical point comes in taking on the female position with respect to any other--be they God or human. He shares Nietzsche's feeling that the Symbolic is arbitrary, but rather than challenge it or subvert it in light of one's own specificity, or in light of a God-relationship, he focuses on the need to legitimate Symbolic categories on one's own. One must take responsibility--there is nothing else to appeal to, neither God, nor subtler nuances of life. One must admit that all is arbitrary and take responsibility for the categories one chooses to affirm as being arbitrary. Unlike Silentio, Sartre doesn't feel that man has a responsibility to maintain the Symbolic as it is. He doesn't specify the conditions under which one is

justified in subverting the Symbolic because he believes that one is always recreating the Symbolic. Like Nietzsche, he thinks the Symbolic is an arbitrary creation that has no claim to legitimacy or authority. Unlike Nietzsche, he doesn't think that there's anything beyond it to inform one. If the Symbolic has no legitimacy, no authority, then nothing does. There is nothing with respect to which one can take up a female position of receptivity, nothing one can entrust oneself to, in order to let oneself be informed by a new shape that will give rise to new categories.

If the Symbolic has no legitimacy then there is nothing to inform one and one is entirely on his own, to make sense of an inert in-itself as best he can. Unlike Silentio, Sartre doesn't think there's any other with respect to which one can take on a female self-strategy. Unlike Nietzsche, Sartre doesn't think there's any pulse of life waiting to inform one. For any meaning at all to exist, one must create one's own categories out of the nothingness of one's own freedom. Thus, unlike Silentio, Sartre throws the Symbolic into doubt, but refuses to take up a female position with respect to anything else. He thus can conceive of the failure of a male self-strategy, but he cannot conceive of an opposing self-strategy with any efficacy.

All three show some awareness of the possibility of two strategies--that is, they all seem to be aware that the male strategy is not the only one, that there is another strategy.

But their stance toward that other strategy varies. All three have varying critical points that constitute varying conceptual boundaries in their ability to incorporate the two self-strategies of the typically male and the typically female into a new self-strategy. While Silentio will allow the possibility of being informed by God's desire, and Nietzsche allows the possibility of being informed by a will to power beyond rational categories, Sartre will not allow himself to be informed by anything at all. All three share the refusal to be informed by a human other. The mark of the male position that they all share is the refusal to take on the "other " of a human other's self/other pattern. At the same time, all three grant this as a mark of the female position, of 'woman' as she appears in their texts. Tracing out these three male positions has thus allowed us to arrive at a critical point that they all share in common. In the next section I will explore the possibilities that going beyond this critical point may lead us to.

5.4 Suggestions for a New Subjectivity

Up to now we've thought of the two strategies as needing to be performed by one or the other of the self/other dyad. We are now ready to move to an incorporation of the two positions into one. That is, up to now there has been what I've called a "critical point"--a point where the individual could not envision anymore overlap of the two strategies without endangering the possibility of subjectivity entirely.

There may have been a greater or lesser overlap of the masculine and feminine, but finally each according to their gender had to bear responsibility for one or the other of two kinds of functions designed to maintain the identities of both. If either the one or the other failed to carry out the function they were responsible for then identity, subjectivity, would fail. This would entail obliteration of the worst sort for both parties.

In a relatively static society with rigid Symbolic categories, an individual would assume an identity at birth and keep that identity the rest of his life. For example, a serf in feudal times would not have much opportunity for any change in his identity. His identity would be staked out in terms of his relationships to the people around him. These relationships, being relatively static, would ensure a relatively static self. For the breakdown of static social relations to occur without a loss of stable subjectivity, there must be a group of people willing to mirror back the desire of those who would create new identities. For example, a serf who typically thought of himself as subservient and lacking in decision-making abilities would need someone to reflect back to him his dawning desire to fight back rather than submit to demands. A mother gives the infant's initial attempts to reach out for something by putting an object in his hand. She notes what he's reaching for and anticipates a desire the infant may not have yet recognized in himself. The woman, or man, who picks up on

the serf's impatience with his position and reflects back to him an angry person with the power to act will be able to affect the serf's subjectivity by allowing him to incorporate new aspects of his experience (e.g., the tension of his body which now signifies his anger to him) into his self/other pattern. Thus a social position takes on new meaning in the context of concrete relationships with others.

