

QUEERING ANARCHISM

Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire

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Gender Sabotage

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Look how your children grow up. Taught from their earliest infancy to curb their love natures—restrained at every turn! ...Little girls must not be tomboyish, must not go barefoot, must not climb trees, must not learn to swim... Little boys are laughed at as effeminate, silly girl-boys if they want to make patchwork or play with a doll. Then when they grow up, “Oh! Men don’t care for home or children as women do!” Why should they, when the deliberate effort of your life has been to crush that nature out of them. “Women can’t rough it like men.” Train any animal, or any plant, as you train your girls, and it won’t be able to rough it either. Now will somebody tell me why either sex should hold a corner on athletic sports? Why any child should not have free use of its limbs? These are the effects of your purity standard, your marriage law. This is your work—look at it!

—Voltairine de Cleyre, “Sex Slavery” (1890)

What makes me transgendered is that my birth sex—which is female—appears to be in social contradiction to my gender expression—which is read as masculine. I defend my right to that social contradiction. In fact, I want to live long enough to hear people ask, “What made me think that was a contradiction in the first place?”

—Leslie Feinberg, *Trans Liberation* (1998)

Anarcha-feminists and anarchists in general need to have some new discussions about gender. Feminism has had an ongoing internal argument regarding minimizing or maximizing the meanings of the differences between men and women. Now we are seeing the influence on many anarchists and feminists of newer ideas about gender (e.g. queer theory) that question the idea of a concrete concept of “woman” and “man,” even “male” and “female.” Yet some radical or anarchist feminists and lesbians remain stubborn about questioning the usefulness of a category called “woman.” Meanwhile, identity politics have come under fire in anarchist circles, often characterizing identity-oriented projects as homogenous (represented only by each project’s most vocal proponents), and dismissing the importance of focusing on opposition to gender, sexuality, class, or racial oppressions.[1] Yet that which is called identity politics often does involve essentialism, *the idea that there are essential differences between two groups*. In the case of feminism, those who most often get to speak for the “movement” are white with class privilege, and regularly marginalize the

experiences of women of color and poor women, and exclude transgender/transsexual people when they organize around a universal concept of *women*. The standard radical feminist characterization of the way gender oppression (“patriarchy”) works legitimizes women’s exercise of domination (through capitalism or white supremacy, etc.), and makes men’s domination seem natural and inevitable. If the criticism of identity politics is that it hardens identities, a queer theory–influenced anarcha-feminism then could be outside of this criticism, and indeed may share it, while still emphasizing the real effects of the group-based oppression.

We’ve been made to believe that human subordination under the law is natural—that we need to be governed. The legitimacy of imposed government is also emphasized through the seemingly natural differences between people. The differences between people have been made significant so as to promote divisions based on domination and subordination. In doing so, those differences must be(come) clear-cut—a border must be drawn between the two, creating a dichotomy so there is no confusion about who is where in the hierarchy. This takes time, centuries even, to really harden our perception of human nature. It takes laws, but worse it takes discipline, primarily in the form of terror and violence, to pound a sense of hierarchy into us. Despite the possibility that the state and capitalism may be able to function without these imposed borders, the borders must still be destroyed.

To achieve liberation, we must reject the binary gender system, which divides us into two mutually exclusive categories. This gender system not only oppresses in the form of a hierarchy of categories, but also in terms of gender expression—holding up masculinity as superior and policing each person into their gender box. The significance of gender/sex differences must be exposed as a political construct, one which has been used to form a cross-class alliance among men, and to make heterosexuality and women’s roles and exploitation in (and outside) the home and family to seem natural.

In effect, we are imprisoned by a gender binary, though a sort of freedom may be accessible to some, and if we don’t behave appropriately there are plenty of prison guards to attempt to put us in our place. Clearly those who do not fit into these gender boxes are seen as a threat and are disciplined through threats or acts of discrimination, verbal abuse, harassment, and/or violence. I argue not that gender transgression or deviance is in itself revolutionary, but that we must transcend or destroy the gender-based power relations, as part of a sort of decolonizing. It is crucial that feminists not reinforce these gender boxes, but also that anarchists not minimize our need to pull these issues from the margins. The existence of these identities created by power relations should not be denied,

but instead should be examined and opposed in the context of power.

Whereas sex is usually defined by biological differences, gender has been used to describe the prescribed social differences between female and male, defining us as feminine or masculine, traits we can generally agree are not universal throughout time or place. One point of contention among some feminists and gender-transgressors (not that the two are mutually exclusive) is the definition of gender. I agree with others like Kate Bornstein that gender may refer to different concepts: gender roles, gender identity, etc.[2] For lack of a better term, here I will use the term “gender stratum” to refer to the hierarchal binary categories of gender. I argue that what is called “gender identity” is a different aspect of gender, which is separate from, but related to gender stratum. “Gender identity,” which I will call “gender inclination” since identity is problematic here, would have different meaning without gender stratum, but should not be confused as meaning the same thing, despite the fact that the two are conflated by many feminists.

