Reframing the Problem of Difference:

Lillian Smith and Hierarchical Politics of Difference

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved February 2012 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2012

ABSTRACT

For many years, difference scholars, such as Cornel West, Iris Marion Young, and Janet Atwill have been reminding humanities scholars that if social equity is ever to be realized, difference needs to be reconfigured and reframed. As Janet Atwill puts it, "difference can no longer be the anomaly, the enemy, or the problem to be solved. Difference is the condition" (212). While these scholars insightfully recognize that difference needs to be accepted, welcomed and loved rather than merely tolerated, they have not sufficiently addressed the perceptual change that must occur worldwide if difference as an intrinsic underlying condition of human existence is to be embraced. This project provides a point of departure for carrying out such a dramatic epistemic change by arguing that hierarchical thinking, not difference, is the real agent underwriting societal violence and discord. Hierarchical thinking delineates a more appropriate critical space than does difference for social justice inquiry, invention, and intervention.

This project also rhetorically theorizes the realm of intersubjectivity and provides two novel contributions to contemporary rhetorical theory: 1) privilege as a rhetorical construct and 2) the untapped inventional potential of the postmodern understanding of intersubjectivity. To illustrate the embodied and performative aspects of hierarchical thinking, this work draws upon the writings of Lillian Smith, a white southerner (1897-1966) whose descriptive analyses of the Jim Crow South allude to large systems of privilege of which Jim Crow is merely representational. Illustrating the invidious nexus of privilege, Smith's writings describe the ways in which individuals embody and perform practices of

i

exclusion and hate to perpetuate larger systems of privilege. Smith shows how

privilege operates much as gender and power—fluidly and variously and

dependent upon context. Viewing privilege as a rhetorical construct, operating

dynamically, always in flux and at play, provides rhetoricians with a theoretically

important move that un-yokes privilege from specific identities (e.g., white

privilege). When viewed through this more dynamic and precise lens, we can

readily perceive how privilege functions as a colonizing, ubiquitously learned,

and variegated rhetorical practice of subordination and domination that, as a

frame of analysis, offers a more fluid and accurate perspective than identity

categories provide for discussions of oppression, social justice, and democratic

engagement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A dissertation truly is a collaborative process and is just as much a social text as we ourselves are. Given that, there are many individuals who have contributed to this dissertation in ways for which I am very grateful but unfortunately don't have room or time to mention.

My heartfelt thanks go to my committee members: Maureen Daly Goggin, Elenore Long, and Keith Miller. Their outstanding support, shown via their unfailing good cheer, steadfast expressions of confidence in my success, and rapid turnaround time (no matter the request) continues to amaze and invigorate me. Each one of them truly models mentoring at its best. At every step of the process they welcomed me as an equal and embodied the very practices of mutual respect that this dissertation speaks about. Always willing to go that extra mile, their additional gifts include Maureen's big-picture view of a dissertation as but a first step in a larger process, Keith's comprehensive knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, and Ellie's careful attention to make sure I was conversant in the field of difference scholarship.

Thanks also to my friends and fellow graduate students, Ryan Skinnell, Nicole Khoury, Andrea Lewis, Elizabeth Lowry, Tanita Saenkhum, and Cambria Stamper, all of whom at one point or another encouraged me, gave me advice, suggested readings, or shared rooms and meals and wheels at conferences. Most importantly, they were always available and willing to talk shop.

Several other individuals require my most loving thanks for their influence upon my development as a scholar and human being. I include Lillian

Smith among my mentors, and thank her for knowing that her writings and influence could outlast her corporeal existence. The voice she courageously expressed in her prose lives on. Smith's profound and indomitable belief that humans have what it takes to construct better selves and better worlds not only helped me to shake the shame I have often felt around my family for what must have seemed to them my borderline obsessive attention to an unjust world, but Smith's work (combined with rhetorical study) also provided me the context and words to better articulate that which I have always deeply felt but had difficulty explaining. My parents, Carl and Wilma, deserve my eternal gratitude for exposing me in innumerable ways to a discourse of social justice. While that discourse was one of many competing discourse strands to which I was exposed at home, attention to issues of social justice were frequent and lively. Lastly, I extend my enduring thanks to my husband Michael who has devotedly read and insightfully commented upon every version of this work. His investment in this project represents more than his profound dedication to me; it also indicates the supreme beauty of his heart, which, like the hearts of so many individuals, is invested in the making of a more socially-just world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Our Unwitting Collusion in a Culture of Violence

"To witness abuse is itself a human rights violation and an injury one can claim in U.S. courts" writes Andrea Smith, a Native American scholar and social activist (51). Each time I read this statement, I am struck by its startling implication: Everyone has witnessed abuse, right? If witnessing abuse is a violation claimable in court, then U.S citizens conceivably could storm the court, for who among us has *not* been violated?

The first time I read the opening quote, a rush of childhood memories flooded my imagination, all seeming to belie what I would consider my well-protected and privileged upper-middle-class white background, one absent of any obvious or visible abuse. Inundated with one repulsive scene after another, my mind's eye watched a gut-wrenching spectacle in which my pre-school teacher jerks a male classmate by the arm to the nearest sink where she unleashes a torrential lecture about "bad words" while simultaneously trying to ram a bar of Ivory soap into a mouth too small to accommodate it. I remember the educator fiercely rotating the bar of soap while adding water to the four-year-old boy's mouth until he gagged and sobbed in a sudsy mess. Another disturbing scene surfaces of myself as a five-year-old watching Saturday morning cartoons with my siblings and cousins. Frequently, my older siblings and cousins hooted and guffawed while I bawled, befuddled and horrified, that Tom and Jerry's and the

Roadrunner and Wiley Coyote's perennially violent relationships constituted

grounds for laughter and amusement. Still another scene surfaces in which the

boys' junior high-school phys. ed. teacher stands on the edge of the athletic field

smirking while his class fulfills the requirement for its assignment of the day—to

"smear the queer"—the "queer" being, invariably it seemed, the most un-athletic

boy on the field, whose terrified and trembling pudgy or scrawny body

desperately scrambles to outrun a horde of boys hell bent on tackling him. The

poor target knows the inevitable outcome; at the very least he would be pinned

down and smothered, bruised and aching for days afterward. These and other

scenes streamed as vivid recollections until at last their sheer disquieting force

provoked metacognition—in this case, an appreciation for the power of logos to

jumpstart the engine of memory and to elicit pathos. Thankfully, thinking halted

my recollection.

Yanked from my reverie, I began to think about the incredible hold

violence has on each one of us, a hold that has yet to be analyzed from a rhetorical

perspective. One of my favorite professors used to say that "violence is the

absence of rhetoric." For years I accepted her pithy aphorism as a truism. It

certainly has traction if rhetoric is seen as an art of public deliberation, as when

two or more nations halt negotiations and at least one opts to war against the

other. Yet the study of rhetoric has a much deeper and broader purview than that

of public deliberation and includes the epistemological as well as the

performative. With this in mind, I have undertaken what might be generally

considered a rhetorical analysis of violence, a project prompted by my deep

interest in social justice and a desire to understand why all the diligent efforts and

organizations dedicated to social justice have not made more inroads than they

have. I hope to show in subsequent chapters that myriad manifestations of

violence have achieved a nearly ubiquitous scope and reach; that violence is

predominantly culturally-constructed and constructive; and that violence is

maintained and perpetuated via individual and collective perception, learned by

each of us during childhood, prior to self-reflexive thought and well-developed

metacognition. That is, the learning of violence toward oneself and others, which

occurs via narrative immersion in systems of privilege (e.g., gender, race),

coincides with the learning of language.

The claim that each and every one of us has not only experienced abuse

but has grown up under abusive conditions might strike many readers as absurd.

However, I hope that after reading this dissertation many of those same readers

will not consider this claim at all odd, and might even, in recognition of the

incredible depth and breadth of the problem elucidated in the following chapters,

invest their time and talents in addressing the issues raised. At this point,

however, I ask readers only to consider the idea that within the legal terms of the

United States Court, most of you have been abused. Despite variegations in

personal experience, everyone can claim to have witnessed hate, bullying and

cruel insensitivity to others—at the very least. These types of preventable

violence and trauma are commonplace to childhood experience, yet both are

generally and too easily dismissed as unavoidable, part and parcel of a normal childhood. This dissertation challenges that perspective.

It is a commonplace notion that violence is endemic to human nature. Endemic violence is promoted representationally on T.V., the Internet, in games and music, and is embedded in language. If the idea of endemic violence might be acceptable to many readers, why, then, would a primary contention of this work—that all of us were and are victims of abuse who have, as a result of that abuse, learned to dehumanize ourselves and others—not be as easily accepted?

Even at first glance there are simple markers that suggest the validity of my argument. For instance, the fact that during my and many other people's "evolution" to adulthood there arises the need to learn to "thicken one's skin" in many ways is a red flag that dehumanization is taking place. For example, as an adult I have not only acquired the ability to watch violence as a form of entertainment, but I have also learned how to function on a daily basis despite knowing that I am constantly surrounded by suffering—of a variety and magnitude that defies belief, and most, if not all, of it is socially-constructed. Full knowledge of the extent of suffering of my fellow human beings and other animals would have immobilized me as a child, yet as an adult, I knowingly function amidst this ubiquitous pain, emotional anguish, violence, and distress well enough to attend to my personal goals and responsibilities. My doing so requires that I "turn off" to a certain extent, to inure myself to the fact that millions are—at this moment—victims of violence and injustice who are starving,

being raped, or are suffering in other horrific ways. This "turning off" reflects an aspect of intersubjective training that will be more fully discussed in chapters three and four.

That violence is both structural and cultural is not a new idea. In 2002 The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a report declaring violence a "global public health problem," the roots of which are structural in nature, involving state, institutional, and individual participation. Arguing for an "ecological" model of violence, the report indicates that we do not have to live in a violent world because violence is preventable: "The factors that contribute to violent responses—whether they are factors of attitude and behavior or related to larger social, economic, political, and cultural conditions—can be changed" (13).

Interestingly, one of the report's primary concluding recommendations refers to the need to attend to a pervasive sense of complacency about violence, institutionally and individually. Implicating complacency as "a formidable obstacle in responding" to violence, the report notes that complacency is an attitude "closely related to the problem of gender inequality—as something that has always been present in human society and will therefore always continue to be so" (251). The issue of complacency is an important one and is integral to the subject of this dissertation, particularly how complacency flourishes in, and functions to maintain, a culture of violence (see chapter four).

To facilitate a richer introduction to the main subject of this dissertation, I return to the context of Andrea Smith's statement that witnessing abuse

5

constitutes abuse. Smith uses the implementation of the Indian boarding school system (circa 1870), the effects of which are still widely felt in and beyond native communities. I draw on features of the Indian boarding school system here to illustrate critical concepts that are closely examined in the chapters that follow. The boarding school system exemplifies a colonizing ideology that is based upon what I refer to throughout this work as "hierarchical thinking," a concept I borrow from political sphere theorist Iris Marion Young in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Hierarchical thinking is based upon adherence to (or deviation from) a norm in which the norm always functions as superior to positions outside the norm, that is, as a position of privilege. As my work makes clear, hierarchical thinking is an episteme into which most everyone in the world has been socialized. While hierarchical thinking reflects an orientation often encapsulated as "Western," throughout this work I will argue that hierarchical thinking extends to all cultures grounded in it.

The role hierarchical thinking plays in violent interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction is well illustrated in the case of Indian boarding schools. During her discussion of the fact that many survivors of Indian boarding schools who witnessed abuse claim that they themselves were not abused, Smith challenges this perspective and argues that these boarders were not spared from abuse but were indeed abused themselves by their forced acculturation into a culture based upon hierarchical thinking. Her research on boarding schools shows a direct correlation between the emergence of violence in native communities and

the instantiation of the Indian boarding school system, implemented in response to native resistance to "'civilizing' instruction" (A. Smith 35). She explains, "I have attended several Native wellness workshops in which participants are asked to draw a family tree that shows the generation in their family in which violence, substance abuse, and other related problems develop. Almost invariably, these problems begin with the generation that first went to boarding school" (44).

Smith's extensive analysis of boarding schools in *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* notably shows that the implementation of such large-scale cultural change was accomplished by forced ideological assimilation to a hierarchical culture—not by beatings, murder, and sexual abuse alone. Abusive actions like these are merely the visible markers and performance of a hierarchical culture of dominance. Smith writes, "in order to colonize a people whose society was not hierarchical, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. She writes, "[p]atriarchal gender violence is the process by which colonizers inscribe hierarchy and domination" (23). Gendered hierarchies are possibly, and arguably, the progenitor of all hierarchical dominations.[1] In the case of native peoples, Smith refers to Paula Gunn Allen who similarly contends that gendered hierarchies are indispensable to colonization. Smith writes, "Allen argues that colonizers realized that in order to subjugate indigenous nations they would have to subjugate women within these nations. Native peoples needed to learn the value of hierarchy, the role of physical abuse in maintaining that hierarchy, and the importance of women remaining

submissive to their men" (A. Smith 23). Each of these tenets clearly shaped Indian boarding school "education."

This example of forced acculturative training provided by the Indian Boarding School system and the subsequent emergence of multiple forms of self-directed and other-directed violence serve to show the damaging extent to which immersive training in hierarchical valuing (and de-valuing) of life itself fosters climates of violence and abuse, even if the participants only partially acculturate to such training. Drawing upon the works of Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, Andrea Smith summarizes the value of, indeed the need for, partial assimilation when colonizing others:

> [I]f the colonized group seems completely different from the colonists, they implicitly challenge the supremacy of colonial rule, because they are refusing to adapt the ways of the colonizers. Hence, the colonized must seem to partially resemble the colonists in order to reinforce the dominant ideology, and establish that the way colonizers live is the only good way to live. However, the colonized group can never be completely assimilated—otherwise, they would be equal to the colonists, and there would be no reason to colonize them. (26)

Here it is important to note that assimilation has traditionally been held out by colonizers as a reward that brings to the colonized "the benefits of the dominant society" (A. Smith 26). Whether or not this "reward" is embraced or resisted by

the colonized, Smith reminds us, "the colonized group can never be completely assimilated" (26). Assimilation, then, represents a spurious promise of equality in a hierarchically-oriented society. Hierarchies are well served by narratives of equality and democracy. Everyone has an equal opportunity to work hard and become a billionaire, right?

Postcolonial and transnational scholars have insightfully examined the relationships among global economic and institutional practices and the symbolic. In "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited," Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that "political shifts to the right [e.g., increasing global militarization and the U.S. prison industrial complex] accompanied by global capitalist hegemony, privatization, and increased religious, ethnic, and racial hatreds, pose concrete challenges for feminists. "In this context," she asks, "what would it mean to be attentive to the micropolitics of everyday life as well as to the larger processes that recolonize the culture and identities across the globe?" (229).

It is in the spirit of responding to Mohanty's query that I write this dissertation. In it, I take a detailed look at the politics of everyday life that recolonizes the thinking, actions, and worldviews of most, if not all of us. While hierarchical thinking constitutes an ideology to which few are immune, as Smith's research on Indian boarding schools shows, most anti-subordination scholarship has paid more attention to the material, social, and political repercussions of hierarchical thinking than to its rhetorical and epistemic dimensions. My project, however, focuses upon the work of another Smith—Lillian Smith (1897-1966)—

to draw our attention to how hierarchical training works rhetorically and epistemically (even among those who resist it) to create attitudes and behaviors that make all of us complicit in a culture of violence. I use the writings of Lillian Smith to closely examine the normative logic underlying hierarchical thinking and the epistemic "knowledge" hierarchical thinking produces, particularly the ways that this knowledge predisposes us to deal with others as well as ourselves. As my analyses will demonstrate, hierarchical conditioning thwarts social justice efforts by producing a web of affects, complacency being but one of many affectual productions. Hierarchical conditioning pervades life in that it traverses domains, serving as an overarching system in intersubjective training. By this I mean the ways we learn to perceive and relate to others as well as the ways we are trained (or not trained) to conceive *of* the collective and of ourselves as collective beings. This training, which I will refer to as "dispositioning" throughout the remainder of this text has not yet been adequately examined. My project begins a careful analysis of this system, and the purpose of this work is to de-naturalize hierarchical dispositioning by showing it to be an amazingly damaging and rhetorically productive cultural construct that is learned and, therefore, preventable. The social-constructedness of hierarchical training, for example, is neatly demonstrated in the case of the Indian boarding school system.

Lillian Smith's vivid intersectional and historical descriptions and analyses of the Jim Crow South and the ways in which it worked as a system of privilege that depended upon the collusion of all individuals and their varying and

10

context-dependent positions of privilege (with respect to gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, business and so on) guided me in the direction of seeing our current social, political, and cultural problems from the perspective of what Margaret Rose Gladney describes as Lillian Smith's "psychocultural critique." Smith considered privilege systems with their interlocking nature to be a debilitating cancer that damages everyone immersed in them. Gladney explains that Smith's "intense interest in child psychology and psychoanalysis informed not only her understanding of racism but also her entire political analysis"(103). The accuracy of Gladney's observation is evidenced in much of Smith's correspondence. In one letter to a friend Smith writes that "All the movements in the world, all the laws, the drives, the edicts will never do what personal relationships can do and must do" (*How* 75). In another letter to her editor at W.W. Norton, Smith writes that "what to do about race is tied up with what to do about EVERYTHING" (*How* 126).

Few scholars have examined how intersubjectivity itself is a social-construct that predisposes people to interact with others in specific ways, ways that frequently traverse most group-specific differences. Although Smith never directly made such a claim, repeated readings of Lillian Smith's works have directed my attention to thinking about privilege and to my making the claim that privilege underwrites every hierarchically dispositioned individual's relationships to others; privilege traverses all domains. Such traversal un-tethers privilege from specific contexts (e.g., white privilege), a theoretically important move that

11

challenges us to reconsider the scholarly focus on systems over individuals, a move, then, that calls for both bottom-up and top-down social justice approaches.

Although Lillian Smith's work is remembered and respected for its civil rights advocacy and for its attention to multiple issues of difference, this dissertation aims to additionally recognize Smith as an important feminist and rhetorician whose public sphere writings and speeches deserve reclamation for their much larger and comprehensive social justice agenda, particularly for their attention to the fluidity of privilege as a rhetorical construct damaging to and performed by all subject positions. In a letter to her life partner Paula Snelling, Smith describes her participation in a joint interview on NBC and the resistance she commonly received when calling attention to the damaging effects of privilege systems upon the privileged. She writes, "white people *don't want* to think *whites* are hurt by segregation: *that* fact isn't as "important" to them or as dramatic as *Ann's* [the other interviewee] being hurt *as a Negro*. Smith directs our attention to the damage that privilege enacts upon *all* subject positions, not merely upon those positions that are subordinated. Smith herself sees Jim Crow as representative of "the West" ("Extracts" 217). She explains, "the situation I lived in, and still live in, is one of great importance to the earth's future, because segregation as I knew it and others in the South knew it is both symbol and symptom of the deep malaise which the human race is suffering from," which, she contends throughout her works, "dehumanizes" all of us. Smith's focus on and description of the epistemic knowledge produced by ordinate positions is one her

12

greatest contributions.