In our complex society there has been a proliferation of symbolic structures. Mass media and cable TV, along with accelerated methods of transportation, have created a clash of all the symbolic structures various cultures have created. If we could delineate a "central" network as the symbolic structures representing Western hegemony, we could target subsidiary networks from "deviant" walks of life as well as "marginal" cultures all across the globe, that are being incorporated into the "central" network and which incorporate other symbolic structures into themselves as well. With this complicated Symbolic, the positions one may take up with respect to others have become much more diverse. While a serf might need a concrete other to reflect back to him new aspects of himself, a boy from a family of farmers might choose to emulate Michael Keaton of "Family Ties" and get involved with public TV.. Having been presented with this option by the media, he has a new position available to him that may be better suited to how he experiences himself in concrete relationships than, say, trying to keep the family farm afloat.

With the proliferation of identity possibilities supplied by a symbolic framework that has expanded to absorb more and more of the vast range of human experience, we no longer need to relegate women to the role of "other." As long as there is a group of people prepared to play out an extreme version of female subjectivity, there is a group of people flexible enough to provide men with whatever "others" they need. Such a group of people insures that a continuous self-identity can be maintained even when new situations are being confronted that exceed the current Symbolic categories. As the globe becomes a world community and the Symbolic allows an increasing diversity of positions, we no longer need one group of people to supply this kind of cement. The Symbolic structures have become complicated enough to allow each individual to take on the positions that suit his experience without needing a group of people that will surrender their own self/other pattern to conform to that of another's. Thus, both sexes could now assert themselves as individuals, transposing themselves through the Symbolic, without needing others flexible enough to sacrifice their own positioning in order to nurture new identities. There are enough paths laid out so that one can sort through the various and conflicting Symbolic orders of various cultures without getting lost, without needing an other to conform to one. Thus, a new option is opened up--the possibility that we could all learn to perform the role of other without losing the role of self. We can all play the self because

there's a complicated enough variety of Symbolic structures available to us to fit a wide range of experience. This allows more likelihood that two people with conflicting experiences can find common ground in the Symbolic. We can also play the other, without sacrificing our own self/other pattern, because there are parameters that can open up between two selves that allow such mingling. That is, there is room in the overlap between the two selves for both to play "other" to the other's self at the same time that the other continues to confirm their own self/other pattern. This creates a kind of play-space similar to what we looked at in chapter two in our discussion of Winnicott. Both selves need confirmation of their social position and yet can release new aspects of their experience in keeping with their other's "other."

For example, I may be a white, male lawyer with an office in New York City. My self/other pattern with a subordinate requires that he give me a certain amount of deference and so forth. If I could allow myself to play the other's "other" in a way that prioritized concrete connectedness rather than Symbolic categories, I might find myself playfully engaging with the subordinate. Instead of disqualifying any aspect of our interaction that didn't fit my self/other pattern, I would allow my body to respond to his body. I would then give these responses meaning by attending to them and articulating them in one form or another. For example, picking up on his body stiffening when

I gave an order in a certain way, and modifying my order. The same would hold true for the subordinate's engagement with me. This kind of interaction occurs all the time of course. The point here is that two modes of interacting can be going on at the same time, with either one mode (the masculine self-strategy) or the other (the feminine self-strategy) predominating. It's interesting to contemplate how quickly the form of the lawyer/subordinate relationship would change if both parties made predominate use of a feminine self-strategy.

Gender-sensitive readings of philosophical texts can help us explore and articulate how gender affects our worldview and our ways of relating with human others. Articulating the two strategies, valorizing both of them, and demonstrating how they can come together into one strategy, will help pave the way toward a new kind of subjectivity in which both strategies can be used by all individuals.