We can probably agree that gender stratum is an imposed social construct. We could take it further by questioning whether our concepts of the biological differences between female and male existed before hierarchy, and whether they at least have the same significance before Western culture interpreted the differences we understand today.[3] The possibility that there are really no natural differences between the sexes—that these sexes don’t exist other than because of political/social reasons—can be troublesome to nearly anyone. In many ways, these ideas exist almost exclusively in the realm of academia[4] and have little relevance to most people’s everyday lives.

On the other hand, throughout the time humans have existed, there have been diverse ideas about the meanings of the physical differences between those with different organs associated with sex/gender. In considering the experiences of intersex people[5] and transgender/transsexual people, it only makes sense that a gender/sex continuum should be the basis for an understanding of human nature. Different ideas about gender and sexuality in various cultures, mostly where untouched by Western civilization[6], show us that not only are Western dualistic ideas about gender/sex, sexuality, and accompanying hierarchy atypical and manipulated to manage the people, but also that the argument that modern capitalism accommodates transgressive gender and expressions of sexuality is beside the point. The transition to capitalism was indeed a main driving force of the conquest over different forms of gender expression and sexuality, enforcing a strict gender/sex binary.

The likelihood is minimal that we could fully understand the origins of the concept of sex or the beginnings of gender hierarchy, even though this may

provide answers about the origins of hierarchy itself. [7] Whether biological characteristics once had neutral meaning or not, significance has been increasingly placed on these differences, creating these sex/gender constructs as part of a hierarchy (sex is gendered and therefore I use the two terms somewhat interchangeably), and the construction of the divisions between men and women has been an ongoing process.

Woman as a Different Species

“Certainly we can say that the language of the witch-hunt ‘produced’ the Woman as a different species.”[8]

—Silvia Federici

To understand the construction of a gender binary and hierarchy, we primarily look at Europe because of the ways in which, through colonization/imperialism, Europe violently exported its ideas throughout the world.[9] Before the witch hunts, European peasant women, having a decent amount of social power despite sexual division of labor and Christian-promoted misogyny, were heavily involved in revolts against feudalism and, later, capitalism. It is no coincidence, as Silvia Federici describes in her book, *Caliban and the Witch*, that the witch hunts, which involved the torture and murder of hundreds of thousands of women[10] mostly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, occurred in conjunction with the transition to capitalism and the colonization of the Americas.

Federici also explains how, over the course of a few centuries, women’s exploitation, through their unpaid labor in the home, termed “reproduction” (which includes procreation but is not limited to it), as well as slave labor in the Americas, had to be constructed as natural in the setting in which it was in the interest of capitalism to be viewed as voluntary and contractual. By justifying their exploitation, the dehumanization of unpaid laborers (women) allowed capitalists to hide/legitimize the reality that people didn’t have a choice in the matter.

The witch hunts were not only counter-insurgency measures. Accusations of witchcraft and prostitution were often made to punish theft and attacks (real or invented) on property, which increased at this time due to land privatization[11] and the exclusion of women from receiving wages. Especially important was capitalism’s new demand for workers (partly due to population crisis), leading to the construction of monogamous heterosexual[12] marriage as natural through the forced dependence of women on men, and criminalization of sexual acts that were not for the purpose of reproduction. Peasant women increasingly began to get punished for crimes such as abortion and contraception, and, in the case of

witches, also for allegedly causing infertility and impotence in men, in addition to castration and killing children. Queer peasants were disciplined by means of terror in Europe in particular (this is where the term “faggot,” meaning kindling, came from[13]), but also during colonization of the Americas as homosexuals and *two-spirit* people were killed, and the continuation of these identities/practices were averted or forced underground.[14]

Federici stresses that while some peasant men participated in and even encouraged these actions against women, and while the church played a strong role, the greater part of the campaign of terror against women would not have been possible without the role and interest of the state.[15] The ruling class’s interest in promoting the differences between the sexes is clear, and they accomplished this task by punishing certain behaviors and using terror to discipline women.[16] Early on, European women were defined as unruly, mentally weak, and in need of being controlled. The witch hunts served to reinforce this, but at the same time to discipline women into a new “nature”—that of the docile, moral, and motherly (yet still in need of being controlled).[17] It is worth noting that while capitalism played a strong role in shaping what became understood as the nature of women, there are obvious examples of how those in power in any economic circumstances (not just capitalism) seek to justify their rule by different means, often by controlling sexuality and enforcing gender norms. So while the concept of women and men as two different groups existed prior to the witch hunts, there was now a new significance on the difference between the two, functioning as a clear binary.