In drawing upon Smith's psychocultural observation of "a deep malaise which the human race is suffering from" to explore a deeply-engrained and pervasive perceptual grounding that cross-cuts cultures and contexts to sustain systems of injustice, I look at the ways in which our hierarchical dispositioning has become so engrained as to have become naturalized and, consequently, invisible in many ways, shaping our perception of ourselves and others. Of perception, Merleau- Ponty writes, "Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out and is presupposed by them (qtd. in Alcoff *Invisible* 187). Perceptual practices are integrated into organized bodily movements and habits that become so habitual that the process of interpretation that constitutes perception, Alcoff writes, "is skipped in an attenuated process of perceptual knowing" (188). Redacting Merleau-Ponty's work, Alcoff forcefully reminds us that "perceptual practices are dynamic even when congealed into habit" (189) and that consciously challenging our perceptual habits fosters change. In fact, Alcoff suggests, "Merleau-Ponty's analysis [of perception] helps to provide a more accurate understanding of where—that is, at what level of experience—change needs to occur" (189). This dissertation project attends to the level of experience and perception of which Merleau-Ponty speaks.

Many feminist theorists have advocated the "epistemic privilege" (Crenshaw, Alcoff) of marginalized groups whose group-specific ways of

13

knowing the world should form the starting points of social justice projects. In contrast, Smith's work has directed me to attend to the ways that privilege functions rhetorically as a mechanism that, although context-dependent, constitutes all of our subject positions across domains—as well as how privilege challenges us to look carefully at the epistemic productions of hierarchical dispositioning (itself premised upon the concept of privilege), which constrains all subject positions. Despite the fact that Lillian Smith lacked the contemporary theoretical vocabulary to theorize fully, in both her fiction and autobiographical non-fiction, Smith describes the Jim Crow South from multiple standpoints to illustrate the epistemic effects of a system based in hierarchical thinking, and she backs up her descriptions with insightful analyses of specific aspects of Southern life. Smith's analyses with respect to what I interpret as her overarching philosophy are somewhat vague, however. To elaborate upon and extend her work, I import feminist theories from moral psychology, rhetoric, and public sphere philosophy. Nevertheless, I thank Smith for turning my attention to fundamental concepts critical to my analysis of hierarchical thinking.

Perhaps most importantly, Smith helped me to think through a question that has always perplexed me, and that is, despite incredibly strong grass-roots movements mobilizing millions of humans at a time in numerous social movements during the past 150 years, movements that aimed to eradicate significant amounts of suffering and instantiate social justice, why has this democratic momentum never truly taken hold and become more effective? This

dissertation's analysis of hierarchical dispositioning helps to answer this question by examining the hegemonic force of hierarchical thinking and the ways in which it accommodates what Smith calls "cultural schizophrenia"—the simultaneous flourishing of competing discourses, such as democracy and Jim Crow or Christian values of kindness and compassion and war (military and economic).

Hierarchical dispositioning, I argue, trumps the competition—that is, discourses of interconnectedness rather than separation, cooperation rather than competition, and the valuing of difference. Nevertheless, even though hierarchical dispositioning forms the gestalt, the grounding of all discourse, its accommodation of a variety of alternative discourses also enables us to experience truly non-hierarchical moments, moments that are commensurate with joy, love, sharing, and empathy. Hierarchical dispositioning is paradoxical in that it forms an overarching "terministic screen" (Burke) that is porous enough to allow for performances of its own dissolution while keeping the screen intact.

Methodologically, the metaphor of colonization and the idea of partial assimilation serve to explain both the co-existence of competing discourses and the seeming hegemony of inequity and strife in this world. Resistance and Derridean sense of play ironically become intrinsic to the maintenance of a hierarchical disposition since each of us only partially assimilates to the full regime of hierarchical thinking. Understanding hierarchical dispositioning's reliance upon competing alternatives assuages two of feminist philosopher Linda Martín Alcoff's concerns about theorizing that essentializes. First, my theory of

15

hierarchical dispositioning acknowledges the "complexity, inevitable cultural hybridity, and multiplicity of the contemporary self" and thus theoretically supports a pluritopic hermeneutic, which Alcoff and other postcolonial theorists rightfully expect (Alcoff 124). Second, my theory addresses Alcoff's concern that the "Western tradition of hermeneutics is itself monotopic and monologic," presupposing "a single coherent tradition that is dynamic through history but unchallenged by alternative horizons competing in a given space or time frame" (124). Hierarchical dispositioning accomodates the multiplicity of traditions at play and explains how alternative horizons that are in direct competition with hierarchical thinking can circulate without gaining the prominence that might be expected of them. Hierarchical thinking, therefore, deserves continued scrutiny for all those interested in social justice projects. Indeed, I argue now that difference scholars have fully conveyed difference as an intrinsic underlying condition of human existence that needs to be accepted and embraced. It is time for scholars to turn their attentions to hierarchical thinking as the next critical problem space requiring collective attention.

Use of Terms

I choose to use the term "disposition" for three reasons. First, it successfully evokes the received learning that is always involved in hierarchical dispositioning. In this respect, disposition acknowledges that our perceptions of ourselves and others are rhetorical in nature, a function of language and context-dependent. Secondly, disposition is the Latinate term for the second of the five

classical Greek "canons" of rhetoric and is most commonly referred to as "arrangement." Since arrangement is always rhetorical, items can be variously arranged, and whatever arrangement is chosen shapes the overall reception of that arrangement. Thus, disposition evokes the patterning whereby hierarchical dispositioning trumps alternative horizons. Lastly, disposition connotes political and social stratification and the subsequent violence that hierarchical dispositioning produces. As Susan Jarratt argues in "New Dispositions for Historical Studies in Rhetoric," disposition can be used in an "analogical and imaginative way to inquire into the arrangement not only of ideas and language in texts but also of people and images in public spaces" (71). "Unlike *ethos*, which refers to the status of the speaking subject in relation to an audience" Jarratt explains, "disposition extends the inquiry beyond the immediate rhetorical situation to social relations more generally. It is a way to account for the presence or absence of difference within historical and geographical spaces, to build into our rhetorical terminology a reminder of the fact that history should attempt to investigate not only those who spoke but also those who were made silent" (71). Used in the way Jarratt suggests, disposition connotes the very real problems that hierarchical thinking creates.

Chapter Distribution

Chapter two includes biographical information about Lillian Smith (1897-1966) whose vividly descriptive intersectional analyses of the Jim Crow South in which she lived provide the textual grounding for my discussion of hierarchical

17

politics of difference. Smith, I argue, should be recognized as a pioneer in the theorizing of difference. Well before the postmodern critique, Smith was incorporating basics of postmodern thought to raise the issue of hierarchical thinking. Smith's descriptions illustrate privilege as a fluid rhetorical operation that traverses contexts and is internalized by all. Her metaphor for this cultural system is segregation (i.e., in any form, from race, gender, and sexual orientation to disability), and she juxtaposes practices of and commonplaces about segregation against competing narratives of democracy, respect, and compassion. Smith directs attention to segregation as a dehumanizing system in which privilege enacts damage upon *all* subject positions, not merely upon those positions that are subordinated, and she historicizes the naturalized to illustrate the continuity of systems of privilege and their ongoing, sedimented pasts.

Chapter three exposes hierarchical conditioning as a foundational flaw underlying the ways in which people are socialized to interact with each other, a flaw that impedes human potential for respectful engagement. The chapter begins with an elucidation of Iris Marion Young's discussion of a politics of difference in which she argues that to bring about a more socially-just society the definition of difference itself must be reconfigured. She explains that difference, in Western epistemology, is generally perceived as deviation from a norm "in which one group occupies the position of a norm, against which all others are measured," an act that always valorizes and universalizes the norm by defining as "different" that which sits outside it. "In this way the definition of difference as exclusion and

opposition," Young argues, "actually denies difference." Young, however, does little to show how this denial of difference functions on the individual level. The second half of the chapter illustrates Young's argument, drawing upon scholarship in moral psychology to show how shame and arrogance are epistemic productions of hierarchical conditioning that impede mutual respect.

Supported by postcolonial scholarship, chapter four argues that hierarchical conditioning is a colonizing force, and as such, relies upon partial colonization to maintain hegemony. While humans are the inheritors of a pluritopic history that includes discourses of empathy, care, and cooperation as much as discourses of domination and subordination, this chapter explains why the former do not ascend to hegemony despite sustained and concerted social justice efforts. Surveying modalities of being that, in addition to shame and arrogance, contribute to individual complicity in hierarchical systems that support violence and suffering, this chapter argues that the epistemic byproducts of hierarchical thinking (fear, denial, entitlement, apathy, despair, and complacency) enable socially unjust systems to flourish, attenuate engagement with the social, and inhibit the potential for change. It is in this chapter that my epistemology of privilege takes shape, demonstrating how individuals unwittingly collude in systems that they may not ideologically support.[2]

Chapter five draws upon Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of "theory effect," the narrative power of description to maintain and perpetuate the status quo. An explanation of the productive and normalizing force of description suggests the

need to substitute an inverse narrative to that which hierarchical thinking

provides—namely a narrative of non-hierarchical thinking, which is based upon

the concept of the intrinsic worth of any living being. Narrative change at this

level, I argue, represents the very means of intervention Janet Atwill advocates in

Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition. Substituting a

poesis equally powerful yet contrary to hierarchical thinking, I argue, would

establish an equally productive and malleable overarching system as hierarchical

thinking has imposed, but one that better fit the ideals of an equitable human

society at all levels. .

This project is only a beginning to a conversation. Essentially, this work

does little more than articulate and analyze a problem space. As such this project

exemplifies Linda Martín-Alcoff's assertion that "[b]oth phenomenology and

hermeneutics are necessary for philosophical analysis" because

"[p]henomenology counsels us to consider how the idea is related to lived

experience, and hermeneutics instructs us to consider the effects of historical

context on the interpretation and understanding of ideas" ("Knowing"). My work

links lived experience with both historical context and ideology to explain how

hierarchical training works epistemically (even among those who resist it) to

create attitudes and behaviors that make everyone complicit in a culture that

underwrites violence. Since articulation often is the first step toward

disarticulation of a naturalized subject position, my overall analysis identifies a

place of intervention for social justice agendas. In particular, my project suggests

that for individuals to flourish, we, ironically enough, must attend to the dispositioning of each individual as part of a larger social organism if dispositions are currently underwritten by an epistemologically flawed system of socialization that prohibits a gestalt of mutual respect.

Feminists, particularly indigenous feminists, have long reminded us that cultures can indeed cultivate non-violence-centered subjectivities that privilege information and subject positions as needed by the community. To that end, I conclude this introduction with the American Anthropological Association's contention that "[i]t is a basic tenet of anthropological knowledge that all normal human beings have the capacity to learn any cultural behavior." In epitomizing the invaluable contributions that rhetorical study offers for denaturalizing and explaining the formidable power of *doxa*, the following project urges us to address the deeply learned perceptual system of hierarchical thinking.

CHAPTER 2

STRANGE FRUIT: REAPING WHAT WE HAVE SOWN

It is the apathy of white southerners that disturbs me; and may I add, this apathy is
north and west of our region too. There are so many people who are determined
not to do wrong but equally determined not to do right. Thus they walk straight
into Nothingness. Are we—the nation that first embarked on the high adventure
of making a world fit for human beings to live in—about to destroy ourselves
because we have killed our dream? Can we live with a dead dream inside us?
How many dead dreams will it take to destroy us all? (20)
                                                                    – Lillian Smith *Killers of the Dream*

        As we know, what still links democratization, perhaps more today than ever
before, to fraternization cannot always necessarily be reduced to patriarchy in
which the brothers begin by dreaming of its demise. Patriarchy never stops
beginning with this dream. This demise continues endlessly to haunt its principle.
        *At the center of the principle, always, the One does violence to itself, and
guards itself against the other*.
                                                                    – Jacques Derrida *The Politics of Friendship*

        These two epigraphs illustrate a disquieting conundrum that further

complicates the challenges that attend any useful discussion of systems

underwritten by hierarchical politics of difference. Given the global proliferation

of democratic ideals among people of all nations, even those subject to severely

authoritarian regimes, it is important to understand how democratic ideals and

patriarchal values can co-exist within a single social system that I am

characterizing by the term "hierarchical." Democratic values, characterized by the

term "social equality," esteem the dignity and worth of every individual in

contradistinction to patriarchal regimes[3] that ideologically support social

stratification via, for example, class, race, and gender. For reasons I will examine

more closely in chapter four, people have learned to function within a bipolar

system that simultaneously accommodates and incorporates both concepts. How are these two systems intertwined and what are the epistemic productions of their inevitable interactions? If democratic discourses somehow support and reinscribe the subordination, domination, and exclusion enacted within the patriarchal regimes they seek to replace, how then do we reinforce democratic values without reinforcing systems based upon domination?

The epigraph by Jacques Derrida suggests that patriarchal systems rely upon the ideal of fraternization, which "endlessly haunts" the principle of patriarchy. The epigraph by Lillian Smith, a white southern woman who wrote scathingly of the Jim Crow South in which she grew up and lived until her death from cancer in 1966, demonstrates that, like Derrida, she was fascinated by the human ability to internalize competing and contradictory discourses of democracy and exclusion. But unlike Derrida's analysis, which invokes an eternal pairing of component parts that nevertheless maintain their discreteness (one discourse forever "haunts" the other), Smith's analysis refers to the genesis of a new thing —white apathy—as a hybrid material reality generated by competing discourses of Jim Crow and democracy. In this regard, Smith's analyses reflect contemporary feminist and postmodern understandings of the co-existent and phenomenological nature of human experience, in which the "we" precedes the "I" and discourses circulate and intersect, embodied, performed, and individuated by the human subject (Butler, Nancy). Thus, the coincidence of two discourses, Jim Crow and democracy, produces a "dead dream" synonymous with apathy.

23

Despite the fact that in her work Smith frequently locates herself as a product of her time, [4] Smith's mid-twentieth century writings are trenchantly contemporary, consistently taking up and pre-dating current scholarship that examines what feminist rhetorical scholar Nedra Reynolds calls "the interconnectedness between the material and the metaphorical" (7).

I draw upon the work of Lillian Smith (1897-1966) because her work richly describes the hierarchical politics that this dissertation theorizes. In addition to directing an innovative summer girls camp for twenty-five years, Smith was a prolific writer devoted to bringing about social equality, publishing seven books during her lifetime (several other manuscripts and some 13,000 letters were lost in one arson-related fire that destroyed her home). She corresponded heavily, delivered several commencement speeches, and, for ten years, edited and contributed to a literary journal that she founded with her lifelong partner Paula Snelling.[5] Devoted to social criticism and social change in the south, the journal began with 25 subscribers and had grown to 10,000 when Paula and Lillian decided to close the journal a decade later. During its transition through three name changes (*Pseudopodia*, *The North Georgia Review*, and *South Today*), the journal published many African American writers, including Pauli Murray and W.E.B. Dubois. Three collections of Smith's writings were published posthumously.[6] An organized rhetor and savvy rhetorician who understood the value of historical memory as well as its easy erasure, Smith kept copies of her writings, all of which concerned themselves in varying ways with issues of social

inequality and the conditions that support and produce it. In *Strange Fruit*,

Smith's banned[7] controversial best-selling novel about a 10-year long interracial

love affair circa World War I, she offers structural and cultural analyses of Jim

Crow and argues that social stratification and culture are simultaneously socially-

constructed and socially-constructive. For example, in one scene in *Strange Fruit*,

the college-educated Black female protagonist Nonnie, who, after an evening of

lovemaking on the outskirts of Town (barred from the simple privilege of ever

having sex with her white lover in a bed or a building), declares "'Race is

something—*made up*, to me. Not real. I don't have to believe in it. Social

position—ambition—seem made up too" (95). Throughout the novel, Smith races

gender and genders race while complicating her characters with variations of

sexual orientation, class, religion and ability. Eileen Boris writes that when

Strange Fruit is "read in conjunction with Smith's autobiographical *Killers of the*

Dream" (which, contrary to *Strange Fruit's* reception, received little critical

acclaim and sold poorly at the time of publication), Smith "offers a cartography of

Southern whiteness, an interpretation of bodies essential to understanding the

Southern political economy" (6) in which "constructions of racialized gender not

only permeat[ed] the political imaginary but also shap[ed] the body politic" (5).

Jay Garcia observes that many people consider Smith's work "a vital resource in

the work of lifting the yoke of racial oppression in the modern United States" (59)

   While Smith is rightly recognized as a pioneer in whiteness studies who

brought the topic of whiteness to public attention by critiquing white privilege and

by racing those who, in their unmarked positions of white privilege, frequently perceived themselves as unraced, Smith's analyses and social criticism of the Jim Crow South extend beyond race and gender to describe larger systems underwritten by hierarchical politics of difference, a politics in which the norm operates as a position of privilege and everything outside the norm is marked as not only different but as inferior and, often, deviant. The characters in *Strange Fruit* dramatically demonstrate, for example, how privilege operates rhetorically, fluidly internalized by all. Alma, the stern mother of the white male protagonist in *Strange Fruit*, wields power and privilege by reinscribing the mores of southern tradition upon her children (thus exerting a hold over her son's thoughts and actions even when he is not in her presence), yet the very same character, Alma, in another scene abdicates that privilege when cowed by her husband's harsh criticism of her. Smith's white characters are variously beneficiaries and agents of an exploitative social order while being bound by the constraints of that same order, as in the case of Tracy who, feeling ashamed of his deeply-felt love for Nonnie, a black woman, ultimately casts her away and engages himself to an appropriate object of his attentions—a vacuous white woman for whom he feels nothing but who superficially represents the ideals of southern white womanhood. Smith's descriptions of privilege are valuable because, for one, her descriptions do not perpetuate the myth that privilege is a free-floating signifier that offers absolute freedom to those in privileged positions (which, nevertheless, are context-dependent) and, secondly, because her work alludes to and describes large

26

systems of privilege of which Jim Crow is merely representational, systems that enable people to feel intrinsically superior to others, not merely along the lines of white superiority, but by any terms of normative judgment, such as class, gender, and ability. Systems underwritten by such politics are the focus of this project, and, as violence-centered and virtually ubiquitous systems, they pose a considerable threat to a sustainable human future. Since the ultimate goal of my project is to understand the ideological underpinnings, operations, and epistemic productions of systems underwritten by hierarchical politics of difference, Smith's writings serve well to ground and support my analyses of these politics.