I have tried to suggest how such an incorporation of the two strategies might work. For reciprocal relations to work, individuals must be able to use both strategies equally well. They must be both responsive to the desire of the other, as well as clear on their own parameters. They cannot let themselves be taken over by the desire of the other, and they cannot let themselves turn into dictators of the form the other will take. [6] Instead, both must utilize both strategies in an equal give and take. This give and take is within the confines of the Symbolic in the sense that it

makes use of the positions the symbolic makes available. It also defies the Symbolic in the sense that it readily subverts Symbolic categories, for example, those of status (as we saw in the example on the previous page) or gender, in order to create new categories in keeping with the concrete specificity of the concrete relationship. But this new kind of relationship is not merely the imposition, transposition, of the self-same identity of one onto an other; it is the creation of two new identities in reciprocal responsiveness to the desire of the other that gives them a new form within the parameters of their identity as laid out by the Symbolic.

In the three philosophers I have looked at here I have explored the possibilities for a new subjectivity presented by each:

Kierkegaard: In his relationship to God, Silentio talks of a receptivity to the incomprehensible desire of an other. If Silentio could take this position with respect to a human other without losing his own identity, he could stretch his identity beyond "rational" standards, without losing his identity entirely. Thus, what he says about a relationship to God, I take as being instructive for a relationship with another that doesn't take one outside of one's own parameters. In addition to the male sense of self that maintains its identity in a self/other context by imposing its self and making the other conform to its desire for the other that will sustain that sense of self, this new self-maintaining human being will allow the same receptivity to an

other that defies all "rational" meaning given to life and one's own experiences as Silentio suggests that Abraham felt in his acceptance of God's desire despite its apparent irrationality. If every individual--whether male or female--could allow this "irrational" moment to creep into their own project of maintaining self-identity, they could allow faith in the other they were involved with to carry them through that moment where the other was taking them beyond themselves and what they had already worked out through the transpositions of a male self-strategy, to a new moment where things made sense in an entirely new perspective. That is, they could take a "leap of faith" by trusting that in taking on the role of "other" to another's self/other pattern, they would not entirely forfeit their own position.

Nietzsche: Nietzsche suggests that we are not tied to any one position in the Symbolic, but his taking on of the female position doesn't have the parameters of Kierkegaard. Instead of taking on the female position with respect to a particular person, Nietzsche attempts to take on the female position with respect to life. This is admirable. But it also makes the danger of losing all and any identity much more immediate. That is, Nietzsche has no answer to the question of how to protect one's identity given that one has abdicated from the male strategy in order to take on the female one. If one were to attend to every nuance of one's embodied experience, one's self and perspective would unravel. Without some sort of parameters to guide one's attentiveness,

the world would quickly lose its coherence. Attending to the nuances of one's embodied experience in responsiveness to an other in order to respond to the other's desire, is the feminine self-strategy for providing such parameters.

] Kierkegaard protects himself from the loss of all identity by speaking of dropping the male strategy only within the context of a God-relationship. Nietzsche tries to adopt female relationships with respect to all life experience, and yet insist that it is one's own personal responsibility to yet maintain identity. Thus, he complicates things for himself by refusing to admit that identity is a contextual affair in which people have to take on various roles if one is to continue as a person. He tries to say that one individual can take on both strategies and not have his identity fail rather than admitting that if his vision is to work, both parties must take on both strategies so that both can continue as identities working in a reciprocal relationship. Instead he insists that woman continue to play her role--even if it is an arbitrary one--and he insists that even though man should push toward the female position, that he should be able to protect himself from a loss of identity, not by insisting on a reciprocal change in any other, but through sheer strength of will.

Sartre: Sartre suggests that the Symbolic order is not sacrosanct, thereby breaking down the legitimacy of a masculine self-strategy. Although he doesn't offer a feminine self-strategy as an alternative, we can trace the

struggle toward a new kind of subjectivity in the project of becoming God. Sartre says that such a project is impossible, but he is operating on the assumption that each individual has the project of becoming God. No single individual can be both in-itself--an object subject to the gaze of another--and for-itself--the consciousness that gazes--at once. A community of individuals could conceivably attain a state of in-itself-for-itself if they could achieve reciprocal relationships. If the self-strategies of the individuals of the community perfectly complemented one another, then it is possible the community could form a harmonious, self-sufficient, self-causing whole.