The notion of inflexible divisions between humans had to be beaten into all the people as a whole, thus creating profound alienation between men and women, and marginalization, if not extermination, of those who deviate from the norms. In addition, to compel the people to work under the conditions that capitalism requires involved a sort of conquest involving a new perception of the body as a machine or tool, and through the criminalization of various communal activities and non-productive sexuality.[18] Workers’ subordination and women’s further subordination were made to seem natural. Even though there seems to be no anticapitalist historical study of the shaping of men, this clearly was part of the witch hunts, the transition to capitalism, and colonialism as well.

In discussing human nature, we need to be critical of the ways that certain concepts such as hierarchy, or a need for hierarchy, are made to seem natural. [19] For instance, Andrea Smith wrote, “Heteropatriarchy[20] is essential for the building of US empire. Patriarchy is the logic that naturalizes social hierarchy. Just as men are supposed to naturally dominate women on the basis of biology, so too should the social elites of a society naturally rule everyone else through

the nation-state form of governance that is constructed through domination, violence and control.”[21] In a speech, she said, “This is why in the history of Indian genocide the first task that colonizers took on was to integrate patriarchy into native communities. The primary tool used by colonists is sexual violence. What sexual violence does for colonialism and white supremacy is render women of color inherently rape-able, our lands inherently invadable, and our resources inherently extractable.”[22]

An example of colonization of the “New World” being accomplished partly through the promotion of sexual divisions[23] is the French Jesuits’ interactions with natives in Canada (called the Montagnais-Naskapi) with no sense of private property, authority, or male superiority, which according to the French had to change if they were to become reliable trade partners. The French taught Naskapi men to discipline their children, and to “bring ‘their’ women to order.”[24] Witch hunts occurred in parts of the Americas (Federici discusses Mexico and Peru) that demonized all natives and Africans, but often focused more on the women.[25] Colonization is an ongoing process which includes patriarchal indoctrination and sexual violence in Indian schools.[26]

Gender Stratum and Race

The sex/gender hierarchy is inseparable from race, colonization, and capitalism. For example, female slaves were treated pretty much the same as male slaves, up until importing slaves was made illegal, at which time female slaves were made more often to breed and were increasingly subject to the sexual violence of white men.[27] Aspects of femininity, defined here as culturally/socially dictated as appropriate for “real” women, were constructed as a distinguishing mark of class (and race), much like landscaped yards that demonstrate that the owners need not use their land to grow food. Women who didn’t have to work were to be unnaturally “weaker, delicate, dependent, ‘lily-white’, housebound” and therefore “the making of the white race involved the politicized unmaking of women to fit into ‘white.’”[28]

Race is also a political and social construct. Understanding one politico-social construct can help us better understand another. Bacon’s Rebellion, which was a more significant one of many rebellions in which European indentured servants and African slaves joined together, frightened the state of Virginia into passing a series of laws specifically outlining the freedoms accessible to Europeans/Christians vs. Africans. In doing so, they created race. “Slavery was the most profitable form of labor in colonial Virginia, but racial slavery was the solution to the threat of servile insurrection and the problem of how to efficiently and peacefully get the workers—slave and free—to work... Race emerged from

the needs of the Virginia upper class to craft a docile and productive labor force. But as the benefits of whiteness became apparent to English laborers, they came to embrace the system by which privileges were conferred in exchange for policing slaves.”[29] While prejudices and ideas about superiority based on differences existed prior, this invention of whiteness created a new significance on physical differences that had a particular function to form a cross-class alliance among white people which still exists today.

The shaping of the categories of race and sex was part of a longer history of hierarchy. Additionally, just as the specific era of the witch hunts lasted a couple centuries, so too was the construction of race an ongoing process, like in the example of the Irish not being included into whiteness until later. Also, after the Civil War, lynching was a prominent way to terrorize—to discipline—Black people into submission. “Before lynching could be consolidated as a popularly accepted institution, however, its savagery and its horrors had to be convincingly justified. These were the circumstances which spawned the myth of the Black rapist—for the rape charge turned out to be the most powerful of several attempts to justify the lynching of Black people,” wrote Angela Davis. She explains further in her book *Women, Race, & Class*, “However irrational the myth may be, it was not a spontaneous aberration. On the contrary, the myth of the Black rapist was a distinctly political invention.” This also contributed to white women’s fear of black men (and to white men’s fear of their property, women, becoming tarnished), and was part of the precedent set which began to criminalize people of color, leading to the high rates of people of color in US prisons today.[30]