Smith's writings urged me to re-think a simple oppositional relationship between discourses and practices of human rights and social justice (i.e., social equality) and those of hierarchal systems (a patriarchal legacy) by bringing into relief a complex of subjective and intersubjective relationships constituted by their interlocking force. A simple binary relationship doesn't adequately describe the complex network produced by opposing systems that work in tandem and that rely upon individual performance for their perpetuation. Smith's focus on the individual, how individuals are socialized to relate to others, or, as Smith might say, how individuals have been equally taught to *not* relate to each other, as well as how individual subjectivities are epistemically constrained (e.g., discouraged from reflecting upon the larger system of which they are part) is foundational to the theory elucidated in this dissertation. Smith deserves credit for her groundbreaking attention to systems of privilege and the epistemic collusion that

27

such systems exact from and levy upon individuals—despite an assertion made by Anne Loveland in her 1986 biography of Smith: Loveland writes that Smith's "primary significance lies in the role she played in the southern civil rights movement of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s" since Smith's "philosophical thinking was generally derivative and superficial and her literary effort unexceptional" (262).

We can see in Loveland's statement, however, the modernist influence of her time, and in the spirit of contemporary poststructural and feminist lens available to me, this dissertation aims to further the recent feminist historiography already begun in Smith's name, particularly with respect to her rhetorical activism and theoretical contributions to difference scholarship. Smith was remembered until the 1990's primarily as a fierce civil rights advocate. Even though several scholars have since acknowledged the ways in which her work incorporates an intersectional view of race reflective of critical race theory and have recognized her value as a social critic who attends to the complex tangle of the personal and political (Garcia, Gladney, McKay), I hope to make it clear that the richly coherent rhetorical and political theory embedded in Smith's work has yet to be sufficiently appreciated or elucidated. Yes, Smith was well ahead of her time in making whiteness, the body, and disabilities (physical and emotional) of topical interest and for implicating discourse in the construction of racialized and gendered subject positions, but her writings encompass a much larger social project, one which I'd characterize as nothing less than the abolition of a socially-

28

constructed and self-reinscribing violence-centered legacy in which humanity is presently mired. In other words, Smith persistently and consistently takes up the subject of hierarchical politics of difference. As early as 1949, Smith importantly raises the critical issue of making a world fit for *all* human beings, as noted in the epigraph to this chapter.

If such a world is to be possible, Smith professes that human beings must learn to understand themselves as cultural beings whose perceptions are just as socially-constructed and materially imbricated as other aspects of culture, and she urges her readers to consider the specie-specific ability of humans to consciously reflect upon and change themselves and the conditions in which they live. In a commencement speech "Ten Years from Today," Smith writes that man is "the only animal who can change himself" because as "a talking animal, he can talk about his dreams, and talking about his dreams makes him want those dreams to come true, and wanting those dreams to come true gives him the power to change himself" (671). While change, like difference, is a given and a constant, the human capacity to alter the course and speed of social change may be unique. Smith incisively points to the ways certain cultures discourage the critical reflexive awareness required to collectively enact positive social change and writes about cultures of exclusion such as Jim Crow that "almost completely [lack] the self-changing power that comes with honest criticism because in the past it forced out its children who saw dangers and tried to avert them, who had insight and talents that could have contributed so richly to the South's recovery;

29

because it bruised those who grimly stayed, unwelcomed, until their energies were depleted" (*Killers 152*). Smith consistently highlights the social-constructedness of human perception. Cultural reflexivity and individual conscience represent key components of human perception, and her discussion of the underdevelopment of both encourages readers to ponder how culture influences the development, or lack thereof, of human perception, and asks readers to think about the affects of stunted perception upon the capacity for large-scale societal change that benefits everyone, not just the few. Determining the veracity of Smith's claim that humans are the only animals with the ability to transform the conditions of their existence is immaterial to this topic. What matters here is Smith's belief in our own plasticity, a quality that enables humans to participate in self and societal transformation. The coherence of her vision permeates her corpus—to expose and de-seat *all* exclusionary systems via detailed understanding of their quotidian workings.

Several scholars have recognized this global aim, particularly Jay Garcia who asserts that Smith uses "human" as "a salient moral category, a form of cultural address, and a horizon of social transformation" (59) in her "plebian and transcultural form of human rights" (60) that "carried transnational dimensions even as it analyzed the particularities of region and state" (60). With a nod to the importance of the individual ("plebian"), Garcia insightfully recognizes that Smith's appeals to "human" operate as "a salient moral category […and] horizon of social transformation" that indicate a global worldview by referring to both the

universal ("transcultural") and local level ("particularities of region and state").

I'd argue too that Smith's categorical use of "human" in these ways

philosophically distinguishes her use of "human" from the modernist universal

subject that defines an individual *outside subjecthood* as the standard of

interpellation. Subjects are always contextually located in Smith's work. The

evident influence of liberal humanism can be traced throughout Smith's writings,

locating her in place and time as a mid-twentieth century white educated

American. Nevertheless, given the time period of the 1930's-60's in which Smith

writes, it is more important to acknowledge the degree to which Smith presages

contemporary feminist and postmodern discussions of subjectivity and

intersubjectivity, as well as the recent re-consideration of the importance of "the

universal" (i.e., serious consideration of commonalities, not merely differences,

among people. See for example, Benhabib, Mohanty).

Furthermore, Smith's corpus has not received the critical acclaim it

deserves with respect to its rhetorical performance and the variety of rhetorical

strategies Smith uses in her effort to expose her readers to the absurdity of

hierarchical systems and the ranking of human beings. Smith encourages readers

to perceive the socially-constructed nature of hierarchical systems and the beliefs

and practices they produce, all of which maintain their force through

naturalization. Smith invests her attention upon human artifice to urge her readers

to create "profound cultural change" by substituting better images of themselves

to live by, images of free individuals "growing from childhood steadily toward a

31

full maturity, accepting both freedom and responsibility, accepting all people as human beings with the same right to grow and to be different" ("Ten Years" 672). Given such a large theoretical problem space, Smith's larger historical vision easily escapes attention, enabling readers to instead focus on the many topics she addresses, from tropes of motherhood to segregation, or on the time and location in which she writes—the Jim Crow South. Nevertheless, all of Smith's writings address the problem of exclusion and the difficulty societies have with accommodating difference.

Therefore, this chapter examines features of Smith's rhetorical activism as rhetorical technai[8] that can be deployed analogously to understand and subvert contemporary exclusionary systems. Such technai include explicit discussion of underlying theoretical concerns, attention to epistemic productions that emerge from hierarchical systems like Jim Crow, and rhetorical strategies intended to persuade readers to change their habits as well as their thinking. Smith consciously conceived of writing and public speaking as a technē (i.e., as a productive art) as a means of both intervention and invention in the world around her, clearly demonstrating Janet Atwill's assertion that "technē is knowledge as production, not product, and as intervention and articulation rather than representation" (2). Of course, the degree to which Smith herself self-reflectively theorized such strategies cannot be known. Given, however, that praxis performs theory, consciously or otherwise, I extract rhetorical performances from Smith's

texts to demonstrate their contemporary theoretical relevance as well as to recognize how they resonate with current rhetorical theory.

For example, Smith's rhetorical performances frequently enact the work that Reynolds attributes to cultural geographers who deconstruct the binary relations between "public and private spaces by analyzing the sociospatial construction of identities through such concepts of *habitus*" (8). "Habitual pathways," Reynolds notes, "are characterized by signs that have faded with familiarity" as "they are no longer needed when the routine becomes naturalized" (81). Smith persistently addresses topics of identity construction, habitus, and the-personal-as-political to make the naturalized obvious. By marking the naturalized as "unnatural" for her predominately white and privileged audience, Smith invites readers to examine their own cultural traditions as historically and socially constructed legacies. Well in advance of Reynold's assertion that "[p]laces, whether textual, material, or imaginary, are constructed and reproduced not simply by boundaries but also by practices, structures of feeling, and sedimented features of *habitus*," (2) Smith maps the exclusionary boundaries that are daily etched and re-etched by individual participation. She demonstrates, for example, how privilege and exclusion are learned by rote and ritual to become naturalized performances:

> What white southerner of my generation ever stops to think
> consciously where to go or asks himself it if is right for him to go
> there! His muscles know where he can go and take him to the front

33

of the streetcar, to the front of the bus, to the big school, to the

hospital, to the library, to hotel and restaurant and picture show,

into the best that his town has to offer its citizens. These

ceremonials in honor of white supremacy, performed from

babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles

and glands and on into that region where mature ideals rarely find

entrance. (*Killers* 96)

Well ahead of current body and performance scholarship, Smith both understands

such performances as cultural fictions that nevertheless become sedimented and

naturalized over time through repeated practice, and she makes the familiar

strange by making visible the daily customs and practices that exclude culturally-

different others. Notably, Smith here also juxtaposes such exclusionary practices

with contrasting received wisdom, "mature ideals" and thereby adjudges the

human capacity to segregate realms of life as the basis of hypocrisy.

Smith focuses on the embodied and performative aspects of hierarchical

systems, I'd argue, not merely to mirror what she sees, but to urge her readers to

re-train themselves and their children, in a proto-feminist recognition that positive

societal transformation necessitates the transformation and flourishing of every

individual. Smith's rightfully conceives of culture as participatory in that

individuals embody, perform, and perpetuate cultural practices and values. If we

are to sustain human life and provide some semblance of a good life for everyone,

Smith asserts, then we must take into account the need to socialize people,

34

especially children, with an understanding of themselves as part of a larger whole

in which their actions have significant ideological and material affects. Such a

phenomenological perspective, Judith Butler asserts, posits the body as "an

embodying *of* possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical

convention," via a "complicated process of appropriation" that produces bodies

that are themselves historical conventions ("Performative Acts" 99).

Smith repeatedly raises the topic of societal transformation, emphasizing

that the capacity for change requires individuals who entertain its possibility, an

idea that harkens back to Michel Foucault's distinction between classical Greek

and Christian ethics. While ignoring the realities of the exclusionary and

hierarchical nature of the Greek polis in which only autochthonous male citizens

merited the dignity and worth afforded theoretically to the individual, Foucault

explains in "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" that

ideologically, ethics in classical thought was reflected in a theme—the care of the

self. Foucault notes that this theme changed during the influence of Christianity

when the idea emerged that "salvation is attained through the renunciation of self"

(285). The care of the self, then, incorporates one's own conduct in relation to

others and thus includes the social, the culturally determined, and Smith's work

importantly raises this ethical consideration, how cultures shape I/thou

relationships (Buber). That which makes Smith's work so presciently current is its

attention to subjectivity, particularly the social conditions conducive to the

formation of an engaged and inclusive citizenry. Ironically, this is precisely what

35

made her work vulnerable to being so easily dismissed and forgotten, to be written off as too psychological and "derivative."

Ortho*dox*y Authorizes Individual Endowments: Material and Cultural Capital

Smith credits a traumatic incident in her childhood for framing her lifelong interest in problems posed by difference and her interest in the power of *doxa* to impede social change. Born in 1897 in Jaspar, Florida to a large affluent white Southern Christian family (Lillian was the eighth of ten children), Smith explains that she was "reared in a small Deep South town whose population was about equally Negro and white," in a large home with a barn, fields, gardens and lawns (*Killers* 30). In *Killers of the Dream*, her partly autobiographical socio-cultural-political analysis of Jim Crow, Smith prefaces her telling of this milestone childhood event with a description of the cultural capital she had accrued through her family's raced and classed privilege. Her self-disclosure intimates the salience of these primary literacies and capacities, formed during her early childhood, to her later civic-minded engagement and to her ability to cope with risk and uncertainty (30). With "advantages of schooling, music and art as were available in the South," Smith writes, "our world was not limited to the South, for travel to far places seemed a natural thing to us, and usually one of the family was in a remote part of the earth" (*Killers* 30). "We knew we were a respected and important family of this small town," Smith continues, "but beyond this we gave little thought to status" (*Killers 31*). Smith's father, she writes,

36

"made money in lumber and naval stores for the excitements of making and losing it—not for what money can buy nor for the security it sometimes gives," and she notes the acceptance of risk in the family, "a mild delight in burning bridges, an expectant 'what next?'" Daily bible reading was a matter of course, and family values, Smith explains, were expressed in "excessively Christian and democratic terms," stressing the importance of "people and their welfare," and, above all else, each child's responsibility to "do something" for society (*Killers 31*).

Having taken these high-minded and empowering discourses to heart, Smith wasn't surprised when her parents took in a little white girl named Janie who was found "living with a Negro family in a broken-down shack" (*Killers* 35). Janie lived with the Smith family for three weeks until it was discovered that she was indeed African American. At the time of Janie's "rescue," however, Janie's adoptive family was suspected of kidnapping her and was ultimately harried into releasing Janie, who moved into Lillian's room in the Smith family home:

> She roomed with me, sat next to me at the table; I found Bible verses for her to say at breakfast; she wore my clothes, played with my dolls and followed me around from morning to night. She was dazed by her new comforts and by the interesting activities of this big lively family; and I was happily dazed, for her adoration was a new thing to me; and as time passed a quick, childish, and deeply felt bond grew up between us. (*Killers* 35)

37

After three weeks with Janie, Smith recalls frantic and hushed conversations one day after "the colored orphanage" telephoned the house to substantiate Janie's "real" identity. Smith remembers her father laughing at the dilemma when he was told of it that evening and his saying, "After all, now that you know it is pretty simple" (*Killer* 35-36). In "dreamlike stiffness" Smith recalls, she and her younger sister were hurriedly informed by their mother that Janie could keep her new dresses and toys but was to return to "Colored Town" the following day.

When a confused Janie turned to Lillian for some reasonable explanation of what was going on, the young Smith found herself in an untenable position. With no resource but her mother's meager and tacit explanation that "white and colored people do not live together," Smith found herself unable to contend with the discrepancy between what she was experiencing and what she had been taught about people being equal and deserving respect. Young Smith felt compelled to side with her parents' decision, woodenly rebuffing Janie's embraces and her need for comforting. Yet Smith recalls knowing deep down that "something was wrong" and that her parents "whom [she] passionately admired had betrayed something which they held dear" (*Killers* 37). "I began to know," Smith writes, "that people who talked of love and children did not mean it," and that "something was wrong with a world that tells you that love is good and people are important and then forces you to deny love and to humiliate people" (*Killers* 39). Here we can clearly see Smith's nascent recognition of a bipolar operating system that seemingly embraces opposing models of behavior. Smith's devout refusal to

accept such an arrangement forms the foundation of her belief in an ethics of transformation and the human capacity to re-vision and reshape its own practices and beliefs.

Tactical Forgetting and Strategic Remembering

At least three additional and significant points relating to the operations of hierarchical politics of difference can be extrapolated from Smith's account of this childhood memory. First, Smith explains that, formative as it was, she had forgotten this incident for thirty years. She remembered the incident when writing her 1944 novel *Strange Fruit*, the setting of which she based upon memories of her hometown. Smith's memory lapse intimates the pain that all children learn to camouflage and bury in the process of acculturating to hierarchical systems, pain that is real and ubiquitous and that too frequently goes unnoticed and unquestioned. Secondly, Smith's remembering, as part of a process of autonomy, intimates the importance of memory to rhetorical invention and social change, as a means of critical self and societal analysis that is roughly analogous to the consciousness raising (CR) of the 1960s. As a result of CR groups, Ruth Frankenberg explains, "the private, the daily, and the apparently trivial in women's activities came to be understood as shared rather than individual experiences, and as socially and politically constructed" (7). Thus the personal became political.

No Child Left Behind

Smith's story illustrates a third important point: no subject position within a hierarchical system is immune to harm. Smith writes that "the warped, distorted frame we have put around every Negro child from birth is around every white child also. Each is on a different side of the frame but each is pinioned there. What "cruelly shapes and cripples the personality of one" shapes and cripples the other. Ultimately, Smith philosophizes, despite growth and development, the acquisition of new knowledge, and the examination of old memories, no one within such a system will ever know what it is like to "grow straight again any more than can a tree, put in a steel-like twisting frame when young, grow tall and straight when the frame is torn away at maturity" (*Killers* 39). Smith's acutely perceptive insight that we cannot know what it would be like to be socialized within non-hierarchical systems is a topic that I will take up in the final chapter. Salient to the current discussion is the point that hierarchical systems are destructive and damaging to everyone subject to them, not merely to those who are in subordinate subject positions, but to those in ordinate positions as well. In other words, the fight is not against oppression, per se, but against a Manichean system that enables its subjects to feel superior (or inferior) to others.

In "Race, Empire, and Humanism in the Work of Lillian Smith," Garcia attributes Smith's understanding of the harm done to all subject positions to her three-year stay in China where she was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and other anticolonial writers. According to Garcia, "The Gandhian supposition that racist

ideologies victimized everyone within a given social order was everywhere apparent in Smith's writing on the American South" (60). Clearly an advocate of the principles of noncooperation and non-moderation delineated by Gandhi (Smith "The Right Way" 72) and admittedly influenced by Gandhi (Gladney *How* 203), Smith does not directly credit Gandhi for her coming to understand that all subject positions are victimized within a hierarchical system. An equally plausible explanation is that her understanding emerged from self-reflection upon her own experience in childhood and, later, in China.

Smith's father lost the turpentine mills and the family fortune in 1915 when Lillian was 17 and moved the family to their summer property on Old Screamer Mountain in Clayton, Georgia where, in 1920, he founded Georgia's first private girls' camp. Working there during the summers, Smith put herself through school, spending four years studying to be a concert pianist at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore (Gladney *How* 19). Smith then took a three-year position (1923-1925) as director of music in a missionary school in China where her exposure to British imperialism prompted her to reflect upon and associate British and American imperialism with the Jim Crow South. She realized that all three were authoritarian and unjust regimes founded upon white supremacy and arrogance. One of "ten or twelve Westerners—American and English—in a city of 250,000 located in a remote area of eastern China" where there were "no roads or trains; all travel was by canals" (Gladney *How* 19), Smith was essentially conscientisized in the Paolo Freireian sense. She witnessed cruel

41

and senseless beatings of Coolies, extreme and brutal poverty, and the racist, hypocritical behaviors of the Christian missionaries who, she observed, would *pray* with the Chinese but not "play tennis or swim with them" (Loveland 40).

Segregation: Ideological, Embodied, and Pervasive

At the request of her father, Smith returned in 1925 to the States to run Laurel Falls camp where she began to develop her thoughts about racial practices. Segregation, to Smith, was a defining metaphor for all that plagued humankind. "Race," she writes, is only one of society's problems: "[I]t is very difficult to separate it from other aspects of culture and personality" (*How* 84). Eventually, Smith came to theorize segregation as "symbol and symptom" (*Killers* 21) of all that is wrong with human beings who are conditioned within a dehumanizing system that maps mental, physical and emotional barriers into discourse and onto individual bodies. Segregation was as much an international problem as a regional or national problem to Smith, who wrote in 1962 that segregation is "far more than a social or economic or political problem" (qtd. in O'Dell 83). "Segregation in any of its forms, whether it be racial segregation, or banning of books and ideas, or political isolationism, or iron curtains, or concentration camps," Smith writes, reflects "ancient patterns of withdrawal," "patterns of death and destruction" ("Ten Years" 672). Segregation as a controlling metaphor describes the underlying conditioning that in later chapters I refer to as hierarchical "dispositioning" ("disposition" is the Latinate term for "arrangement," the second rhetorical cannon), which enables people to feel superior to and exclude others.