The new self-strategy incorporating both female and male self-strategies: This self would be based in both opposition and connectedness as two moments in the whole of a dynamic process of self-maintenance. A self that made equal use of both strategies would be a self that would use the positions laid out by the Symbolic as a vehicle for translating and transposing its own self/other pattern to new situations and contexts. it would also be a self that would be open to being informed by the desire of an other within the parameters set by an overlap of its self/other pattern with the self/other pattern of the other. That is, it would adhere to the form of its self/other pattern, but it would also be flexible enough to overflow the boundaries of its own

self/other pattern in order to conform to the "other" of a self/other pattern of someone of his or her choosing.

In the reciprocal relationship of a fusion-experience in which both selves are able to take on a female self-strategy with respect to one another, each will anticipate the desire of the other in a mutual attempt to pleasure one another. Thus, neither will dictate the exact shape the other should conform to. Instead, the two selves will create a new self/other pattern for both, by mutually conforming to the as yet unarticulated desire of the other. That is, through attentive receptivity to the concrete specificity of the other that defies all categorization, each self will anticipate the desire of the other and attempt to satisfy that desire before it is voiced. In this mutual attentiveness where each attempts to conform to the other's "other," the parameters of both selves' self/other patterns will change. The desire to satisfy the other will lead each to overflow the self-boundaries set by their self/other patterns in the Symbolic. But this overflow of self-identity will remain within the parameters of taking on an "other" that will satisfy another. The transformed self/other pattern of each will also be continuous with their original self/other pattern since that pattern was the context within which the other attended to the self's desire.

For example, two colleagues may have very decided views on their relationship vis à vis the other and the book they want to write together. If both take on a female self-

strategy with respect to the other, those views will swiftly change. Rather than attempting to fit the other and the project into one's self/other pattern, the individual will attend to the pleasure of the other. Again, a playspace is created in which both try to tune in to and anticipate the desire of the other. In this state of reciprocal attentiveness the project and their relationship to one another take on a form that is different from either individual's preconception of it. Thus, the self/other pattern of both is transformed in the process of creation.

5.5 Philosophy and Feminism

The new self-strategy that I have just characterized above came from a reading of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre that took the possibility of two types of self-strategy and their incorporation into one self-strategy seriously. This possibility cannot arise until the male self-strategy is no longer considered the ideal norm for any and all self-strategies. In order to articulate a new kind of self-strategy, one that utilizes the advantages of both male and female strategies, we need to become aware that there are two types of strategies, characterize the types and the various forms the positions that fall under each type can take, and articulate ways of incorporating the two more fully into one. Thus far such a project has been hindered by the assumption on the part of both male and female theorists that the only "good" strategy--the only strategy that is a

strategy--is the male, oppositional strategy. We will not be able to formulate a new kind of subjectivity until we can both recognize and affirm the female self-strategy as a strategy that has, in its own right, solved the problems of effective human agency. Both strategies have their advantages and draw-backs. As we have seen, neither strategy can work without the other. But a further exploration of both strategies as strategies rather than as givens about human nature or "man" and "woman" needs to be made if we are to go beyond both to a new mode of being, a new kind of subjectivity that can create new possibilities for human existence.

I consider the interpretive framework that I have sketched above to be tentative and contingent in the sense that further use of it will inevitably change it. What I would like to see is further investigation of the differences between a male and female self-strategy, and further speculation about how the two might be combined in such a way that we could do away with the need for any gender categories at all. There have been many interesting studies in recent years about human nature and the self. The Frankfurt School, post-structuralists such as Foucault and Derrida, have all made provocative attempts at articulating the dialectical nature of self/other relationships and self/society contexts in order to enrich our understanding of human nature. But none of these attempts has taken gender into account in a systematic way.