Despite there being major limitations to drawing parallels between race and gender stratum, the construction of these dichotomies allows us to see partly how hierarchy functions. Those in power divide the people on the basis of a physical difference (ignoring exceptions and gray areas) and amplify the significance of those differences through criminalization[31] and limitations of legal and economic freedoms, as well as through violence (justified by the alleged transgressions), while affording the favored group (men/whites) freedom from most repression. This process functions to make “natural” the divisions and hierarchal positions of those it involves. A cross-class alliance, rewarded with privileges, undermines anti-authoritarian resistance and class solidarity. In the case of women, I should point out that male privilege includes man’s ability to dominate the women in his family, which can be seen as more personal while being, in effect, political.

Gender Liberation for Everyone

The naming of political advantages (or “wages”) of whiteness or maleness as privileges is a problem, however. If the way I described hierarchy’s functioning is accurate, it would not really be in the interest of the favored working-class group to participate in an alliance with the rich rulers since that means they will perpetually be ruled and exploited (this is where the promise of mostly unattainable upward mobility comes in to reinforce the alliance). White people have a responsibility to our/themselves to abolish whiteness for these reasons and to be fully human,[32] in addition, of course, to the responsibility to end racism.

Similar to the case of white people, when men participate in domination, they do themselves harm. While folks assigned male at birth who don’t comfortably fit into their assigned gender box are certainly affected by gender oppression, the ones who do conform (willingly or not) would also benefit from undermining the ways gender hierarchy has been naturalized through the socialization of boys and men. They can hardly be free, and the relationships they have with others cannot be fulfilling as long as emotions are suppressed, competitive masculinity has to be established, and inequality (if not abuse) must be maintained with women (and often children as well). Yet why would men choose to change if they are consistently told they are privileged, bell hooks asks.[33] To change means, for one, that men would have to overcome their training to deny their emotions. Implicating women as well as men in perpetuating this damage done to males through parenting, hooks wrote, “Homophobia underlies the fear that allowing boys to feel will turn them gay.”[34] Whereas “feminism” tends to imply a fight by and for women, it is, then, also in the interest of men to oppose gender oppression and homophobia/heteronormativity, rather than perpetuate it. It also means that feminism, for lack of a better word, must also address the situation of men.

While it is clear that men largely benefit from this system while women do not, it clearly functions by enforcing this gender border along with the concepts “man” and “woman.” We must not, then, continue to reinforce these false concepts as binary, essential, stable, and universal categories. Clearly, even though viewing women as a socially constructed gender/sex within a hierarchy is useful, caution must be taken to avoid a sort of essentialism or sense of universal experience of this oppressed group. Some feminists who see sex/gender as a hierarchical social construct do not accept any other definition of gender, which leads to major disagreements over gender identity.

Some might argue that a realization of gender fluidity rather than a dichotomy would perhaps accomplish the task of undermining the political construction of gender/sex categories for the purpose of domination.[35] This deserves further

examination. If we argue, as some have,[36] that hierarchical binaries like man/woman and white/black are created to naturalize hierarchy, this implies that a hierarchy existed prior. Therefore, while it may have been less acceptable to people, this hierarchy existed nonetheless, so the task is surely not simply to abolish the binaries/constructs. Yet again, there is only so much we can know about the origins of the concept of “man” and “woman” aside from the ways in which they have more recently been made more significant.

In this argument for rejecting the binary gender system, it should not be understood to mean that no one should identify as a man or a woman, much less that we should vaguely “smash gender” or implement some utopian androgyny. [37] A truly liberatory position on gender/sex requires self-determination of gender identity/inclination (including bodily alterations) and freedom from coercive gender assignment.[38] Everyone’s experiences and sense of identity should be incorporated into an idea of what gender means. One’s inclination for femininity (in people assigned male *or* female at birth) for example, should not be dismissed or devalued by others who don’t relate to it. Additionally, most trans people face dangers if they diverge much from the standard ideas of femininity (and masculinity), and therefore have to pass by conforming in order to survive (by maintaining safety and employment), despite critical awareness by many about gender hierarchy and heterosexism.

That said, we need to dismantle gender stratum, to separate the power dynamics attached to gender, in that masculinity often means domination, and femininity, subordination. Since men are taught to be dominating—that this is equated with masculinity (being a “real man”)—we need to make a particular point to change this. Men are denied their emotions, and as bell hooks writes, “Patriarchy both creates the rage in boys and then contains it for later use, making it a resource to exploit later on as boys become men. As a national product, this rage can be garnered to further imperialism, hatred, and oppression of women and men globally.”[39] At the very least it teaches men in general to be apathetic about the plight of others. Because it is instilled in men that their nature requires them to be dominating, we must extract the domination imperative from what it means to be a man. Hooks distinguishes patriarchal masculinity from masculinity, and this deserves further consideration. Without the naturalization of a man/woman dichotomy, masculinity and femininity (gender inclination) and all their various meanings are either exposed as social only, and/or as more about individual tendencies of personality and affinity.