42

This ability to conceptually segregate enables Othering, Smith shows us, and thus produces the conditions for exclusion. Systems of segregation, Smith contends, produce strange fruit. All of us are strange, for no one is immune.

Smith used the term "strange fruit" before Abel Meeropol (under the penname Lewis Allan) wrote the lyrics to the song "*Strange Fruit*," which Billie Holliday famously sang and recorded. Unlike Meeropol's use of the term to signify victims of lynching, Smith used the term to describe those who, as a result of their ideological identification with privilege (e.g., white supremacists) perpetuated and profited from systems of privilege. In this sense, African Americans and other people of color who were subject to brutality and violence were not strange. On the contrary, the violence makers were the strange fruit, not their victims. White people were thus strange "fruit", that is, the ideological productions of white supremacy and other "strange" privilege systems, such as gender and class (i.e., systems underwritten by hierarchical politics of difference). Although Smith allowed the publishers of her novel *Strange Fruit* to give Allan credit for the title on the copyright page, Smith regretted her decision, suggesting that linking the novel to the song "distorted the theme of the book" (Loveland 67). Association with the song emphasizes lynching and the oppression of African Americans during Jim Crow, rather than telling, as Smith intended, "the story of mankind in its struggle to find a good life" (*How* 73). Smith explains, "Maybe no one but me sees all this in the book; but all the time I wrote it I felt that I was writing a kind of world fable" (*How* 73). Smith's ascriptions of her own work as

43

representing a "world fable" and "the story of mankind" support my contention in this chapter that Smith was indeed tackling the issue of hierarchical politics.

Maintaining Control of Power: Divide and Conquer

Smith first uses the term "strange fruit" in her parable "Two Men and a Bargain," published in 1943 in *South Today* and republished in *Killers of the Dream*. The parable refers to an exploitative bargain struck between Mr. Rich White and Mr. Poor White, in which the Mr. Rich White man is permitted to continue exploiting Mr. Poor White in exchange for the gift of white supremacy and the ability for both misters to exploit African Americans. Compensated for his poverty, misery, and lack of educational access with the comforts provided by feelings of superiority; legal protection and the impunity to lynch, rape, and inflict rage upon non-whites; and the promise of uncontested labor monopolies for low wage labor, Mr. Poor White agrees to not rise up against Mr. Rich White:

Anything you want to do to show folks you're boss you're free to do it. You can run the schools and the churches any way you want to. You can make the customs and set the manners and write the laws (long as you don't touch my business). You can throw books out of libraries if you don't like what's in them and you can decide pretty much what kind of learning, if any, you want southern children to have. If science scares you and you don't like the notion of messing around with it, remember you don't have to, this is God's country and a free one. Anyway, it'll tell you things

44

you can't believe and still believe what you believe now so it's better maybe not to take much stock in it.

If you ever get restless when you don't have a job or your roof leaks, or the children look puny and shoulder blades stick out more than natural, all you need do is remember you're a sight better than the black man. And remember this too: There's nothing so good for folks as to go to church on Sundays…

But if you don't have much to do, and begin to get worried-up inside and mad with folks, and you think it'll make you feel a little better to lynch a nigger occasionally, that's OK by me too; and I'll fit it with the sheriff and the judge and the court and our newspapers so you won't have any trouble afterwards; but *don't expect me to come to the lynching, for I won't be there*…

And I promise you: Long as you keep the nigger out of your unions, we'll keep him out of our mills. We'll give you the pick of what jobs there are, and if things get too tight you can take over his jobs also, for any job's better than no job at all. Now that's a bargain. (177)

Alluding to caste and class, this chilling parable refers to systems of social stratification and the ways that privilege operates to maintain that stratification. Well ahead of critiques of neoliberal corporate business practices (Klein, Mohanty) and in understanding that social, economic, and political stratification

45

that excludes some but not others prohibits participatory democracy and free access to public spheres of deliberation (Fraser, Young), Smith indicts class as much as gender and race in the deliberate maintenance of social inequality.

Throughout her writing, Smith repeatedly brings up ways in which power elites (whom she refers to as "demagogues) mobilize ideology to maintain their positions of privilege, thereby raising for contemporary readers the specter of "The American Dream" and the globally disseminated spurious capitalistic notion of endless growth. Mr. Rich White's comment that "any job is better than no job" rides the split discursive coattails of religion and business, drawing upon the discourses of the Puritan work ethic and pride in oneself to occlude the real source of individuals' problems and misery—the hierarchical thinking that enables and justifies social inequality. Via Mr. Rich's seeming support of morality in his advocacy of the church, Smith also implicates religion as a possible source of complacency that contributes to the capacity for denial of critical social issues (e.g., the deprivations and problems of everyday life). She accuses those in power of consciously deploying religion to maintain the status quo, writing here and elsewhere that elites "profitably exploit" the "lush meadows of fear and hate and ignorance" that are produced and reproduced within systems that value exclusion ("Ten Years" 671). Smith importantly addresses an issue that largely presents itself alternately as taboo or naturalized (thereby remaining an elephant in the room): power elites' investment in de-contextualized economics (e.g., free-market capitalism) that do not place the needs and well-being of every individual on the

planet in the center of economic theory.

Ascension to the top strata, Smith notes in the chapter following the parable of the bargain, operates as an ideal. Writing that "for the few the bargain paid off in big profits and always one hoped to be one of the few" (*Killers* 191), Smith alludes to the ways in which privilege operates both as an ideal and as rhetorical device. Although "one hoped to be one of the few" might strike contemporary readers as simplistic and hyperbolic, this claim partially describes what I am theorizing as the rhetorical operations of privilege underlying hierarchical systems. Privilege, I argue, operates rhetorically and in an analogous manner to gender in that the privilege embedded in normative judgment is ideologically internalized by all subject positions. Of course, not all individuals hope to be one of the few. As we know, rhetorical operations (like gender) shape individuals' perceptual horizons (Alcoff) but do not act as overdetermining agents, or else, for example, all women would perform femininity in the same way at all times. Moreover, privilege does not necessarily operate on the conscious level, and most often operates at the level of the habitual and embodied, but the desire for privilege often surfaces to the level of articulation.

In the parable of the bargain Smith assigns the desire to be better than (i.e., the desire for privilege) as that which underlies hierarchal thinking. Without directly naming the agent cause for the bargain, Smith nevertheless implicates feelings of superiority and entitlement:

"Yes," said Mr. Poor White, "I still want to be better than a

nigger."

"See?" Something said.

"Yes, but why are folks against us! Everybody's against us…The whole world! Even my own children," said Mr. Rich White.

"The southern politician's for you," Something said. "And a lot of Yankee Republicans. And there are people in Europe for you. Plenty of folks are still for you. I'm for you—I'm always for the guy who wants to be first; who rides the front seat, always the front seat, and won't let others ride with him."

"Who are you?"

"You know me. Every man knows me until death stops the knowledge. But some won't make the bargain…Who am I? Listen, I'll tell you: I'm that which splits a mind from its reason, that splits a people from humanity. I'm the seed of hate and fear and greed. You are its strange fruit which I feed on…"

But Mr. Rich White and Mr. Poor White did not understand the words.

"None but the weak," said a voice, "crave to be better than. Strong men are satisfied with their own strength. There is another way to make bargains…"

"Must be a Communist talking," said Mr. Rich White, "or somebody un-American." (190)

48

While the parable of the bargain certainly encapsulates the ideology of white superiority, Smith here, as I have been arguing, is describing a larger system of privilege undergirded by "being better than." Being better than defies reason, Smith notes, splitting people from their humanity. Hierarchical systems, then, epistemically produce hate, fear, and greed, upon which normative judgment "feeds," creating subjects who are "strange fruit"—that is, virtually everyone.

Historicize and Change

Even as Smith claims that some people "won't" make the bargain, I'd argue that in the parable, Smith attempts to mobilize readers by appealing to their sense of intellectual superiority. Readers who understand the parable are prompted to disavow themselves from such bargains by "feeling better than" Mr. Rich White and Mr. Poor White who do not understand the parable. While Smith elsewhere contests the idea that people can "opt out" of their culture, much as no one is immune to gender socialization (even those who refuse and subvert gendered norms have likewise internalized those norms), she also believes in humans' ability for developmental change. Thus, while indicting hierarchical systems and the power of demagogues to sway and control the public ("Must be a Communist talking"), she concurrently mobilizes her readers to socially-just action, writing elsewhere in *Killers of the Dream* that "words can arouse a conscience as well as baser passions, and that conscience in sane people is a determining factor in behavior" (200).

Staying true to this belief, in 1955, a year after *Brown v. Board of Education*, Smith welcomed the Supreme Court's strategic decision to desegregate schools by publishing *Now Is the Time*, a handbook for racial integration. The text begins with a structural analysis—an historicizing of Jim Crow—and finishes with delineation of concrete practices, hundreds of them that serve as substitutes for engrained behaviors, for example, "If you live in the South, perhaps there is not too distant from your town a Negro college which you can visit. Take your children with you and a group of your friends can visit it" (*Now* 83). Serving as a guide to "transformative praxis"(Flower), *Now Is the Time* situates these new and "better" integrative practices against older practices of segregation citing, for instance, the history of disabled individuals in the United States, those with cerebral palsy, the hearing impaired, and the blind, among others. Smith reminds her readers that humans have barbarically dehumanized and segregated "in the name of this difference or that" (26).

A recurring strategy that Smith uses to nettle her readers' consciences is to denaturalize hierarchal systems by historicizing them. Doing so reveals not only their constructed origins but also our capacity to subvert them. Being a constructed, historical subject, Smith understands, is a matter of fact. For example, when discussing the limited subject positions available to Southern white women who must live up to the expectations of the cult of southern womanhood, which is, of course, reserved for white women only, Smith simultaneously forgives women and men their socialization. She writes that "[i]t

would be unfair to blame the mothers of two or three generations for a way of life

that began destroying its children long before they were born, as it would be to

blame the men. Both men and women were born into it and of it" (*Killers* 152).

Even as she lifts personal blame, Smith points to mothers' role in indoctrinating

their children into Southern Tradition: "They did a thorough job of dishonoring

curiosity, of making honesty seem a treasonable thing, of leaving in their children

an unquenchable need to feel superior to others, to bow easily to authority, and to

value power and money more dearly than human relations and love" (*Killers*

153). Smith reminds her readers, however, that blaming individuals not only

replicates the gendered norms inherited diachronically, but that such blame

obviates the underlying causes which have been handed down for centuries before

the cult of southern womanhood or the racialization of skin color had emerged in

the public imagination:

> Sometimes we blame Mom too much for all that is wrong with her
>
> sons and daughters
>
> After all, we might well ask, who started the grim mess? Who
>
> long ago made Mom and her sex "inferior" and stripped her of her
>
> economic and political and sexual rights? Who, nearly two
>
> thousand years ago, said, "It is good for a man not to touch a
>
> woman…But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better
>
> to marry than to burn"? Certainly that old misogynist St. Paul was
>
> no female apostle. Man, born of woman, has found it a hard thing

to forgive her for giving him birth. The patriarchal protest against

the ancient matriarch has borne strange fruit through the years

(*Killers* 153)

Here Smith provides an historical and rhetorical view of gendered culture that,

even as it assigns the church a dominant role in the replication of gendered

hierarchy, particularly the inferiority of the female sex, suggests that humans can

abolish hatred- and fear-based legacies and shake such historical monkeys from

their backs. "Strangeness" is learned, passed on through centuries, and Smith

alludes to my argument—that the heart of strangeness is perceptual, constituted

by the historically constructed and socially replicated notions of superiority that

discursively permeate and influence human beliefs, behaviors, and dreams.

Deregulation: The Personal *Is* Political

Unlike John Inscoe who argues that "Smith's interest in Jim Crow and its

effects were more psychological than political," I consider Smith's use of the

psychological as highly political[9] and her art as a mechanism of social activism.

In both her fiction and non-fiction, she acts as a political philosopher searching to

understand and explain the pervasive cultural disease of the twentieth century

whose poverty, fear, greed, racism, hate, and war is represented by the metaphor

of segregation. Considering social criticism the "responsibility of writers to their

culture and its problems," Smith invited Richard Wright to work with her on

"suggestions for other writers that might encourage them to do more creative

thinking and writing about our cultural problems, and yet leave them free of any

ideological ties," explaining that she is "not in the least interested in political movements or in being any kind of reformer or political leader" (*How* 84-5). Although Smith did participate in various organizations, for example, sitting on the board of directors of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and did wholeheartedly support and encourage political activism, for example, the non-violent resistance and protest of SNCC and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, she was wary of any narrow political ideology. Her talent, as Smith explains it, "is that of clarifying issues" (*How* 62).

One of the issues that Smith clarifies and that I take up in chapter five of this dissertation points to the importance of childhood socialization to societal development because external controls will never ensure ethical behavior. Smith reminds us "It is a very important thing for us to remember, today, that no government can *make men good*" ("Vital" 670). To harbor the thought that man is "an economic or political unit," is an error of judgment: "To believe that he is, by ignoring personality, we over-simplify a complex, subtle, tragically profound problem" (*How 86*). Smith, here, demonstrates the sophistication of her political thought by attending to the complex network produced in the nexus of the personal and political. According to Darlene O'Dell, Smith borrows from German gestalt therapy the idea that "structure or organism could not be analyzed by the sum of its parts" and must be understood instead "as a whole" (12). Philosophically derivative in this sense, as all scholarship is ultimately derivative, Smith enumerates the conditions necessary for the production of "healthy fruit,"

53

what she refers to as "the two most fundamental rights of mankind: the right to grow and the right to be different" ("Vital" 672). By addressing conditions fundamental to bringing about social equality, Smith perceptively disregards distributive models of justice, which often overlook and obscure "social structures and relations beyond distribution" that contribute to oppression and domination (Young 9). Smith's disavowal of distributive models of justice can be seen in her remark that the "South's major problems [cannot] be solved by trying to put a loaf of bread, a book, and a ballot in every one's hand," a perspective echoed in political philosopher Iris Marion Young's assertion that "power is a relation rather than a thing" (31). Young also critiques distributive models that consider issues of "nonmaterial goods [such as] power, opportunity, or self-respect," arguing that "when metaphorically extended to nonmaterial social goods, the concept of distribution represents them as though they were static things, instead of a function of social relations and processes" (16).

In, at the very least, implicit acknowledgement of the dynamic processes underlying the cultivation of cultural capital, including opportunity and self-respect, Smith used her summer camp as an incubator for her philosophy, working to construct the very conditions—the right to grow and be different—that she advocates in her writings. When she begrudgingly took over the running of the camp from her father, Smith observed what Gladney describes as "the highly competitive nature of the sports program and the rather authoritarian atmosphere" ("A Chain" 50). Adhering to her philosophy that to change anything, something

54

better needs to be substituted for whatever is being taken away, Smith began by studying other camps and read literature about "child development and psychological theory" (Gladney "A Chain" 51). After reading about the benefits of general camp programs, Smith noted discrepancies between the literature and campers' experiences. Writing that "one child looking pale and worn out after a horseback ride…" and another "was too tired to eat lunch," Smith decided that the "business of lumping children and pushing them through a set program as if they were inanimate objects was going to end in my camp" (Gladney "A Chain" 51).

Developing an individualized approach, Smith limited enrollment to 65 campers (aged six to sixteen), despite a long waiting list, and increased the ratio of campers to counselors to nearly 2:1 (Gladney "A Chain" 51). Furthermore, Smith incorporated curricula of performing arts (theatre, dance, and music) in addition to sports. Most importantly, Smith cultivated a sense of quality education among the girls by taking what each of them did seriously. For example, one camper writes, "We worked with silver and good stones in crafts" and "painted in oils" and "acted in plays that were worth performing," led by college educated counselors who often came from expert programs in the arts (Gladney "A Chain" 51). Each camper's program, Gladney explains, was individualized to the needs of the camper, and "no two days were exactly alike for anyone" since each girl's schedule was "made each night for the following day": "Once a week, each girl met with the director and assistant director to discuss her interests and goals for

the following week," and carried out her program, learning from any mistakes that may have been made in the planning (51).

What I find most intriguing about this approach are the perceptual changes that quickly emerged among the girls' outlooks toward each other. In a letter to camp parents, Smith writes, "We do not find it necessary to use artificial awards or any competitive methods" giving instead "natural recognition." "For in treating each girl as an individual we cannot let her achievements go unnoticed" and the girls treat one another similarly, noticing each other's accomplishments. Every girl, Smith observes, improves in several areas, and the consequences of this focus on personal achievement ironically turned out to be a reduction in competition. Several times a summer, Smith also met with girls to discuss frankly with them subjects that traditionally were taboo, such as the body, sex, war, racial divides, class snobbery and so on. As Gladney explains, even after Smith closed the camp to focus on her writing career, Smith continued "her commitment to the growth of the individual human being as a primary means of effecting social change" (53).

Smith's commitment to this philosophy is as evident in her interactions with campers as it is in her writings. As Snelling says of Smith, "Life and letters were not two separate spheres: her sojourn in both was an unfinished symphony of search and revelation, in which the reader (yesterday, today, tomorrow) has a vital performing role" (1). Smith understood the role of the reader in the construction of any text, writing how "no one—no writer, no painter, no sculptor,

no musician ever can perfect his dream or even carry it out or create it in full until there is a listener or looker to collaborate with him" ("The Old Days" 679). On the reception of *Strange Fruit*, Smith writes that even as it sold millions of copies, "maybe, just maybe, not more than fifty thousand of its readers really collaborated with me as listeners on that book" because for most readers, their expectations to read something obscene and scandalous usurped their ability to listen to the book's message ("The Old Days" 679-80).

Conclusion

Smith's political analyses continue to be relevant to difference scholarship, particularly in their attention to conditions that nominally exist in certain contexts but in no large-scale fashion: the right to grow and the right to be different. Together, both conditions provide a generative lens of inquiry for future scholarship. The implications of Smith's understanding of the ways that "segregation expressed a geography that mapped power and hierarchy through bodies" (Boris 2) similarly direct us to take the matter of childhood socialization and how to avoid mapping power and hierarchy onto bodies much more seriously across the humanities.

Smith's work does not, however, explain the hegemonic staying power of hierarchically-based systems, a topic taken up in chapters 4 and 5, and many of her later speeches often convey a somewhat modern and linear narrative of democratic progress in the United States:

We have two big jobs ahead of us, now that profound changes are

taking place in our South, now that segregation is crumbling. The

first job is to hasten the crumbling, for *time is important*. Walls are

not only falling in the South, they are falling everywhere, and

American democracy can win the imagination of the world only by

showing the world that within the strongest democracy on earth all

of its citizens have been accepted and given their rights. ("Ten

Years" 672)

Given that this excerpt is taken from a commencement speech, it may be that

Smith here is strategically mobilizing her audience to claim and act upon their

democratic ideals. Although she does not theorize how hierarchical thinking

operates hegemonically, Smith does allude to many of the forces that keep

hierarchical thinking entrenched, including apathy, fear and greed.