Unless feminist theory is taken seriously, and unless the existence of two kinds of self-strategies are taken seriously--each with their own valid perspective to offer--we have no possibility of working beyond gender to a new kind of subjectivity that could allow each and every individual to make use of both self-strategies and so expand their perceptions of the world. Until we can take female experience as an aspect of life that is informed by a perspective every bit as valid as the male perspective, we will never be able to confront the impasses we currently face and move beyond them. Not only must we grant "female" experience as a different perspective on life, but we must characterize what constitutes that difference in perspective and we must incorporate that perspective into the new world-view that we are all struggling to create.

I would like by interpretive framework to allow a reading of all those who have investigated human self-understanding in the Western idealist tradition, in a manner that will bring gender to the fore. Most of the people who have written on the subject have not directly addressed the question of gender. They have written analyses that are "gender-blind" in the sense that they have completely excluded or ignored the female perspective by either marginalizing it or putting it completely off-stage. Feminist theory has, of course, tried to correct this limitation. What I have tried to do in this dissertation is to suggest an interpretive framework that would allow us to

utilize the insights of these gender-blind analyses of human nature and self by reading these very same gender-blind texts in such a way that gender is brought to the fore. For the purposes of this dissertation, this framework is restricted to a specific philosophical tradition, although it is possible it could have a wider application.

Even a gender-blind text is informed by gender. Every theorist speaks from a position that is gender-informed, speaks from a perspective that makes more or less use of either a "masculine" or "feminine" self-strategy. Reading these texts with such an interpretive framework in mind highlights the gender categories at play in a particular text. This, in turn, demonstrates the importance of these categories as conceptual barriers to envisioning a new mode of being for humanity--one that goes beyond gender categories, that reaches beyond relations to others built upon oppositions and domination, and instead strives for relations built upon connectedness and cooperation.

Feminist theory is not relevant merely for the feminist project of emancipating women from a role that has become constricting and oppressive for women. It is also the key to resolving the conflicts we all face, both men and women, in our self-conceptions. We are moving to a new sense of self-identity. Both men and women need to make full use of both self-strategies to give full expression to the new kind of human being that is currently emerging. Until men can get over their gender-blindness, and until women can get over

assuming that they must either become male to speak, or must deny "male" self-strategies in order to affirm themselves as women [7], we will not be able to create the new self-image we need to create a new kind of human community.

Neither sex can ignore the advantages of the other's self-strategy. Both sexes must learn to incorporate the advantages of the self-strategy of the other. We must overcome our differences in order to affirm what both have to offer to the other. Human identity always has and always will be a product of a social and communal enterprise--no single individual can form and maintain an identity without the help and support of the others around her. For women to be emancipated, both men and women need to change. For men to deal with the crisis in values and meaning that currently faces them, both men and women need to change. We need to recognize and affirm the interdependence of us all, and the need we all have for both male and female strategies in order to maintain human identity. Only then will we be able to transform a practice of maintaining human identity that has divided two tasks between two sexes into a practice that can incorporate those two tasks into a dual task that can be performed by all in reciprocal relationships based in mutual trust and respect.

A gender-sensitive reading of philosophical texts can do several things for us:

- 1) It can help us further articulate the interdependent nature of human identity. Once we've put the self into

context, positing it as one moment in the whole of a self/world relation rather than isolating it from the world in which and by which it constitutes itself, we can further elaborate that context by investigating the other kinds of selves a self needs in order to continue in a particular form. Once we start seeing how various kinds of selves constitute one another in a community of interlocking human relations, we can better understand what kind of contextual transformation would be needed to effect particular kinds of individual changes. In particular, we could better understand the way current gender categories work in preserving both male and female selves and so envision a transformation of gender categories that would respect the way in which gender categories play off of one another.

2) It can help us further articulate the interdependent nature of various perspectives on reality. The "masculine" worldview, as represented in the dominant discourse of the Western tradition, would not be possible without its "underside"--the unarticulated feminine position that supports the masculine worldview. If we all actually subscribed to the masculine view that fullfledged personhood consists of autonomous thought and action that asserts its mastery over everyone and everything around it, human society would soon fall apart. "Masculine" persons can only maintain this view as long as there are silent, feminine others to submit to playing the roles necessary for maintaining this illusion. Without the feminine prioritizing of human

connectedness, the masculine prioritizing of human opposition would have left them so alienated from themselves and other people that they would no longer be able to function as members of a society.