It is this domination that should be opposed, no matter who is doing it or in what form. No one ought to identify domination as part of who they are, nor should women excuse their own (or other women’s) participation in domination

just because they believe they cannot be oppressors. This applies to male privilege, hetero privilege, class privilege, white privilege, etc., in addition to hierarchies perhaps inadvertently created by those judging others as not revolutionary, queer, or gender nonconforming enough.

In the past there was an expectation that the radical lesbian movement (and before that, women's suffrage) would strongly threaten the dominant order. In fact, it has been viewed as a threat, but as we can see, it has been defeated, recuperated or co-opted under the larger system of domination.[40] If much of radical feminism/lesbianism was really the only real threat to the system,[41] then it served the dominant order to marginalize the particularly militant tendencies and/or those of women of color, or divert the movements to re-embrace essentialism, which reinforced the order of things.

Some radical feminists were certainly on to something. According to Celestine Ware, a black woman activist (1970) who was quoted in bell hooks' *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, "Radical feminism...postulates that the domination of one human being by another is the basic evil in society. Dominance in human relationships is the target of their opposition." Hooks comments, "As feminist movement progressed, critiques of the notion of power as domination and control were submerged as bourgeois activists began to focus on women overcoming their fear of power (the implication being that if they wanted social equality with men, they would need to participate equally in exercising domination and control over others)."[42]

Attributing violence and abuse to the nature or necessary political position of men gives women the opportunity to participate in domination while insisting that they can do so in a more ethical way (or that they are by definition incapable of participating in domination). In addition, this attitude makes male violence seem inevitable and allows us to avoid critical thinking about systemic/institutional oppressions, such as the likelihood that capitalism and the state promote rape.[43] If rape is natural to men, then the survivors (mostly women) can rationalize that their only recourse is through the state. Yet prisons and police are not the solution to this problem. In addition, acknowledging that being a woman, queer, or transgressing gender boxes, and/or having feminist or anarchist politics does not make one necessarily incapable of being a perpetrator of abuse and sexual assault, we must see this as a larger project of addressing issues of consent. Additionally, uniting around the freedom to choose what will be done or not done to or with our bodies ties together many people's struggles.

As far as identity politics go, there must be some focus on identity in the sense that there are very real effects of these unreal constructs. Yet the point is to understand the gender and race divisions not only to end gender and race

oppression, but to end domination totally—to undermine these cross-class alliances created in the process of power seeking to naturalize itself, its law, and its divisions. Certainly capitalism, with the state, made the divisions between genders and races politically significant in a way that they never had been before. This shows that much of the racism and sexism that has existed in the last few centuries is not innate, not organic, not grassroots, but rather manufactured. Part of this struggle will be in exposing the ways in which our beliefs have been shaped in the interest of power—that many of the things we consider to be natural are in fact not just man-made, but state-made.

Illuminating the ways that our oppression is not “natural” can be done partly through the actual demonstrations and experiences of gender fluidity and queerness, sometimes referred to with other concepts as “queer.” “Queer is...an identity that problematizes the manageable limits of identity. Queer is a territory of tension, defined against the dominant narrative of white-hetero-monogamous-patriarchy, but also by an affinity with all who are marginalized, otherized, and oppressed.”[44]

In the sense that *queer* is unstable and destabilizing, it has much potential. Clearly the refusal to participate in privileging political relations would not be co-opted. We know that “LGBTQ” is co-opted just as feminism is, and therefore the potential lies in the ways in which queer is not co-optable. Where identity politics seeks inclusion for its respective group, it chooses participation in domination and reinforces binaries. Would a rejection of inclusion and participation be the antithesis of identity politics, even if it were a politics that focused on a specific group-based oppression?

Gender transgression alone may or may not succeed at destroying the gender hierarchy. If it does, it is because it is able to render the binary meaningless. Yet few are so optimistic about this possibility since it would probably require a lot of participation and clear intent because of this co-optability of transgressions of gender and sexuality by the power structure. However, I argue that binary gender and compulsory heterosexuality have to be destroyed because they regulate us all into our gender and sexuality boxes, limiting our ability to be liberated and to participate in resistance. It is necessary to come up with new ways of resisting gender oppression/patriarchy without reinforcing the idea that woman is a useful category to organize around. Finally, the exposure of gender/sex as a social construct on which a binary hierarchy was naturalized and functions through cross-class/race alliances may activate a clearer general understanding of how this occurs, thereby allowing white women, for example, to better see how whiteness functions similarly, crumbling multiple constructs at once. Imagining new possibilities for gender, race, and power/economic relations is necessary for

liberation.