Smith deserves recognition for taking up the problematic of difference

before the postmodern critique, postcolonial studies, and feminist scholarship

brought it to the forefront of humanities scholarship (Crenshaw, Derrida, Harding,

Said). Smith certainly understood that the difficulty in accommodating difference

underlies all of humanity's ills, and she thus arrives, if indirectly, at a major

premise of this dissertation: Because difference is fundamental to the human

condition, it will never go away, so how we learn to perceive difference can and

must change since the hierarchizing of difference that characterizes our

contemporary global socio-historical time period undermines the very basis of

democratic engagement. Smith recognized the need to change the way difference

58

is perceived and to embrace it—rather than the illusion of equality—as early as 1962:

> So—I threw *equal* out of my vocabulary. I don't think it matters two cents who is equal to whom. No individual is equal to another individual. We cannot be. It is not in our nature to be the same…
>
> Thinking of these matters and the confusion so many feel, I have become convinced that *our right to be different* is, in a deep sense, the most precious right we human beings have, and the one most likely, if we hold to it, to ensure the human race a future. We need to treasure human differences where they are important (I can't see that skin color is more important than eye color); we need to cherish the unique achievements of various groups, to protect the unique talents of individuals, to value the various beliefs and ideas and abilities that seem to grow more easily in one culture than in another. We may need them all for our survival—certainly we shall need some of them one of these days, and we don't know which we shall need the most or where they come to birth. ("Words" 151-4)

Here Smith insightfully acknowledges the knowledge constructed by groups, and reminds us that group-specific knowledge may at anytime reveal itself as much needed (i.e., expert), something we may all need one day for our survival.

Moreover, by admonishing us to value group-specific knowledge ("various beliefs and ideas and abilities that seem to grow more easily in one culture than another"), Smith indirectly attacks an assimilatory model that has been advanced by liberal humanism. "Liberal humanism," Young explains, "treats each person as an individual, ignoring differences of race, sex, religion, and ethnicity" (166). Smith does not ignore such differences, and she spurned the term "integration" for its assumption of an assimilationist ideal, preferring instead to characterize herself as anti-segregation. Young's solution to the assimilationist ideal is a "politics that asserts the positivity of group difference." She writes, "By puncturing the universalist claim to unity that expels some groups and turns them into the Other, the assertion of positive group specificity introduces the possibility of understanding the relation between groups as merely difference, instead of exclusion, opposition, or dominance" (166).

Although Smith would probably not have explicitly disagreed with Young's statement, Smith's focus is not the reclamation of group pride as an emancipatory mechanism that counters group oppression. Rather, as the following suggests, Smith bypasses the subject of identity politics altogether:

> Then there are those who think of me as an odd, funny "little rich
> southern woman" who goes out parading around and defending
> Negroes, and tearing down the wall of segregation. There is a tiny
> bit of truth in this stereotype, of course; I am not rich and have
> never been, having been "on my own" without a penny from

60

seventeen on. But I have taken a stand against segregation in all

my writings, one way or the other, but always in a complex stand,

a philosophic position that many Negroes do not understand. I am

not popular with Negroes because I have never been "for"

Negroes: I am for quality people, regardless of color; I am for

getting rid of barriers that stunt and dwarf human growth…I am

deeply concerned about the human race but am for the person, the

human being; his quality is what I am concerned about; and I don't

think organizations can do what must be done by the individual

himself. (*How* 236)

At face value and read out of context, Smith's focus on the individual could strike

readers as modernist, but as I hope to have shown in this chapter, Smith's

individualism refutes a liberal autonomous conception of the individual and

discredits the mythic model of a universal subject. While acknowledging the

group-specific knowledge inherent in any subject position, Smith simultaneously

avoids advocacy of any specific group because it is not her intent to resolve

problems that result from difference *after the fact*. Rather, as I have striven to

show, Smith takes up the topic of hierarchical politics of difference with the intent

of exposing it as a dehumanizing cancer blighting human sociality and as the

culprit that creates identity politics.

In the next chapter, we will take a closer look at precisely how

hierarchical politics operates. We will see that, as a metastasized cancer pervading

sociality, hierarchical politics structures the macro yet relies upon the micro for its continuation and successful performance. In other words, collective hierarchical structures rely upon the perceptual training of individuals, each of whom learns to think hierarchically prior to developing the capacity to think reflectively.

CHAPTER 3

PERCEPTION AND PRIVILEGE: HIERARCHICAL POLITICS OF

DIFFERENCE AS WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Smith hoped to cut away the cultural logic that hierarchized men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, whites and blacks, to pressure notions of gender and racial authority, to see how the discourse of racism damaged both races by binding them together in destructive rhetorical manacles –McKay Jenkins

We need a critique of Western assumptions about knowing the colonized Other, in order to uncover their orientalist self-aggrandizing structure, but without relying on an unproblematic "authentic" alternative from the colonized, whose interpretive horizon is similarly historically dynamic and is undoubtedly distorted by colonialism as well —Linda Martín Alcoff

Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out, and it is presupposed by them — Maurice Merleau-Ponty (qtd. in *Visible Identities* 187)

As we saw in the last chapter, Lillian Smith was a political philosopher

and rhetorical strategist who spent most of her adult life attempting to convince

others that the strife-ridden and socially-inequitable world that she and each of us

inherits is the manifestation of an underlying socially-constructed and

constructive "cancer" that could be eradicated if human beings collectively

embraced their autopoietic nature. Smith was concerned with ferreting out the

underlying causes of what she called a "dehumanized world" and the conditions

that would allow a segregated society such as the Jim Crow South of her time.

Because these causes and conditions are equally relevant to the stratified and

hierarchized "Jim Crow" of our own time whose zeitgeist some call "a culture of

death," I use Smith's theorizing of difference, introduced in chapter two, to frame

my study. Smith insightfully identifies the contextually-dependent inability of

people to accommodate difference and to live in relations of mutual reciprocal

respect as a principal underlying cause of societal strife, and she argues that this

"inability" reflects a ubiquitous and deeply learned praxis of dehumanizing

others. In short, without access to a postmodern lexicon, Smith advances a

complex theory of hierarchical politics of difference[10] in which humans are

trained to internalize norms of assessing themselves and others categorically, a

process that essentializes humans in order to determine their worth. Humans learn

and subsequently naturalize this assessment system during childhood when they

are socialized into hierarchical regimes (e.g., gender, race, class, ability). In this

chapter, I draw upon Smith's theorizing of this dehumanized and dehumanizing

system, particularly the ways in which individuals are trained to disrespect

themselves and others by deeming themselves and others either inferior or

superior, in order to examine and extend Iris Marion Young's discussion of

hierarchical politics in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.

A basic premise of hierarchical politics is that the world is violence-

centered. In other words, hierarchical politics direct us to theorize the ugliness of

the human world, its violent underbelly. As we saw in the previous chapter, Smith

was disturbed by the pervasive violence and exclusion (e.g., state-sponsored,

social, economic, gendered and so on) she witnessed in both China and the Jim

Crow South, and she began to theorize its roots. Despite her frequently expressed

high regard for human creativity, imagination and potential for self-change, Smith

recognized that contemporary culture is essentially underwritten by violence, and her writing begins from this basic premise. If we are persuaded by the mass of evidence suggesting that her basic premise is true, how then are humans to eradicate the socially-constructed violence-centeredness of societal structures and culture? According to Smith, we must first root out and analyze the underlying causes of societal conflict to eradicate violence. In pursuit of this, Smith incorporates both non-ideal and intersectional theory decades before they were named. Many contemporary political theorists advocate these two feminist theories for effectively theorizing the nexus of interlaced conflict-centered "discriminatory" systems that largely constitute contemporary economic, political, and social systems. While non-ideal theory endorses "addressing the needs and problems of those who are most disadvantaged" by placing them at the center of analysis (Crenshaw 167), intersectionality rejects single-axis analyses in favor of multiple-axis analyses that more fully capture the complex phenomena of lived experience.[11]

Both theories proceed from the understanding that, while all theories reduce and frame the world, the more traditional analytical frames of ideal theory and single-axis analyses can actually distort and occlude what they purport to accurately describe. Political philosophers Charles Mills and Iris Marion Young demonstrate, for example, how narratives of democracy (i.e., social and legal equity) often work against the realization of social justice. Young relates how the rituals of holidays, such as Thanksgiving, the Fourth of July, Memorial Day,

Lincoln's Birthday, and Martin Luther King Day, serve to reinscribe the dominant

narrative of democracy in the popular imagination, and she describes these

ritualized performances of holiday practice and the mythos they enact: "we tell

each other" and "make our children perform" stories of a meritocratic playing

field in which all people are treated as individuals whose "life options and

rewards should be based solely upon their individual achievement" and in which

everyone "should have the liberty to be and do anything they want" (157). Young

retells these commonplaces of liberal humanism as a preface to her argument that

"an ideal of justice that defines liberation as the transcendence of group

difference" is an impossible ideal based upon specious ideas of assimilation and

equality, neither of which is attainable because neither allows room for nor

venerates group-specific difference.[12]

     Mills also critiques democratic narratives as points of invention,

contending that as heuristics, they occlude the subjects who are purportedly the

objects of social justice theory—those who are excluded, marginalized, and/or

otherwise oppressed. Mills refers to the absence of women in the history of

mainstream philosophy scholarship to illustrate his point: "If it were obvious that

women were equal moral persons, meant to be fully included in the variable

'men,' then why was it not obvious to virtually every male political philosopher

and ethicist up to a few decades ago?" (166). Mills criticizes traditional

scholarship for starting from "ideal theory," which "tacitly represents the actual as

a simple deviation from the ideal, not worth theorizing in its own right, or claims

66

that starting from the ideal is at least the best way of realizing it" (166). When the "actual' is grossly over-simplified and represented as a mere "deviation from the ideal," Mills explains, then "racism and sexism are framed as 'anomalies' to a political culture conceived of as—despite everything—basically egalitarian" (168).

The rampant assumption of Americans that Americans live in a democracy, for example, illustrates how inquiry that begins with the ideal can distort the truth and deflect attention from where it is critically needed. As Anne McClintock explains, "[n]ationalism contains the very real risk of projecting the denial of difference onto a conveniently abstracted 'collective will'" (123). How do we prevent this kind of myopia?

Many feminist scholars advocate starting from the "nonideal," from perspectives of the socially subordinated whose perspectives and experiences challenge dominant narratives that in their falsely attributed universality have become naturalized. For example, the myth that Americans live in a democracy in which the quotidian problems experienced by the majority of people are isolated issues unrelated to the otherwise sound structure of its "democratic" institutions not only belies the truth of the matter but also cultivates various affective climates, such as an air of indifference (an off-shoot of complacency and/or denial) or an atmosphere of hostility and defensiveness (in response to any critique of the collective national identity). I make this latter claim as a result of personal experience. During my youth, whenever I critiqued conditions in the

United States, despite my genuine desire to improve the way things were,

members of my family, I came to understand, frequently perceived my comments

as a threat to their own nationalistic identity, so I learned to brace myself in

anticipation of the inevitable familial response: "If you don't like it, move

elsewhere, but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater."

Smith certainly recognized the ways in which democratic narratives

discursively operate to disguise the fact that, to varying degrees, most

contemporary societies are not structured upon economic and social equality, but

precisely the opposite. Smith describes this fundamental conflict in *Killers of the*

Dream, the "dream" referring to democracy:

> From the day I was born, I began to learn my lessons…I learned it
>
> is possible to be a Christian and a white southerner simultaneously;
>
> to be a gentlewoman and an arrogant callous creature in the same
>
> moment; to pray at night and ride a Jim Crow car the next morning
>
> and to feel comfortable in doing both. I learned to believe in
>
> freedom, to glow when the word *democracy* was used, and to
>
> practice slavery from morning to night. (29)

By situating individual human relations within larger systems of domination,

repression, and oppression, Smith clearly begins her social analyses from the

theoretical standpoint of the nonideal[13] while masterfully conveying one of the

many rhetorical byproducts that the naturalized ideals of democracy generate—

denial. Denial, for example, of rampant poverty in the United States,

68

unsustainable corporate economic and energy practices, structural racism, or any number of undemocratic practices flourishing today.

Smith also notably forwards a radically nonideal view of contemporary democracies by observing that structures of subordination are not anomalous to allegedly democratic societal institutions but are, rather, foundational to them. Theorizing fifty years before critical race scholars, Smith clearly starts from the premise that racism, sexism, and other structures of subordination are not only at the root of societal problems, but that they in fact constitute the very ground upon which societal structures are predicated. From this perspective, the baby (the ideal) and the bathwater (the nonideal) cannot be neatly separated so as to conveniently blind us to the latter by exalting the former. Smith resolutely makes this point clear when writing to James Dombrowski during WWII to explain her resignation from the Board of Directors of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare: "I have never been able to follow the line that we must get rid of racial discrimination, for instance, or unemployment, for instance, in order to 'win the war.' I think we must get rid of these evils because they are cancers in human culture and *bring on* wars. A war cannot be 'won'" (italics mine *How* 91).

Borrowing a concept from Young in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, I suggest that Smith alludes here to "hierarchical politics of difference" as that which underwrites a pervasive and global system of sickness that prevents social, legal, and political equity. This system is predicated upon various systems of violence that structure our most fundamental societal institutions, and these most

69

basic structures constitute a world that individuals are born into and learn, with varying degrees of "success" (defined variably) to live in. While this system precedes us, it is important to remember that it is, nonetheless, an artificial system that, although extremely complex, can be abolished. Hierarchical politics of difference represents both collective and subjective hierarchical structuring; both rely upon a learned perceptual system that, once internalized and naturalized, becomes nearly impossible to un-learn entirely. Nevertheless, it is this perceptual system that needs to be tackled, a perceptual system that inhibits the accommodation of difference while enabling people to feel justified in their abjection of and violence towards others. I think the reader will agree that such a system is antithetical to the realization of democratic ideals. Hierarchical politics, as I will argue in this chapter, represents the polar opposite of the accommodation and expectation of difference, which relies upon genuine mutual respect—a far cry from the popularized virtue of "tolerance." Smith uses the term "segregation" to signify hierarchical politics and the learned perceptual system that underwrites it, which I refer to throughout this writing as "hierarchical thinking." She writes, "the situation I lived in, and still live in [referring to the Jim Crow South], is one of great importance to the earth's future, because segregation as I knew it and others in the South knew it is both symbol and symptom of the deep malaise which the human race is suffering from" (*How* 126). Smith conceives of segregation as a controlling metaphor underlying *all* political and social problems, writing in a letter to her Norton editor that "what to do about race is tied up with

70

what to do about EVERYTHING" (*How* 126). Later in the same letter, she writes

of the "drug-like habit of White Supremacy" and her belief that "the whole

problem of the peasant is a world-wide one stretching from Tobacco Road to the

rice fields of China and the millet fields of India," a problem not grounded purely

in economics but, rather, a problem "centered at the core of our culture" (*How*

126).

While Smith respected the need for people to pursue legal and economic

"rights," she perceived them as necessary but insufficient components of

progressive social change. In addition to providing people with basic material

needs and legal equity, real change, she argues, requires that individuals learn

how to relate to and truly respect each other, not in spite of, but *because* of their

differences. "The South's major problems," Smith explicates, cannot be solved

"by trying to put a loaf of bread, a book, and a ballot in every one's hand," for

"man is not [merely] an economic or political unit" (*How* 86). To Smith, who

astutely takes an intersectional perspective of the human condition, human

problems should not be examined in isolation: "Racial segregation, political and

economic isolationism cannot be considered apart from man's whole personality,

his culture, his needs" (*How* 86).

Smith also understood that in order to take all of a person's needs under

consideration it is absolutely necessary that we examine the conditions that

children are given to develop. Overlooking the conditions in which children grow

(or don't grow), Smith asserts, is a tragic flaw because children "cannot grow and

mature without self-esteem, without feelings of security, without faith in his world's willingness to make room for him to live as a human being" (*How* 87). "Under the segregation pattern," neither black children nor white children grow up with their needs met (*How* 87). White children suffer as well, Smith claims, for they cannot "grow freely and creatively" but, rather, are crippled with "arrogance and hardness of heart, and blindness to human need" (*How* 87). All subject positions within such a system, Smith observes with profound wisdom, become "dehumanized."

In recognition that "segregation is an ancient, psychological mechanism used by men the world over" (*How* 86), Smith does not limit her critique of societal conditions to the south or to racial segregation. Segregation, Smith understood, is epistemic, "a mechanism so destructive that it, in itself, has become a menace to the health of our culture and our individual souls," a "cultural schizophrenia," similar, Smith says, "to the schizophrenia of individual personality" (*How* 86). We must not "turn away and refuse to look at," Smith implores, the harm enacted by this mechanism.

I respond in this chapter to Smith's urgent cry to address this problem that is "centered at the core of culture" (*How* 126), a problem which, I argue, is more accurately summed up by the term "hierarchical politics of difference." Hierarchical politics relies upon a deeply naturalized rhetorical and perceptual system—the assessment of ourselves and others based upon a "logic of identity" (Young 169) that replicates and perpetuates structures of domination and

72

inequality (e.g., gender, race, class, ability) that have become so entrenched as to have become naturalized. Hierarchical politics of difference merges the theorizing of subjectivity and larger social structures of inequality by making difference an analytic frame central to both. Difference in Western[14] epistemology is generally perceived as deviation from a norm, Young writes, "in which one group occupies the position of a norm, against which all others are measured" (169), an act that always valorizes and universalizes the norm by defining as "different" (i.e., deviant) whatever sits outside the norm. Young elaborates, "the marking of difference always implies a good/bad opposition; it is always a devaluation, the naming of an inferiority in relation to a superior standard of humanity" (170). She observes that perceiving difference "as exclusion and opposition" actually "denies difference" by setting the norm as an assimilatory ideal, an act that invalidates the worth of that difference. Young suggests that if we are to reconfigure our society to be more socially-just, the definition of difference itself must first be reconfigured, and she effectively argues "for a politics that recognizes rather than represses difference" (10)—an egalitarian politics of difference.

How do we accomplish this task of reconfiguring difference? Young alludes to the need for an ideological shift, but precisely what does an ideological shift entail? Such an epistemic turnabout, I argue, requires a perceptual shift that addresses the ways in which we are conditioned and pre-disposed to interact with each other.