3) It can demonstrate the importance of feminist theory to both men and women without invalidating the achievements of the masculine perspective. Just as the feminine perspective has been crucial to the development of the masculine perspective and self-identity, so is the masculine perspective crucial to the development of the feminine perspective and self-identity. Without the Symbolic structures put into place by masculine self-strategies, the feminine perspective could not be articulated. It is thus not a matter of male against female or vice versa, but of two kinds of perspectives, each of which enabled the other one to exist.

Given my account of human identity as the product of an interlocking network of self-strategies, and given the role human identity has to play in the constitution of a particular world-view, a better understanding of gender is crucial to human self-understanding as well as an understanding of how we shape the reality we attempt to describe. Philosophers who have any interest in a deeper self-understanding or a deeper understanding of the way our self-understanding enters into our understanding of the world we live in, can therefore not afford to marginalize gender

issues. We can no longer afford to assume that understanding the experience of a particular group of people can give us the whole picture. Not only are the experiences of the rest of humanity crucial for an understanding of the human race as a whole--they are crucial to the understanding of the "masculine" perspective as well. Feminist theory not only allows women the opportunity to theorize about their particular perspective on the world and human affairs, it also allows men the opportunity to better understand what informs their own perspective.

In addition to what I have called the "female" perspective, we could distinguish other alternate perspectives that form the background to the dominant discourse. The "marginal" perspectives that aren't incorporated into the current hegemony of the current dominant discourse takes many different forms. Gender is one way of approaching the interdependency of various perspectives. Additional categories for characterizing the different perspectives are those of race or class. It seems to me that gender is one of the key entrypoints into an exploration of the interdependency of various perspectives because it is the one perspective that counters the dominant masculine discourse that each and every one of us experiences from birth on. Gender difference is a key part of all human identity from our earliest childhood. [8] As we grow up we learn to marginalize various parts of our identity--we learn what aspects of our experience finds expression in the

dominant discourse and what aspects are marginalized according to various other categories such as race, class, geographical region, or other "deviancies" (being handicapped, or whatever). To create a self that is acceptable in all walks of life, we constitute ourselves according to the social categories that apply most universally. We learn to restrict other aspects of our identity to the social contexts where it is accepted--our particular geographical region, or a particular group of people. Trying to introduce these identities created in smaller, more marginal, contexts creates the tension that introduction of a "marginal" identity into the hegemony of the dominant discourse of a culture always creates.

Gender is a focal point for a particularly interesting way that certain self-identities have been marginalized. Female self-strategies constitute roughly one half of the population, and yet they are still considered "marginal" according to the dominant discourse. Feminist theory that attempts to characterize and valorize female self-strategies is still considered marginal in academic departments all across the country. Female academics have learned to marginalize their female experience, just as male academics have. To have a voice in the dominant discourse as given expression by the academic community, one must marginalize the female aspects of one's experience and speak with a male voice.

It is only if we articulate the female perspective, as well as the male perspective that we will be able to explore ways of changing both perspectives by bringing the two closer together. Both perspectives capture aspects of human experience. The question is, do we want the two perspectives divided between two groups of people, or do we want an entirely new perspective that can be shared by all. When I say a "new perspective" I don't mean the perspective of a God's eye view that finally captures all of human experience. If such a view is possible, it is too far in the future for me to envision. What I do mean, is a perspective that can see all perspectives as interdependent and mutually affecting--and that can valorize all the different perspectives that go into the whole perspective of a human community as equally valid. [9] A philosophy that takes gender and gender issues seriously has the task of providing a theoretical framework in which various perspectives can be seen as mutually supporting and mutually enriching. Thus, instead of valorizing any one perspective as the "correct" view of human experience, we will have a perspective for seeing how various perspectives not only fill out the picture of reality, but also make other perspectives possible.