- 1 See Lilith, "Gender Disobedience: Antifeminism and Insurrectionist Non-dialogue," http://theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/Lilith_Gender_Disobedience_Antifeminism_and_Insurrectionist_dialogue.html (accessed January 28, 2012). In response to Feral Faun/Wolfi Landstreicher's "The Ideology of Victimization" and other texts on gender.
- 2 "In his book, *My Gender Workbook*, Kate Bornstein characterizes gender's components as fourfold: gender assignment, gender role, gender identity, and gender attribution. Gender assignment is what the doctor calls you at birth, so it can be written off as a description of sex (Bornstein reserves the word sex for sex acts so as to circumvent Essentialist argumentation). Gender role is described as what culture thinks your niche should be, while gender identity is totally subjective. Gender attribution refers to how another person might interpret your gender cues." Stephe Feldman, "Components of Gender," <http://androgynouscatch.com/components.htm> (accessed January 28, 2012).
- 3 "Nothing could be less abstract than the idea of a natural social group, or it never occurs except in the context of an existing power relationship, and that is the crux of the matter. An ideology or interpretation of reality which balanced the right of the oppressors against the nature of the oppressed, each conceivable only in terms of the other and both belonging to the actual practice of appropriation, could hardly be described either as reflection (which presupposes the separateness of the practical and symbolic levels) or as rationalization, which presupposes not only the same separateness but also an intellectual ingredient in the exercise of domination which is not always present in hard fact." Colette Guillaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology* (1995), 79.
- 4 Judith Butler wrote in *Gender Trouble*, "Can we refer to a 'given' sex or a 'given' gender without first inquiring into how sex and/or gender is given, through what means? And what is 'sex' anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal and how is a feminist critic to assess scientific discourses which purport to establish such 'facts' for us? Does sex have a history? Does each sex have a different history, or histories? Is there a history of how the duality of sex was established, a genealogy that might expose the binary options as a variable construction? Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all." Stevi Jackson discusses Christine Delphy's position: "She argues that rather than the difference between men and women being a self-evident anatomical fact, recognizing that difference is itself a social act... It is not enough, she argues, to treat the content of gender as variable, while assuming that the container (the category woman or 'man') is unchangeable. Rather, we should treat the container itself as a social product." Stevi Jackson, "Theorizing Gender and Sexuality," in *Contemporary Feminist Theories* (1998), 136.
- 5 "Social construction of biological sex is more than an abstract observation: it is a physical reality that many intersex people go through. Because society makes no provision for the existence of people whose anatomical characteristics do not neatly fit into male or female, they are routinely mutilated by medical professionals and manipulated into living as their assigned sex..." Emi Koyama, "The Transfeminist Manifesto," 2000. The Intersex Society of North America website states that the figures for the total number of people whose bodies differ from standard male or female is one in one hundred births. From www.isna.org/faq/frequency (accessed January 29, 2012).
- 6 "Patriarchy...rests on a gender-binary system; hence it is not a coincidence that colonizers also targeted indigenous peoples who did not fit within this binary model. Many Native communities had multiple genders—some Native scholars are now even arguing that their communities may not have been gendered at all prior to colonization—although gender systems among Native communities varied." Andrea Smith, "Dismantling Hierarchy, Queering Society," *Tiqqun Magazine* (July/August 2010). From www.tikkun.org/article.php/july2010smith (accessed February 6, 2012)
- 7 I am hesitant to argue what John Zerzan does in the following quote because addressing its significance prior to the witch hunt and capitalism is a rather overwhelming task. Yet it is likely significant: "[Gender] is a cultural categorization and ranking grounded in a sexual division of labor that may be the single cultural form of greatest significance. If gender introduces and legitimates inequality and domination,

what could be more important to put into question?” John Zerzan, “Patriarchy, Civilization, and the Origins of Gender.” From http://theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/John_Zerzan__Patriarchy__Civilization__And_The_Origins_Of_Ge (accessed February 6, 2012). While many feminists see gender hierarchy as the first hierarchy, those materialist feminists who argue that gender/sex categories were created to naturalize an already-existing hierarchy might then argue that gender did not introduce, but did legitimize inequality and domination. Gender might be the first category-based hierarchy, but may not have been the first hierarchy. The question is whether that hierarchy was in any way gendered prior to the attempts at stabilizing the categories of gender.