While Young elucidates the ideological workings of hierarchical politics

73

of difference, she does not examine the interpersonal underpinnings of hierarchical politics, which are ideologically based upon disrespect and affectively based upon shame and fear. These interpersonal and intrapersonal responses are learned during childhood and become naturalized, structured into our ordinary responses to and assessments of ourselves and others. Although these responses and assessments, depending upon context and individual, sometimes surface to the level of conscious attention, most of the time, they do not. This deeply internalized perceptual system that I refer to as hierarchical thinking structures our intersubjective relationships and orientations. To capture this framing of our intersubjectivity, I have coined the term "hierarchical dispositioning."[15]

Because hierarchical dispositioning has not garnered the attention it needs if it is to be disarticulated, this chapter draws upon scholarship about violence (causes and types) and scholarship from moral psychology about interpersonal respect to explicate how hierarchical thinking operates as a learned collective episteme by which all of us are oppressed. When I use the terms "oppression" and "domination" in this chapter, I use them in the sense of Young's definitions: Oppression is "the institutional constraint on self-development" and domination is "the institutional constraint on self-determination" (37).[16] Scholarship in moral psychology (Gilligan, Tangney and Dearing, Young) indicates that hierarchical thinking trains individuals to devalue themselves and others—a form of dehumanizing of self and other. Since the dehumanizing practices that

hierarchical thinking teaches us certainly constrain the subject formation of individuals and their subsequent self-development, in my opinion, all who are subject to such training are oppressed. I attribute my position on this collective oppression to Smith's influence even though a less well-defined but essentially similar position had been fixed in my worldview for many years. This view of collective oppression is one of the critical points missing in Young's discussion of hierarchical politics. Collective oppression, however, needs to be fully acknowledged if we are to understand hierarchical politics of difference as a fundamental obstacle to real egalitarianism and the establishment of flexible social, political, and economic structures that conduce to a much better quality of life for everyone, not just the few. The affective and ideological mechanisms that underwrite hierarchical thinking are learned (and thus preventable), rendering hierarchical thinking a cultural and individual dispositioning that perpetuates unjust social conditions on both the individual and collective level.

Project Limitations and Justification

Before continuing, I feel compelled to add that this is a "bottom-up" analysis of hierarchical politics, an examination of the ways individuals have learned to function to a large extent by replicating the larger systems in which they live. Top-down analyses are of course equally crucial to bringing about positive social change, but I do not focus on them, despite their necessity, because the rhetorical study of hierarchical regimes (e.g., gendered/raced regimes, decontextualized "free-market" economics and corporate militarism[17]) have

75

received much more attention (much-needed attention) in the field of rhetoric and composition than has hierarchical politics of difference. As we saw in the last chapter in the parable "Two Men and a Bargain" in which the rich white man exploits the poor white man by economically and ideologically pitting him against the black man ("divide and conquer"), Smith was also quite vocal about the deceptive and exploitative rhetorical techniques deployed by groups motivated solely by self-interest, whom she calls "demagogues." The following excerpt is but one of many of Smith's analyses of the rhetorical techniques such demagogues employed and continue to employ:

> Totalitarianism is an old thing to us down home. We know what it feels like. The unquestioned authority of White Supremacy, the tight political set-up of one party, nourished on poverty and ignorance, solidified the South into a totalitarian regime under which we were living when communism was still Russian cellar talk and Hitler had not even been born.
>
> To keep us that way, our political demagogues used and still use the same tricks Stalin uses today: an external enemy to hate (the damyankee), and internal enemy to fear (the Negro), an iron curtain which was first forged out of the reluctance of the democratic few to take an open stand against such powerful forces. During those bitter decades liberalism was driven completely underground. Caution was a necessity, temporizing was virtue.

This was the only way men could work for human rights under a

system that exacted such heavy penalties from its 'deviationists' as

did Southern tradition.

Much of Smith's analysis resonates today. In the United States, for example,

internal scapegoats (e.g., "illegal aliens," "drug-pushers") and external enemies

(e.g., "terrorists," "socialists") are used to strictly maintain dichotomous two-

party lines and to justify "external" (i.e., taxpayer) funding of corporate

militarism. Demagoguery constitutes a topic that forms an important narrative

strand in Smith's corpus. Despite this much-needed study of various forms of

intentional deception by those in power ("power" here is not used in a rhetorical

sense)[18] Smith, as do I, considers hierarchical politics of difference a fundamental

and, consequently, critical issue in dire need of attention. Even though

hierarchical thinking, as a learned perceptual and rhetorical system, for example,

enables a comfortable and largely unchallenged place for elite subject positions (a

topic more fully explored in the next chapter), hierarchical thinking has not

received the attention it warrants, both generally and in relation to Smith's work.

**The Convergence of the Macro and Micro: Hierarchy Promotes Violence of
All Kinds**

Hierarchical politics of difference, I argue in this chapter, underwrites all

structures of inequality, collective (macro) and individual (micro). On the

individual level, hierarchical thinking structures the ways in which we relate to

ourselves and others, and it thus structures both our subjective and intersubjective

relationships. Hierarchization is central to hierarchical politics and hierarchical

thinking, and it is the fundamental basis of disrespect and the grounds for all

violence. One of Smith's greatest contributions, as I hope to have shown in the

preceding chapter, is her attention to embodiment and performance at the level of

the individual to show how bottom-up practices intersect with top-down practices

of inequality to perpetuate a "legacy of discursive imprisonment" that structures

contemporary lived experience (McKay 129). Understanding the nexus of

overarching social hierarchies and underlying interpersonal mechanisms that

constitute this imprisonment, then, is imperative to eradicating the hold that a

historical legacy mired in violence has upon the world. I turn to contemporary

scholarship concerning violence because hierarchical thinking resides at the core

of all practices and structures of inequality, individual and collective, all of which

constitute forms of violence.

The convergence of the micro and macro is vital to understanding the

interrelatedness of various types of violence on this planet that plagues not only

virtually every society on earth, but the planet itself. All of this violence, I

contend, is underwritten by hierarchical thinking, from genocide, cluster bombs

and land mines to bullying, alcoholism, and suicide, from corporate greed,

biopiracy, and agribusiness to prostitution, minimum wage, and poverty. The

World Health Organization's first *World Report on Violence and Health*

addresses the interlocking structural nature of violence. Violence, according the

report, can be "threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a

group or community" and can result in or is likely to result in "injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (5). Violence, the report importantly explains, need not be considered violence by its practitioner since what is considered violent varies from culture to culture, so the prevailing determiner of violence is whether harm is enacted. That psychological harm, maldevelopment, and deprivation are included in a definition of violence is important to understanding how hierarchical thinking plays into the larger network of violence, which, according to the report, can be reduced to three types of violence: self-directed, interpersonal violence, and collective violence (6). Collective violence, according to the report, "is subdivided into social, political, and economic violence" (6). Macro structures of social inequality—the social, political, and economic—thus structure and consistently thwart the very conditions of individual development that Smith, as discussed in the previous chapter, deems necessary for the realization of social justice: "the right to grow and be different."[19] As Smith so accurately observed in the 1940's, violence is endemic to both to the macro and micro—the very structures of our individual and social institutions.

As the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), Gro Harlem Brundtland, explains in the preface to the report, "Violence is a complex problem related to patterns of thought and behavior that are shaped by a multitude of forces within our families and communities, forces that can also transcend national borders." "Violence is often predictable and preventable," she continues,

79

and "[l]ike other health problems, it is not distributed evenly across population groups or settings." "Many of the factors that increase the risk of violence are shared across the different types of violence and are modifiable," Brundtland reminds us. Inequity is one of those primary factors, and so in a brief, one-page preface, Brundtland extrapolates what she considers to be a most important point from the nearly three-hundred-page report: "One theme that is echoed throughout this report is the importance of primary prevention."

Primary prevention refers to intervention on the macro level, to reducing structural inequality within our political, economic, and social structures (i.e., collective violence) whereas secondary prevention refers to interventions aimed at subgroups and, finally, tertiary prevention targets the individual. Primary prevention, however, has the greatest effect on reducing *all* types of violence. Structural inequality has been shown to have a greater influence upon individual violence than any other factor, according to James Gilligan, a senior faculty member of Harvard Medical School and Director of the Institute of Law and Psychiatry, whose various and extensive work with violent criminals in the Massachusetts prison systems informs his insightful analysis of violence in *Preventing Violence*. After "[r]eductions in absolute poverty (raising populations above the subsistence level)" are achieved, Gilligan writes, "reductions in relative poverty (achieving greater equality of wealth and income), have been far more responsible for the dramatic decreases in death rates and increases in longevity that have occurred over the past two centuries than improvements in medical

treatment" (21). The United States, Gilligan notes, has "the largest gaps in income and wealth between the rich and poor of any developed country" (21) despite the well known fact, he says, that economic equity diminishes the incidence of all forms of violence:

> It has been shown throughout the world, both internationally and intranationally, that reducing economic inequities not only improves physical health and reduces the rate of death from natural causes far more effectively than doctors, medicines and hospital; it also decreases the rate of death from both criminal and political violence far more effectively than any system of police forces, prisons, or military interventions ever invented (82).

It probably comes as no surprise to most people that economic equality reduces violence. It may surprise many, however, to learn that it is *relative* poverty (not absolute poverty) that foments violent behavior. Despite social-darwinists' narratives to the contrary, absolute poverty does not necessarily incite mob violence.

Gilligan thus strikingly demonstrates the interrelatedness of violence on the micro and macro scale, particularly with respect to the three forms of collective violence listed in the World Health report: economic, political, and social. For example, the reduction of economic disparity between "the richest and poorest groups" in a population has the corresponding effect of "reduc[ing] the frequency of interpersonal or 'criminal' violence" (83). With respect to political

violence, Gilligan draws upon the examples of Germany, Japan and Italy who "adopted political democracy" after WWII to argue that political democracy reduces "the frequency of international violence, or warfare (including 'war crimes')" (83). To highlight the cultural variability of violence and the influential impact collective violence has on the proliferation of violence in general, Gilligan also cites various cultures, including Anabaptist sects (e.g., Hutterites, Amish, and Mennonites) and "the Mbuti pygmies of central Africa and the Semang of Malaysia," whose relative social, political, and economic equity manifests itself in the relative absence of collective and individual violence (86-91). Hutterites, for example, share their wealth, have virtually no class differentiation, and have not had "a single homicide" in more than a century in the United States and "only one suicide in a population of about 21,000" (Gilligan 87). Although Gilligan proffers examples of groups that are fairly homogenous culturally speaking, these examples do indicate that the absence of social, political, and economic stratification promotes a less violent climate than highly stratified societies do—a fact that highlights a human inclination to be perversely troubled by structures that are inequitable and, consequently, unfair—at the very least, by many of those individuals who are directly experiencing the "less than" side of things.[20]

Gilligan's analyses highlight the relationship between the individual and the social, particularly how shame operates to enact harm in highly stratified systems. Shame constitutes a primary social causes of violence. Gilligan indicts not only what he calls "vertical" division, "hierarchical ranking of upper and

lower status groups, chiefly classes, castes and age groups, but also other means

by which people are divided into in-groups and out-groups," but also "horizontal"

division, the social roles "to which the two sexes are assigned in patriarchal

cultures" (38). All of these hierarchies, Gilligan concludes, cause violence

because they induce shame. "Men are shamed for not being violent enough

(called coward or even shot as deserters), and are more honored the more violent

they are (with medals, promotions, titles, and estates)" whereas women are

shamed for "being too active and aggressive" (38). While "violence for men is

successful as a strategy," Gilligan observes, "violence is much less likely to

protect women against shame" (39). Therefore, aggression instigated by women

occurs less frequently than that instigated by men.

   While Gilligan's overall conclusion that female-generated violence is not

a successful strategy may be accurate, it neglects to take into account certain

contexts in which female aggression might be common, as in the case of mothers

who violently "discipline" their children. Rhetoricians understand, of course, as

Smith did, that an individual's subjectivities are multiple and intersecting, an

understanding that substantiates a basic premise of intersectional theory: identity

categories are not discrete, summative, or layered (Crenshaw, Brah and Phoenix).

For instance, while Smith actively attacked white supremacy and understood that

white supremacy meant "supremacy of the white male, not the white female"

(Loveland 192), she did not reify such hierarchies, often writing about when and

where white women, having internalized hierarchical thinking as a part of their

patriarchal legacy, exert their dominance to subordinate others. Nevertheless, Gilligan's point that violence is not generally a successful strategy for women explains why most institutional and interpersonal violence is indeed propagated by men.

Although Gilligan and I began our research from very different starting points and with different goals in mind, his a desire to reduce violence within the Massachusetts prison population (a goal he achieves, nearly eradicating inmate violence) and mine a theoretical examination of why social justice has not made more progress than it has considering the extensive efforts of countless individuals and groups during the past century to bring about social, economic, and political equality—we both arrive at theories based upon disrespect. Violence, Gilligan explains, using a metaphor reminiscent of Smith's use of "cancer," is a disease built into the very structures of society. It is a disease based upon disrespect whose pathogen, he asserts, is shame. That is why, he elaborates, relative poverty incites more violence than does absolute poverty because "[i]nferiority is a relative concept." Gilligan elaborates, "When everyone is poor together, there is no shame in being poor" (100). Whether violence operates on a primary (collective) or tertiary (individual) level, Gilligan argues, shame is the "pathogen" by which violence is carried.

While there are many factors that correlate to violence, including poverty and education, the prevailing constant in every situation is shame, Gilligan asserts. His interviews with violent criminals substantiate this position:

In the course of my psychotherapeutic work with violent

criminals, I was surprised to discover that I kept getting the same

answer when I asked one man after another why he had assaulted

or even killed someone: "Because he disrespected me." In fact,

they used that phrase so often that they abbreviated it to, "He

dis'ed me…" Whenever people use a word so often that they

abbreviate it, you know how central it is in their moral and

emotional vocabulary. References to the desire for respect kept

recurring, with remarks like, "I never got so much respect before

in my life as I did when I first pointed a gun at some dude's face."

On another occasion, I could not understand why one of the

prisoners was engaged in a running battle with the prison officers

that resulted in his finally being sentenced to solitary confinement

and having every privilege and possession taken away from him. I

asked him, "What do you want so badly that you are willing to

give up everything else in order to get it?" In response, this man,

who was usually so inarticulate that it was difficult to get a clear

answer to any question, astonished me by standing up tall, looking

me in the eye, and replying with perfect clarity: "Pride. Dignity.

Self-esteem." (29)

Most individuals don't resort to criminal violence, Gilligan explains, because they

have countervailing sources from which to derive self-esteem, such as job/career,

family, and education whereas violent criminals frequently receive little recognition, are often subject to various stigmas, and most, furthermore, have been subject to extremely emotionally and/or physically abusive childhoods, which precluded their development of basal security. As Gilligan explains, "the purpose of violence is to force respect from other people. The less self-respect people feel, the more they are dependent on respect from others; for without a certain minimal amount of respect, from others or the self, the self begins to feel dead inside, numb and empty" (35).

Violent criminals thus offer one of the more extreme examples of how hierarchical thinking—a system of valuing and devaluing based upon internalized norms—underwrites both interpersonal relationships and an individual's intersubjective orientations toward the social. As Gilligan points out, "violent criminals are perfectly aware of the difference between right and wrong, and justice and injustice" (101). They "are not violent because they are dumb, out of touch with reality, or unable to recognize hypocrisy, dishonesty, and injustice" (101). To the contrary, they "are violent precisely because they are aware of the hypocrisy, dishonesty, and injustice that surrounds them and of which they have been victims" (101). They are fully aware of an economic system, Gilligan reminds us, in which "some people inherit millions while most people inherit nothing," one of many conditions that obviate any discussion of equal opportunity" (101).

Gilligan rightfully calls for the abolishment of collective violence (economic, social, and political) by which people are assigned an inferior status on a collective scale. Yet to disarticulate such hierarchies, it is crucial to address hierarchical thinking—the epistemic learning of disrespect and shaming that solidifies in childhood—a learned and deeply ingrained perceptual system of self- and other-assessment. Interactions based upon disrespect are central to the lived experience of most people as evidenced by its ideological sedimentation in language. "Language itself reveals the link between shame and rage," Gilligan observes, offering the following example: "People become *indignant* (and may become violent) when they suffer an *indignity*" (30). This shame-based dynamic, however, is not limited to "Western" Latin-based cultures and is as clearly evident, for example, in cultures concerned with saving face or honor, indeed in all cultures in which naturalized hierarchies exist.

Such naturalized hierarchies are culturally learned, as the Canadian and American Indian boarding school system confirms. As mentioned in the introduction, despite subjection to centuries of brutal genocidal violence, self-and other-directed violence was uncommon within native American Indian communities until the instantiation of the Indian boarding school system in the 1870s when Indian children were taken from their communities and socialized "via white gender norms" (Kitch 192). Such norms included, according to Kitch, "chastity, subservience, domesticity, and marriage for women" and "family dominance, individualism" (192), "manual labor, warfare, and the elimination of

87

tribal dependency" for men (193). Training into this gendered hierarchichal cultural infrastructure was imposed upon Indian children who internalized their learning even as many resisted such obvious enforced indoctrination. The manifestation of self-directed and other-directed violence that has surfaced in tribal communities since the late nineteenth century demonstrates that humans are indeed rhetorical beings shaped by their narrative immersions.

As the Indian boarding school system illustrates, normative training into hierarchical regimes inculcates in children a praxis of disrespect and, consequentially, shame, which is, I contend, a learned episteme of dehumanizing self and others that profoundly changes an individual's intersubjective orientation. The internalization of this episteme by students and descendents of the Indian boarding school system illustrates that individuals are social beings who are "primordially, ineradicably, connected to the other" and who form multiple social identities that emerge via group affiliation (Alcoff 112). Affiliation, in this sense, refers to the internalization of a norm, not the assimilation to it. In the case of gender identity, for example, individuals can subvert and individuate gendered norms, yet their affiliation with gender *per se* remains, demonstrating that "discourses do not merely categorize and rearrange what is in the world but, in some cases at least, create things that didn't exist previously" (Alcoff 170). While all of the children and descendents of the Indian boarding school system may not be hierarchically dispositioned since many continue to carry a cultural paradigm of egalitarianism that is difficult to truly "know" if one is not brought up in a

culture steeped in respect for the self, other, and all life (including the planet), they are nevertheless encumbered with egalitarianism's epistemic opposite— hierarchical thinking—an artificially learned system that was purposefully and concertedly imposed upon Native American Indians. Hierarchical thinking relies upon the internalization of hierarchical norms (not necessarily the assimilation to them), and it constitutes an assessment system based upon the learning and deeply imprinting concepts of inferiority, superiority, and disrespect upon the human psyche.

Because the valuing and devaluing of oneself and others that characterizes such an assessment system are learned, they obviously can be unlearned. Worldwide, children are immersed in cultures that to varying extents instantiate hierarchical thinking; consequentially, these children become disposed to assess themselves and others via imprinted hierarchized norms. This internalized ideology of superiority/inferiority spawns learned behaviors of subordination and domination that engender various emotions, including disrespect, shaming, feeling shamed, adoration, fear, xenophobia, feelings of entitlement and privilege, and arrogance, and other injurious reactions that underwrite collective and individual conflict, strife, and violence. These learned self-and-other destructive emotions and behaviors spread like a cancer that sabotages the potential for just and egalitarian cultures in which the well-being of all is the primary goal. The burgeoning of violence within native communities after the establishment of the Indian boarding school system attests to the violent

and conflict-centered habits of behavior and mind that hierarchical thinking engenders. Hierarchical thinking essentially "writes" the contemporary socio-economic-political and personal world, producing a toxic text for all, even the highly-privileged few, who, in the interest of maintaining that privilege, see little reason to revise it.