The self-strategies I have laid out here and characterized as either "male" or "female" could take many different forms depending on culture, race, class, and other factors that may enter into one's particular identity. [10] Gender is an important place to start in investigating the

interconnectedness of all perspectives and how they interact, because it is a crucial feature of everyone's original creation of a self in connectedness with and individuation from a same-sex or opposite-sex other. We need a perspective that can hold multiple perspectives together, giving a theoretical framework in which their interdependence and their interconnectedness can be explored. Masculine identity, being oppositional in nature, opposes itself to a female other. It may oppose itself to other groups of human beings as well, depending on its race, class, etc., but its most fundamental opposition is to a female other. [11] Thus, gender is a key entry point for commencing an exploration of philosophical texts as the creation of a perspective that is dependent upon the background of another perspective. To better understand the way human perspectives play off other human perspectives, gender-sensitive analyses are crucial to the philosophical enterprise of theorizing the human condition.

NOTES

[1] For discussions of the problem of difference in a feminist context see, for example, Bulkin, Pratt and Smith (1984), Hooks (1984) and Spelman (1982). This problem has been of on-going concern in the women's movement due to the difficulty of forming a collective identity as "women." Women come from different races, ethnic groups, and economic backgrounds. These differences may often seem more striking than the shared identity of one's gender. Feminist theory has taken on the challenge of being sensitive to these differences at the same time that it still attempts to provide a comprehensive theory. My remarks in this chapter are informed by this discussion.

[2] It is on this point that I'm very sympathetic to post-structuralists like Foucault and Derrida who carry on a continual practice of deconstruction. I do, however, feel that there is at least possibility of achieving a new world-view more satisfying than the present one--even if such a world-view would be quickly outmoded. I am thinking of a world-view here along the lines of a group-identity constructed by myriad individuals, just as a self is constructed from myriad fragments of embodied experience.

[3] See Dworkin (1974) and Frye (1983).

[4] Although I chose three male writers since my particular interest here is the limitations of male positioning, I certainly think female writers can exemplify male positioning. In addition, how gender categories impact on the self-constituting activity of women and just what might constitute a "woman" writer (or a writer beyond gender categories?) are both interesting questions that I would like to explore in the future.

[5] I am influenced here by Janice Raymond's discussion of problems with the concept of 'androgyny' for feminism in The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male (1979, ch. VI).

[6] For a discussion of problems due to the "ego-permeable-boundaries" of the female gender see Flax (1978).

[7] The French trend of l'écriture féminine explores some of the problems of a purely feminine voice. See Eisenstein and Jardine (1980), Marks (1978), Marks and de Courtivron (1980) and Moi (1985).

[8] I am thus, for the purposes of my project, emphasizing gender as an identity category. For a discussion of what identity categories (e.g., race, class, gender) have priority that challenges this view, see Elizabeth Spelman

(1985). her view brings up for my project the interesting question of how other kinds of identity categories affect self-strategies. Such question, however, are beyond the scope of this work.

[9] This is a Hegelian view in the sense that I'm assuming a sort of "coming together" of perspective along the lines of absolute spirit. Any self-respecting post-modern, post-structuralist would turn over in her grave! I here admit a yearning for this kind of ultimate closure, at the same time that I accept deconstructing practices as more feasible for a day-to-day understanding of human experience.

[10] I have argued that there are many positions in a spectrum of positions between the poles of "male" and "female" that an individual could take; thus, for example, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre are representative of three variations in male positioning. The possibility that such positioning could be affected by factors such as race, class or ethnicity, is a fascinating one, but I don't have the time to pursue it here. To bring up this possibility and do it full justice would complicate my project to the point of absurdity. Rather than taking this as an indication that the kind of exploration of gender categories I propose here is futile, however, I take this as a further indication of the possibility of getting beyond gender categories entirely. See my discussion of this point with respect to the feminist concern for differences among women in chapter one, section 1.5.

[11] Again, that the opposition of male and female is the most fundamental opposition is subject to debate both in and outside of feminist circles. Although I am advocating gender as an important category of analysis, it is not crucial to my project that it be accepted as the most fundamental identity category.

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