8 Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), 192.

9 I am not arguing here that gender inequality is only a Western phenomenon. I am arguing that the period of the witch hunt created new meanings for gender, and these meanings were spread throughout many parts of the world. It is worth noting that this has influenced anthropological interpretations of gender as well.

10 The small percentage of those hunted as witches who were men were usually relatives of women charged with being witches. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), 189.

11 Ibid., 200.

12 The terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual” were not used until much later.

13 Ibid., 197.

14 Ibid., see also Walter Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh* (1986), chapter 7: “The Abominable Sin: The Spanish Campaign against ‘Sodomy,’ and Its Results in Modern Latin America.” Williams describes the motivation resulting partially from the Spanish attempt to regain control of their country from the Moors, who were more relaxed about same-sex relations. Also, the Spanish used the rampant homosexuality in the “New World” to justify their conquest.

15 Federici describes one way women’s power in the anti-feudalism movements was broken down involved the state legalizing rape (of proletariat women) and prostitution (during a specific time period, since prostitution was also criminalized for other reasons), making women’s bodies the new commons in place of the access to land and other natural resources they were losing. Men were afforded these privileges to damage the more equal relationships they had with women. Interestingly, municipal brothels also served the purpose of addressing the rampant homosexuality of the time. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), 48–49.

16 Ibid., 168. There were plenty of skeptics regarding the reality of witchcraft, but many, like Thomas Hobbes, “approved the persecution as a means of social control.”

17 Ibid., 103.

18 Ibid., 136–140.

19 “Like the social Darwinism that preceded it, sociobiology proceeds by first projecting the dominant ideas of current society onto nature (often unconsciously, so that scientists mistakenly consider the ideas in question as both “normal” and “natural”). Bookchin refers to this as “the subtle projection of historically conditioned human values” onto nature rather than “scientific objectivity.” Then the theories of nature produced in this manner are transferred back onto society and history, being used to “prove” that the principles of capitalism (hierarchy, authority, competition, etc.) are eternal laws, which are then appealed to as a justification for the status quo! What this procedure does accomplish,” notes Bookchin, “is reinforce human social hierarchies by justifying the command of men and women as innate features of the ‘natural order.’ Human domination is thereby transcribed into the genetic code as biologically immutable.” Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (2005), 92, 95. Quoted in “What Does Anarchism Stand For?,” An Anarchist FAQ Section A.2, <http://infoshop.org/page/AnarchistFAQSectionA2> (accessed January 28, 2012).

20 “By heteropatriarchy, I mean the way our society is fundamentally based on male dominance—dominance inherently built on a gender binary system that presumes heterosexuality as a social norm.” Andrea Smith, “Dismantling Hierarchy, Queering Society,” *Tikkun Magazine* (July/August 2010). From www.tikkun.org/article.php/july2010smith (accessed February 6, 2012)

21 Andrea Smith, “Indigenous Feminism without Apology.” (2006) <http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and->

Analysis/Library/Indigenous-feminism-without-apology-Decentering-white-feminism.