Before I continue with further examination of the means by which hierarchical thinking is discursively learned and becomes intrinsic to and naturalized within much of the collective and individual infrastructure, I'd like to first draw upon scholarship in moral psychology that explains why discussion of respect is integral to understanding hierarchical thinking. Scholarship in moral psychology sheds light on how humans learn *not* to acknowledge the intrinsic worth of each individual, the essence of dehumanization. Learning how to dehumanize oneself and others constitutes the essence of hierarchical thinking, and is the mechanism by which it is produced and perpetuated.

Fortunately, the operations of respect direct us toward an alternative egalitarian epistemic mode for structuring social, political, and economic institutions and for structuring individual mores, beliefs, and behaviors. This alternative egalitarian episteme is ideologically based upon the intrinsic worth of a living being and what conduces to the well-being of each and everyone of us. The affective productions of an egalitarian episteme, while difficult to fully imagine on a global scale, effectively promote harmony and cooperation among groups and individuals at the most basic interpersonal level. In its fullest

extension to include all forms of life, this alternative episteme symbolizes a native American Indian worldview that the Indian boarding school system so actively tried to suppress and eradicate in its purported mission "to civilize" the already civilized.

"R-E-S-P-E-C-T": The Basis of Egalitarian Politics of Difference

Many of us have had the pleasure of experiencing the feeling of egalitarian interactions (i.e., non-hierarchical interactions). Young children frequently approach each other from a non-hierarchical stance because they are not yet fully disposed toward hierarchical thinking; their dispositions have has not yet solidified into habituation. In other words, they don't "know any better" because they haven't yet compiled and catalogued the categorical knowledge needed to be hierarchically disposed.

This absence of categorical knowledge was readily apparent in the actions of young children on the resort beaches of St. Thomas, V.I., where I lived for three years. At that time, the year-round population was approximately 90% black, and it was a common sight to see a white tourist child approach a local black child so that they might play together. The subsequent and immediate engagement in play usually followed a similar script: no official introduction, no names exchanged, maybe a query "What're you doing?" or "Can I play?" Parental response (both black and white) varied widely but still kept to a few scripts: happiness to see one's child interacting with another, an indulgent yet uptight smile of tolerance, or, yes, a frantic and horrified parent striding to her/his child to

yank the child away from the "offending" (and offensive) playmate. Children who were ripped from their absorbed play (sometimes politely, sometimes violently) often whimpered or howled in confusion, not comprehending the cause of their "transgression."

I share this anecdote because I think that people, whether they consider themselves liberal or not, may not consider themselves hierarchically disposed since they may not be consciously aware of their hierarchical habituation. Moreover, their hierarchical thinking might surface, consciously or not, in only certain contexts. In certain other contexts, the need or inclination to categorize the worth of another may never surface. What is important to highlight, however, is that while many individuals may frequently experience non-hierarchical interactions in their daily lives, non-hierarchical interactions do not structure much of people's worlds—hierarchical interactions primarily do, individually and socially.

If our goal is to abolish hierarchical politics in favor of cultivating egalitarian politics, as Smith would have encouraged, then it is in service to that goal to understand what distinguishes non-hierarchical interactions from hierarchical interactions. Egalitarian politics of difference acknowledge that all parties are similar in most respects, and, sharing the same basic needs and desires, each party is intrinsically worthy of being. This recognition of the intrinsic full-stature worth of another party defines non-hierarchical interactions, which take place when an individual neither supersedes nor is subordinated to "the other."

The "other" can encompass another individual, a group, or a social institution. A non-hierarchical intersubjective orientation, then, assumes a reciprocal relationship of respect between individuals, between groups, and between an individual and a collective structure. Under all circumstances, individuals flourish in their positioning to others, meaning, everyone has access to "the good life," which, according to Young, is comprised of two values: 1) "developing and exercising one's capacities and expressing one's experience" and 2) "participating in determining one's action and the conditions of one's action" (37). Conditions that provide everyone with the chance for self-growth and self-determination acknowledge the intrinsic worth of every individual and direct us to base our interactions with each other upon "personhood" rather than interpellation. When "personhood" sculpts engagement, whatever differences emerge exist relationally, as variation, not hierarchically within fixed categories that essentialize identity and that conceptually organize the worth of a subject—a perspective that directly contradicts the naturalized position that ranking the worth of others has achieved in most cultures.

Robin Dillon explains that the recognition of each individual's fundamental worth as an end in itself is intrinsic to moral engagement and is termed "interpersonal recognition self-respect" (201). Drawing upon Kant's views of moral duties in "Kant on Arrogance and Self-Respect," Dillon remarks, "Interestingly, what Kant emphasizes in discussing the duties of respect for others is not actions we must or must not perform but *attitude*" (italics added 194),

93

which, Dillon explains, understands that "The duty of respect is a negative one 'of not exalting oneself above others'" (194). "The duty to respect others thus includes," Dillon adds, "the duty to refrain from anything that would threaten another person's right and duty to respect themselves" (194).

A hierarchical system of difference, however, intrinsically denies a system of exchange based upon interpersonal recognition self-respect. Positions outside the norm are stigmatized and threaten individuals' right to respect themselves. Positions occupying the norm which posit the norm as superior to that outside it contradict the essence of dignity which is a "noncomparative, nonscalar form of worth" since "all persons have it equally and absolutely" (Dillon 201). Dillon brilliantly discredits the legitimacy of hierarchical politics as a basis of mutual respect:

> The valuation of self at the heart of arrogance is thus much more seriously false than a mere measurement error; it manifests a warped view of the worth of persons. The only worth he understands and values, recall, is scalar—comparative and competitive. So the problem is not just that he does not regard others as ends in themselves or is motivated by considerations of self-esteem to deny that others are his equals in fundamental worth and status, making him liable to treat them disrespectfully. The deeper problem is that he cannot regard any being as an end in itself, as unconditionally deserving of respect, *himself included*.

94

(italics added 201)

Dillon's work importantly demonstrates that such scalar valuing is intrinsically damaging to *all* subject positions, even those occupying the norm since everyone in such a field of play are valuing themselves and others via scalar assessment, an expression of "a warped view of the worth of persons." Those who occupy the norm (and most of us do at some point or another) have learned to feel superior in that subject position, yet, while occupying the privileged subject position of the norm, subjects may or may not realize that they are indeed receiving their self-esteem in a scalar fashion since—as I have been demonstrating—hierarchical thinking *is* an episteme. Superiority, consciously felt or not, is a learned and naturalized cultural fiction, one of the rhetorical constructs undergirding hierarchical thinking.

An off-shoot of superiority, arrogance may also not be recognized as such by the arrogant, but, as with superiority, it is learned and culturally cultivated. Arrogance not only underwrites individual behavior and belief, but it also underwrites the inequitable socio-politico-economic institutions that structure lived experience. Deconstructing the operations of arrogance encourages us to face much more than the problematic issue that we are trained to treat others without respect; it encourages us to face the fact that we have been trained to treat ourselves without respect, having learned to assess ourselves by the same normative system by which we assess others. What does it feel like to be "an end in itself, as unconditionally deserving of respect"? While some readers may balk

at this question, declaring that they do indeed assess themselves upon non-scalar terms, I take the position that most of us base much of our self-esteem upon scalar forms of worth since we don't know what it feels like to value ourselves *per se*. We are rhetorical beings who learn what we are shown, and we learn to substitute scalar forms of worth for non-scalar worth, having been trained into a culture of violence in which nobody is valued or respected solely on non-scalar terms. It is troubling to consider how deeply we learn to de-value ourselves and others despite narratives (and occasional personal experiences) to the contrary.

So, how do we learn to deeply devalue ourselves?

Scholarship on identity (Alcoff, Smith, Young) and perception (Merleau-Ponty) helps to explain how hierarchical thinking operates through discourse to provide the grounds by which we assess our own and others' worth and through which we learn to attribute our identity. Hierarchical valuing (and de-valuing) of human beings relies upon a totalizing notion of identity as intrinsic and consequently fixed. Hierarchical valuing and devaluing, the essence of hierarchical thinking, is learned during early childhood—prior to sustained conscious reflection—when children are forming their social identities. Problematically, then, identification and interpellation, both of which comprise the formation of social identities (Alcoff) are complexly interlinked with hierarchical thinking and the devaluing of self and other.

Hierarchical Thinking Is Embodied Knowledge: Learning the Praxis of

Injustice

Hierarchical thinking is the perceptual apparatus legitimating inequity. Smith insightfully describes how it is learned and embodied before such learning surfaces to the level of consciousness or to the level of language, depending upon circumstance. Well ahead of current body and performance scholarship, Smith understood that the ideologies of privilege and exclusion and their corresponding affective counterparts, entitlement and abjection, are learned by rote and ritual during childhood and are embodied practices that later become naturalized (however individuated) performances:

> From the time little southern children take their first step they learn their ritual, for Southern Tradition leads them through its intricate movements. And some, if their faces are dark, learn to bend, hat in hand; and others, if their faces are white, learn to hold their heads high. Some step off the sidewalk while others pass by in arrogance. Bending, shoving, genuflecting, ignoring, stepping off, demanding, giving in, avoiding….Children, moving through the labyrinth made by grownups' greed, and guilt and fear.
>
> So we learned the dance that cripples the human spirit, step by step, we who were white and we who were colored, day by day, hour by hour, year by year until the movements were reflexes and made for the rest of our life without thinking. Alas, for many

white children, there were movements made for the rest of their

lives without feeling. What white southerner of my generation

ever stops to think consciously where to go or asks himself it if is

right for him to go there! (*Killers* 96)

Here Smith not only raises the postmodern issue of the embodied learning and

practice of interpellation, she also indirectly speaks about received and embodied

literacies, such as abjection and entitlement, both examples of "literacies" formed

during childhood that throughout a life inhibit the free play of participatory

democracy in most purported democracies.

Problematically, such embodied learning is rarely conscious, acquired

during the process of learning language, as Smith explains: "We know that racial

hate is only a way of expressing hate that began to flourish long before the child's

mind knew anything about 'color'" (*How 109*). Yet children, while they may on

occasion resist what they may feel is intrinsically unfair, they nevertheless

internalize the boundaries and norms taught to them. Smith writes, "Southern

Tradition taught well: we learned our way of life by doing. You never considered

arguing with teacher, because you could not see her. You only felt the iron grip of

her hand and knew you must go where all the other children are going" (*Killers*

96).

Logic of Identity Transmitted through Language

While such ideological assessment of oneself and others may often

operate below the level of discursive consciousness, hierarchical thinking is

definitely encoded and transmitted through language. Smith explains how linguistic stereotypes operate as rhetorics of dismissal and as mechanisms of disrespect. In "Woman Born of Man" co-authored with her lifetime partner Paula Snelling, Smith explores this misogynistic and linguistically-sedimented strategy by describing how female stereotypes function to Other women, as projections of male self-hate and loathing. "This woman whom man has created," Smith writes, "has haunted us females throughout the ages":

> For centuries, man has seen us as Something Dreadful and To Be feared; and then, unable to live with this terror he has created, he turns around and makes Woman into the Pure, the Good, the All Loving, into Perfection itself. He has switched this image of woman from Madonna to Bitch, and close to both is always the Terrible Witch; in Asia, she has been the Goddess of Mercy with a thousand hands to carry out her merciful errands, and she has also been the Dark Kali, the goddess who in Indian lore throws her babies into the burning pit. (202)

Female stereotypes, Smith observes, function dismissively, denying the lived realities of the women they purportedly describe.

Smith frequently experienced such stereotyping. Her detractors, men and women alike, trained into the gendered and raced authoritarian regimes Smith deplored, often evoked gendered commonplaces that indicate an incapacity to see Smith as she was. After her best-selling novel *Strange Fruit* was banned in

Boston, Smith writes of her notoriety "You are called bitch and saint, whore and heroine, you are praised for your courage and sneered at for your obscenity; you are made into stereotypes, no one sees you as a person, not even those who admire your book most; you are turned into images which please them or appeal to their feelings of hate or admiration, to their fears and hopes" (Loveland 72). Smith's analyses and lived experiences trenchantly demonstrate that "woman" still operates as the absent Other, that which is not present. The perceptual reduction of self or other to a "knowable" subject is an essential component of hierarchical thinking, which dismisses the rich multiplicity and uncapturable alterity of any person.

Drawing upon Theodor Adorno's work, Young calls this learned perceptual assessment of self and other a "logic of identity" (98). She writes that the logic of identity is a type of reasoning that aims to find unity through categorization, the classification of "particulars as inside or outside a category (98). It "tends to conceptualize entities in terms of substance rather than process or relation" and thus "represses difference" by turning the different into a categorical opposition (98). Difference itself, however, "is not absolute otherness, a complete absence of relationship or shared attributes," but, epistemically, difference becomes absolute otherness in response to learning the "logic of identity" (Young 99). "The irony of the logic of identity," Young thus explicates, "is that by seeking to reduce the differently similar to the same, it turns the merely

100

different into the absolutely other" and "inevitably generates dichotomy instead of unity" (99).

Such "constructions of 'Otherness'" are "staples" of postmodern thought, McKay Jenkins explains: the "Other" is part of a postmodern subject, "something on which the subject depends for its very existence" (123). Jenkens provides the following example: "Whites define themselves not by what they are but by what they are *not*, that is, black; black is thus construed both as a "lack," an inadequacy, 'what (white) is not,' and a 'loss,' something that is at once loathed and yearned for, reviled, and mourned" (123).[21] As Smith's discussions of female stereotypes indicate, gender functions to Other much as race does. Constructing Others in this fashion is perceptually learned and is a function of hierarchical thinking. In contrast and epistemologically speaking, constructions of others based upon personhood do not produce conceptions of self or other based upon inferiority or superiority. As we see, however, self and other-definition learned as a result of hierarchical thinking relies upon dehumanizing negative definitions of disavowal and disidentification—of that which we are not. Disidentification renders an object abject (Butler *Bodies* 112).

Disidentification and identification are evidence of human sociality, that humans are social beings. According to Diana Fuss, identification refers to the internalization of narrative norms, "the entry of history and culture into a subject" (3) whereas disidentification is "an identification that has already been made and denied in the unconscious" (7). In systems of privilege that rank individuals

101

according to pre-fixed values of worth and non-worth, norms are discursive and symbolic nodes of power, the means by which individuals are perceptually trained into systems of domination and oppression. Consider for instance, what constitutes "good taste," "appropriateness," or "beauty." What defines good taste or gender-appropriate actions or any other number of "natural" responses to Others should be understood as socially-conditioned responses, the values of which were learned via group affiliation and narrative immersion. Young draws attention to the "scaling of bodies," for instance, to illustrate these operations of hierarchical thinking: "While a certain cultural space is reserved for revering feminine beauty and desirability, in part that very cameo ideal renders most women drab, ugly, loathsome or fearful bodies" (123). Those who are visibly gay or lesbian, or old, disabled, or fat, Young notes, risk similar interactive dynamics—all based upon hierarchical thinking.

Hierarchical thinking, based upon the internalization of norms, clearly structures decision-making processes and interpersonal interactions. Although in the United States it is quite common to hear a narrative of progress when speaking about interpersonal communication across differences, that is, how much more progressive the public is with respect to race and sex than it was a few decades ago, I would argue that, rhetorically speaking, the U.S. remains mired in violence, poverty, and social inequity because hierarchical thinking, the progenitor of virtually all human strife and conflict, has not yet been sufficiently attended to. Young similarly lambasts the "common conviction that ideologies of natural

102

inferiority and group domination no longer exercise significant influence in our society," as well as its counterpart that "the aversions and stereotypes we claim perpetuate oppression today" are weakened, merely extensions of the grosser xenophobia of the past" (130). She uses the Adrian Piper phenomenon to debunk such illusions:

> Through a phenomenon that Adrian Piper calls higher-order discrimination, people frequently disparage attributes that in another person would be considered praiseworthy, because they are attached to members of certain groups... Aversion to or devaluation of certain groups is displaced onto a judgment of character or competence supposedly unconnected with group attributes. Because the judger recognizes and sincerely believes that people should not be devalued or avoided simply because of group membership, the judger denies that these judgments of competence have a racist, sexist, or homophobic basis (135).

The Adrian Piper phenomenon clearly suggests that identification, the internalization of history and culture, is deeply learned below the level of consciousness.

Identification, whose definition, according to Fuss, encompasses disidentification (i.e., abjection) reflects the process of hierarchical thinking. Identification, Fuss explains, "is not only how we accede to power, it also [is] how we learn submission" (qtd. in Ratcliffe 60). Fuss's discussion of

identification reinforces Young's assertion that hierarchical thinking engenders "social relations [that] are tightly defined by domination and oppression" even in "contemporary welfare corporate societies," ironically flourishing amid the diffusion and dispersion of power wielded by "widely dispersed persons [who] are agents of power without 'having' it, or even being privileged" (Young 32-3). We can see, then, that hierarchical thinking is unconsciously internalized and perpetuated at the level of the individual. Pierre Bourdieu makes a similar contention: "Symbolic power relations are perpetuated through knowledge and recognition, which does not mean through intentional acts of consciousness" (198). For symbolic domination to occur, "the dominated have to share with the dominant the schemes of perception and appreciation through which they are perceived by them and through which they perceive them; they have to see themselves as they are seen" (198).

That the internalization of privilege (normative knowledge) occurs within all subjects is important for several reasons. For one, understanding how norms operate turns us to see that privilege is a rhetorical construct internalized and performed by everyone. Seeing privilege as a fluid and rhetorical construct is vital to difference scholarship because doing so un-tethers privilege from specific contexts (e.g., white privilege), a theoretically important move that enables social justice scholars to bypass the conflicts presented by identity politics, which focus on group-specific identities rather than the underlying reasons for group conflict. Seeing privilege as a rhetorical construct, then, directs us to address the

underlying cause of group privilege—hierarchical thinking.