- 22 US Social Forum 2007, Liberating Gender and Sexuality Plenary, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5crWlrksZs> (accessed January 28, 2012).
- 23 Overall, though, and especially after the first phase of colonization, men and women were equally accused as devil worshippers and treated as such. This was done to justify to Europe and to the church specifically that the conquest was a mission of conversion, not a conquest for riches. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 220–21.
- 24 Ibid., 111.
- 25 The witch hunts in the Americas were “a deliberate strategy used by authorities to instill terror, destroy collective resistance, silence entire communities, and turn members against each other. It was also a strategy of enclosure, which depending on the context, could be an enclosure of land, bodies or social relations. Above all, as in Europe, witch hunting was a means of dehumanization and as such the paradigmatic form of repression, serving to justify enslavement and genocide.” Ibid., 220.
- 26 “Strengthening of this male power [in tribal councils] is inextricably linked to a long history of colonialism, as well as to federal government policy and law, such as Indian boarding schools... The boarding schools’ purpose, for example, was to insert patriarchy into tribal communities and to socialize children to believe in patriarchal gender norms.” Renya Ramirez, “Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender: A Native Feminist Approach to Belonging,” *Meridians* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2007), 22–40
- 27 Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, (1981) 5–7.
- 28 Butch Lee and Red Rover, *Night Vision*, (2000) 29.
- 29 Joel Olson, *Abolition of White Democracy*, (2004) 37. I would say that “peacefully” is not a good word here, as Olson elaborates on some of W. E. B. DuBois’s analysis of this cross-class alliance as ensuring the stability needed to maintain capitalism “largely through the terrorization and subordination of the rest of the working class.”
- 30 See Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, (1981).
- 31 In the case of race, criminalization is now used in such a way as to not seem related to race, even though it clearly targets people of color at a disproportionate rate. Race-based identity politics, focusing on inclusion and exceptionalism, tend to overlook the criminalization of people of color.
- 32 “So-called whites must cease to exist as whites in order to realize themselves as something else...in order to come alive as workers, or youth, or women, or whatever other identity can induce them to change from the miserable, petulant, subordinated creatures they now are into freely associated, fully developed human subjects.” Noel Ignatiev, “The Point Is Not to Interpret Whiteness but to Abolish It,” paper presented at the University of California-Berkeley conference, “The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness,” April 1997. From racetractor.org/abolishthepoint.pdf (accessed February 6, 2012).
- 33 bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. (1984): 73–75.
- 34 bell hooks, *The Will to Change* (2004): 45.
- 35 “Like the apartheid of race, blurring of class boundaries is the gravest offense because it challenges the reality of the division of reality...sexual continuity is threatening—it destroys the male-dominated power structure completely. If there are no hard and fast sex types, then there can be no apartheid of sex.” Martine Rothblatt, *The Apartheid of Sex*, (1995): 19. “The continued oppression of women proves only that in any binary there’s going to be one up and one down. The struggle for equal rights must include the struggle to dismantle the binary.” Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw*, (1994): 106.
- 36 See Collette Guillaumin. *Racism, Sexism, Power, and Ideology*. (1995).
- 37 “Many in the movement who yearned not only for women’s liberation, but also for human liberation, embarked on a bold social experiment. They hoped that freeing individuals from femininity and masculinity would help people be viewed on a more equal basis that highlighted each person’s qualities and strengths. They hoped that androgyny would replace masculinity and femininity and help do away with gendered expression altogether. Twenty years after that social experiment, we have the luxury of hindsight. The way in which individuals express themselves is a very important part of who they are. It is not possible to force all people to live outside of femininity and masculinity. Only androgynous people live comfortably in that gender space. There’s no social compulsion powerful enough to force anyone else to dwell there. Trans people are an example of the futility of this strategy... People don’t have to give

up their individuality or their particular manner of gender expression in order to fight sex and gender oppression. It's just the opposite." Leslie Feinberg, *Trans Liberation* (1998), 53.

38 See Emi Koyama, "Transfeminist Manifesto." (2000) From eminism.org/readings/pdf-rdg/tfmanifesto.pdf (accessed February 6, 2012); Michelle O'Brien, "Trans Liberation and Feminism: Self-Determination, Healthcare, and Revolutionary Struggle." (2003) From anarchalibrary.blogspot.com/2010/09/trans-liberation-and-feminism-self.html (accessed February 6, 2012); and Carolyn, "Politicizing Gender: Moving toward Revolutionary Gender Politics." From www.spunk.org/texts/pubs/lr/sp001714/gender.html (accessed February 6, 2012).

39 bell hooks, *The Will to Change*, (2004): 51.

40 I would note that "bisexual" denotes a binary, and thus does not necessarily upset gender, but pointing to the recuperative nature of the power structure, Paula Rust wrote, "Thus lesbianism was initially constructed as a challenge to gender. But once 'woman' was reconstructed to include 'lesbian', lesbians became part of the prevailing gender structure. In effect, lesbianism was co-opted into gender and ceased to be a challenge to it. Furthermore, the rise of cultural feminism reified rather than challenged gender, maximized rather than minimized the differences between women and men, and created a concept of lesbianism that was dependent on the preservation of gender. Given lesbians' initial challenge to gender, one might expect bisexuals' efforts to break down gender to be well received among lesbians. But because of the change in the relationship of lesbianism to gender..., bisexuals' contemporary challenge to gender is also a threat to lesbianism." Paula Rust, "Bisexual Politics," reprinted in Judith Lorber, *Gender Inequality, Feminist Theories and Politics* (Roxbury Publishing Co., 1998), 93–94.

41 "The development of sisterhood is a unique threat, for it is directed against the basic social and psychic model of hierarchy and domination..." Mary Daly quoted in Peggy Kornegger, "Anarchism and the Feminist Connection." (1975) From anarchalibrary.blogspot.com/2010/09/anarchism-feminist-connection-1975.html (accessed February 6, 2012).

42 bell hooks, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*. (1984): 83.

43 Angela Davis, "Rape, Racism, and the Capitalist Setting," in *Angela Y. Davis Reader* (1998), 129.

44 Mary Nardini Gang, "Toward the Queerest Insurrection," From zinelibrary.info/toward-queerest-insurrection-0 (accessed January 28, 2012).