Secondly, recognizing that hierarchical thinking is internalized by everyone suggests that hierarchical thinking is a cultural fiction that has achieved "thing-hood." As many theorists have already demonstrated with race and gender, discursively constituted regulatory norms can create real "things" that structure our lived experiences and are means by which we learn to assess ourselves and make life choices, yet despite concerted efforts to expose such cultural fictions for what they are (culturally-constructed and constructive) in order to disrupt their hegemonic status, they largely remain reified as Alcoff explains:

> If race is a structure of contemporary perception, then it helps constitute the necessary background from which I know myself. It makes up a part of what appears to me as the natural setting of all my thoughts. It is the field, rather than that which stands out. The perceptual practices involved in racializations are then tacit, almost hidden from view, and thus almost immune from critical reflection. (188)

If gender and race remain perceptually backgrounded, consider the extent to which hierarchical thinking is habituated. Alcoff explains that habitual perception "is so attenuated as to skip the stage of conscious interpretation and intent" (187), and although it may be visible, as with gender and race, hierarchical thinking constitutes a part of "the horizon of our cultural tradition" and thus "is not a mere instrument of vision, but the condition in which vision occurs" (Gadamar qtd. in

105

Alcoff 95). If the conditions necessary for the instantiation of social justice are indeed "the right to grow and the right to be different," as both Smith ("Ten Years" 672) and Young (37) suggest they are, and, if, as I am arguing, hierarchical thinking constitutes the background from which we assess ourselves and others and comprises the fundamental condition from which we relate to each other, then we must face the fact that hierarchical thinking presents an immense obstacle to establishing the fundamental conditions for a socially-just world.

While hierarchical thinking is visible in scholarship on many fronts, especially with respect to how individuals are complicit in maintaining and perpetuating regulatory norms that work to exclude, marginalize, and oppress those who do not meet those norms, the full weight of hierarchical thinking as a collective and oppressive episteme that circumscribes and prescribes human intersubjectivity has not been sufficiently addressed. The cultural-constructedness of subjectivity, which has been amended to acknowledge the influence of biology, is well accepted within the humanities whereas the cultural-constructedness of human intersubjectivity has not yet been sufficiently plumbed. Even as the postmodern critique invokes its epistemological and historical roots of "modernism," and even as rhetorical discussions of identification and disidentification acknowledge the violence such processes enact, postmodern discussion of identification and disidentification has so far accorded these processes an unequivocal status as givens when they are no more than cultural fictions, productions of hierarchical thinking. If hierarchical thinking is also a

pervasive cultural fiction, as I contend it is, the epistemological and experiential

constraints that hierarchical thinking imposes upon human relationships have not

been adequately explored. When humanities scholars refer to "Western

epistemology," a label that I learned to wield as a derisive moniker describing all

that is inherently wrong in the world, including atomistic selves, the mind/body

split, and the objectification and degradation of life itself, I think that many

scholars actually are referring to hierarchical thinking and dispositioning.

Western Epistemology (WE): An Experiential Not Geographical Boundary

What is generally referred to as Western epistemology (We) is more

accurately described by the term hierarchical dispositioning. One reason is that we

cannot discern the origins of Western epistemology although many feminists

attribute the codification of gender hierarchy to its instantiation. To avoid the

frustrations associated with origin myths, I have relied upon the concepts

underlying Western epistemology, such as the logic of identity. In a redaction of

Jacques Derrida's contributions to poststructuralist theorizing of the relationship

between language and consciousness, Sharon Crowley traces the privilege

afforded to identity back to Aristotle:

> Aristotelian logic is based on two concepts directly borrowed from
>
> the grammar of simple sentences—categories and predicables,
>
> classes of things and the possible relations between them. The
>
> basic assumption of this logic—the law of identity and
>
> contradiction—posits that either a thing is or it is not. Of course

107

this law presumed presence, and the entire logical system awarded

privilege to identity, rather than to contradiction. (3)

Taxonomies have logical uses. However, as this chapter argues, essentialism (the

tendency to epistemologically reduce humans categorically into rankings via a

logic of identity) has unfortunately become imbricated with human

consciousness.[22]

The "West," however, does not hold a monopoly upon this type of

thinking. There are many cultures whose dominant narratives privilege the social

over the self that nevertheless are predicated upon assessing self and others on the

basis of hierarchical norms that "defin[e] difference as deviance in relation to a

norm and "freeze some groups into a self-enclosed nature" (Young 171). Most

contemporary cultures (to varying degrees contingent upon context), socialize

individuals to hierarchical dispositions predicated upon arrogance and shame (or

superiority and inferiority, if you will). Despite variegations among cultures and

within cultures, hierarchical arrangements based upon domination occur. Within

hierarchical interactions, we might say that at one end of the spectrum, the

individual denies/is ignorant of her relationship to the social, and at the other, the

individual subordinates herself to the whole. Yet in both of these scenarios,

mutual reciprocity of respect does not occur. In this context, the classical

epistemological opposition between "West" and "East" thus loses significance in

the light of the fact that hierarchical thinking pervades most contemporary

cultures, even those that prioritize the group over the individual.

While the terms "West" or "Western tradition" may have lost their charge as a geographical distinction, their ideological implications evoke a long tradition of hierarchical politics of difference. In *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States*, Sally Kitch uses "Western" to be "understood as a political rather than a geographic location and as a term that connotes arrogance about cultural superiority that fueled the ideology of white supremacy" (7). Despite my agreement with Kitch's association of "Western" with cultural superiority, I hope to make clear that the underlying cause of such arrogance is, in fact, due to the toxic effects of hierarchical thinking. Hierarchical thinking fuels feelings of superiority—*any* feelings of superiority—and it is therefore reified hierarchization, not cultural imperialism, that more accurately demarcates the problem space that demands our immediate and critical attention.

Yet, even as an ideological distinction, hierarchical thinking does not convey the overwhelming experiential constraints it imposes. I turn to a passage from Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference* to begin discussing hierarchical thinking's impact upon our lived experiences. Young writes that essentializing others via a logic of identity expresses "a fear of making permeable the categorical border between oneself and the others" (170). This fear, she notes, "is not merely intellectual and does not derive only from the instrumental desire to defend privilege" (170). Rather, this fear "wells from the depths of the Western subject's sense of identity, especially, but not only in the subjectivity of privileged

groups" (170). Young concludes this passage by claiming that "the politics of difference confronts this fear, and aims for an understanding of group difference as indeed ambiguous, relational, shifting, without clear borders that keep people straight—as entailing neither amorphous unity nor pure individuality" but as entailing "relations of similarity and dissimilarity that can be reduced to neither coextensive identity nor nonoverlapping otherness" (171).

Although I wholeheartedly agree with Young's analysis and her claim that egalitarian politics reside in acknowledging groups' and individuals' "nonoverlapping otherness"(another way of expressing interrelations based upon personhood), her discussion of how "hierarchical politics of difference confronts this fear" (171) is sorely lacking. By focusing on the need for group-specific pride and coalition-building, Young's discussion does not confront the issue of fear itself as much as it attempts to contend with what fear produces: its aftermath. Coalition building in itself does not resolve the difference constructed via hierarchical thinking. While I do not contest the need for building coalitions across difference, a much more robust discussion of fear needs to be developed to attend to the epistemological effects of such a deep-seated fear. Despite Young's move to ask readers to consider what interactions based upon "non-overlapping otherness" entail, her discussion does not address the experiential effects that internalizing a pervasive and unshakable fear has in structuring our intersubjectivities. My argument that follows merely scratches the surface of what I think is a profoundly significant and largely ignored area of inquiry. Although

this area of inquiry has been broached by various scholars, as the following

discussion indicates, it requires considerably more attention.

Fear resides at the heart of identity formation within systems underwritten

by hierarchical politics of difference as evidenced in Gilligan's discussion of

violent criminals whose lack of basal security can drive them to respond to the

slightest threat, indeed, any perceived slight, with unadulterated rage. The

scholarship gathered for this chapter has inclined me to think that hierarchical

thinking depends upon a deeply learned and solidified fear that disposes humans

to dehumanize themselves and others while masquerading as autonomy. In

addition to hierarchical gender training, narratives of individualism and the

importance of disavowing tribal affiliation, I remind readers, were deployed

within the Indian boarding school system in the United States and Canadian

governments' efforts to make Indian men "white." Linda Martín Alcoff, a

professor of philosophy, political science, and women's studies at Syracuse

University, attributes the establishment of hierarchies and the "construction of a

generalized other" to the modern ideal of autonomy in which self-reliance and

disengagement are valorized, and, like Young, she attributes this epistemological

tradition to the West. Alcoff writes that "autonomy understood as disengagement

assumes as a default or general starting position that the other is hostile,

oppressive, or at least less rational," and she claims that this assumption underlies

the "Western resistance against the dependence on and constitution of the self

within a social domain" (122). Fear is a fully rational response to a hostile and oppressive social domain.

Hierarchical Dispositioning

This sense of self as independent, autonomous and distinct from the social, however, is merely a perceptual production, learned and developed in childhood. In truth, humans are always already intersubjective beings. Postmodern epistemology has fully demonstrated the mythic nature of the categorical borders between oneself and others and has already accomplished the intellectual work of demolishing modernist orientations to subjectivity. At issue, however, is that we have not sufficiently considered the degree to which our epistemological conditioning sculpts our intersubjectivity. That we are intersubjective beings is a given. But what *kind* of intersubjective beings are we? Since we are rhetorical beings, conceivably, there is an endless array of flavors.

I wish to make clear that hierarchical dispositioning is a specific flavor, a specific historical and cultural fiction that has been around for so long as to have become nearly imperceptible. If consciousness is an embodied mode of being-in-the-world, as Smith's, Young's, and Merleau-Ponty's scholarly contributions suggest, and if hierarchical thinking scripts contemporary consciousness (and sub-consciousness), as I have been arguing, then hierarchical thinking overwhelmingly shapes our being-in-the world, particularly our orientation to ourselves and others.

112

Hierarchical thinking imbues us with a deeply learned fear, fear of being devalued and, possibly, fear of witnessing (and feeling) similar disregard for others. Of course, I cannot speak for everyone, but when I feel fear, I seize up, my boundaries solidify, and I am overly concerned with myself and those whom I care about. In this system underwritten by fear, self-esteem, or what we know as self-esteem, is garnered by assessing our own worth by comparing ourselves against others according to pre-set scales of human worth. It's an all out, me-against-you scenario, except for those times when "you're like me," in other words, my equivalent.

This process teaches us to dismiss and disregard the feelings of those who are "categorically different" as a means to value ourselves, a form of aggrandizement that becomes naturalized, a position of privilege that endorses arrogance, entitlement, and a general disregard for others. This chapter's earlier discussion of interpersonal recognition self-respect, however, reminds us that this disregard for others conceptually rests upon a fundamental disregard for oneself, a epistemological foundation that is undeniably fear-inducing.

In distinct contrast, in non-hierarchical interactions, there is a noticeable absence of fear, which enables those moments I previously referred to as non-hierarchical interactions. But do these non-hierarchical interactions really convey what a non-hierarchical consciousness as mode of being-in-the world would be like? What if we were to seriously consider what human subjectivity would be like if we grew up in non-hierarchical systems? If we really are the intersubjective

beings that postmodern theory tells us we are and our boundaries really are permeable, as the study of rhetoric suggests, I ask readers to consider what cultivating those permeable boundaries would *feel* like, what literacies and capacities would we develop? Perceptually, if we were not awash in fear when forming our identities, what would our intersubjective experiences entail if "the social," that is, our institutions and collective narratives acknowledged, legitimated, and valorized the permeable boundaries of humans? Frankly, we cannot know. The moments afforded by our non-hierarchical interactions, the moments when we belly laugh, love, and feel carefree together rely upon the extent to which we can disconnect ourselves from hierarchy and are limited generally to interpersonal interactions that do not include our collective social institutions, such as economics. They thus provide merely a glimmer of an altered human intersubjectivity.

With these questions in mind, I suggest that while we have theorized subjectivity, we have not made much headway theorizing intersubjectivity beyond merely realizing and acknowledging that humans are indeed intersubjective beings.

So, to conclude this discussion, which is actually the beginning of a discussion, I return to the idea of shame to make the point that children's fear of being devalued, along with its accompanying sense of either shame or self-aggrandizement that comes from devaluing Others, is learned via endlessly repeated cultural performances that instill a fear so profound that it produces a

kind of narcissism, an absorption with protecting the self against assaults upon one's dignity or from feeling another's pain. This intersubjective conditioning structures us and becomes a hierarchical dispositioning, an arrangement that we have not yet learned how to shake. Hierarchical dispositioning thus represents a "terministic screen" oppressing us all, a dispositioning that constrains our "right to grow" and "right to be different," two fundamental conditions for social justice.

Shame on You and Me

As I've argued so far, in systems underwritten by hierarchical politics, identity construction acts as a damaging conceptual frame that organizes difference, thus Others, categorically. This mode of perception undergirds hierarchical dispositioning and enables individuals and groups to feel superior to, to stigmatize, and, consequently, to justify violence against Others, all of which composes and arranges the basic backdrop of the global theatre into which each of us is born.

Nevertheless, each of us struggles within our given circumstances to discover strategies that provide us with respect. While much more could be said here regarding Young's work, which urges us to consider how normative standards constitute an assessment system by which individuals and groups feel worthy or unworthy, superior or inferior to others, I'd prefer to finish with a brief discussion of shame that not only reinforces the fact that humans intrinsically are social beings but that suggests that it is in our best interest to cultivate a cooperative-based intersubjectivity that acknowledges the self-worth of everyone.

In "Shame and Stigma" Martha Nussbaum examines the origins of shame.

Drawing upon the work of Silvan Tomkins and Aristophanes, Nussbaum traces

the emergence of shame to infancy during the time when "the infant realizes that

it is dependent on others, and is by this time aware of itself as a definite being

who is and ought to be the center of the world" (181). Shame emerges when the

infant realizes her own inadequacy and weaknesses, for, according to Nussbaum,

"shame involves the realization that one is weak and inadequate in some way in

which one expects oneself to be adequate" (183). Shame, then, Nussbaum

explains, "requires self-regard as its essential backdrop" (184), evidencing an

individual's early disposition to conceiving herself as a being who has intrinsic

worth, a condition of interpersonal recognition self-respect. If self-regard

constitutes a basic human characteristic, then being treated with disregard (by

oneself or others) breaches a basic human tendency, an incongruity that accounts

for, among other things, violent criminals' economic and social rage (Gilligan).

In "An Apology for Moral Shame," Cheshire Calhoun elaborates upon the

connection between self-regard and shame and explains how someone who has

autonomy and self-worth can still be shamed despite confidence in her own

evaluative capabilities. Calhoun explains that even when being knowingly

misjudged, the shame of those who are shamed "signals their capacity to take

seriously fellow participants in their social world," an indication of their

recognition that others interpellate them, thus giving the others what Calhoun

calls "practical weight" (138): "The power to shame is a function of our sharing a

116

moral practice with the shamer and recognizing that the shamer's opinion expresses a *representative viewpoint* within that practice" (141). Theoretically, the shamed, who is cognizant of "representative viewpoints," nevertheless respects her own evaluative stance and, thus, cannot respect the shamer. The shamer, on the other hand, respects and assertively performs those "representative viewpoints" and, thus, disrespects the viewpoints of the shamed. Shame thereby functions to "track social stratifications" (Calhoun 144) and reproduce them. More importantly, Calhoun notes, the inspiration for this kind of shame is intersubjective; the shamed see themselves through the shamer's eyes. This is a painful and limiting subject position given that, as moral agents, the shamed are inextricably bound to engage with the shamer yet are forever excluded from reciprocal engagement with the shamer due to the absence of interpersonal recognition self-respect on the part of the shamer.

Shame certainly points to the intersubjective nature of humans and illustrates our interconnectedness by showing how individuals serve as mirrors to each other, reflecting how individuals are being perceived by another. Shame, then, can be a useful tool for self-growth, as Gilligan says: shame "warns us that there is something lacking in our repertoire of social or cognitive skills and knowledge, some failure of development and maturation that needs further work" (80). The human ability to mirror each other has scientific support. Human brains contain "mirror neurons" that respond to the emotional states and activities of others, precisely mimicking the cell activity and neural response of those others.

117

Mirror neurons help to explain empathy and sympathy, why we might cry at a stranger's pain or feel joy at a group's triumph. The existence of mirror neurons suggests that if we are to be truly content, everyone around us must be content too—that we are essentially cooperative beings who are actively participating in and feeling what others are doing and feeling.

We can draw several conclusions from a discussion of mirroring. For one, cooperation and self-regard are basic human inclinations that are thwarted by hierarchical politics of difference. Understanding this helps to explain the rage that individuals sometimes exhibit when these two basic needs are not met, when their need for cooperation and regard are absent. They are, in effect, denied their own sociality, and responde by becoming, in varying degrees, "socio-pathic." Secondly, the existence of mirroring and an intrinsic self-regard provides evidence that children feel hurt when they and others are dehumanized. It would follow, then, that children learn to protect themselves by isolating themselves emotionally from themselves and others, constructing self-enclosed egos that likely mirror those of the adults around them. In addition, if self-regard and cooperation are indeed natural backdrops of human intersubjectivity, then shame that is based upon hierarchical knowledge (which "un-naturally" adjudges human worth based upon artificial categories) must strike individuals as extremely unfair.

This brief examination of shame and arrogance reveals a deeply-rooted defect underlying the ways in which people are socialized to interact with each other, a flaw that impedes our purported social aim to live together in harmony.

Because respectful engagement requires that respect for oneself and for the other are of equally paramount importance, the absence—or diminishment—of either prohibits respectful engagement, producing a less-than-mutual engagement. In this sense, hierarchical thinking may be understood as a socio-pathogen that interferes with the human inclination to uphold regard for oneself while also caring about the well-being of others, and it thus represents a no-win situation that inhibits the fundamental basis of moral engagement: mutual respect. In addition, deconstruction of the binary of shame/superiority brings to the fore the inescapable truth that a hierarchical politics of difference not only inhibits mutual respect but also replicates a never-ending cycle of negative affect.

Conclusion

Hierarchical dispositioning may have historically served the self-interests of select individuals and groups, but it clearly does not serve everyone in any given context. If democracy is a purported societal goal, than I hope to have sufficiently shown that hierarchical thinking offers a perceptual grounding that undermines that possibility of establishing a socially-just world because hierarchical thinking contradicts the concept of inclusivity. Within hierarchical politics, as a fundamental human condition of difference, some subjects have not choice but to occupy marked positions outside the norm.

I also hope to have effectively argued that hierarchical thinking traverses most contemporary cultures, thereby revealing that more cross-cultural similarity exists than most scholars of difference acknowledge.[23] Critiques of the modernist

ideals of universality and neutrality have rightfully deconstructed any unified notion of a "we" in the public sphere (Young, Fraser). The concept of a "we," Nancy Fraser explains, "assumes that a public sphere is or can be a space of zero degree culture" (121). Fraser's articulation exemplifies the social turn in the humanities, which has thoroughly trounced ahistorical conceptions, such as "zero degree culture," exposing them as mythic modernist ideals. In Kuhnian fashion, thousands of scholars have zealously fleshed out the nuances of this intellectual paradigm shift, focusing on the ways in which modernist and Enlightenment epistemologies are value systems that underwrite and justify systems of oppression and exclusion (Butler, Crowley *Toward*, Fraser, Harding, Smith and Young).

Ironically, however, this postmodern turn has overlooked a "nonideal" (Mills) aspect of culture to which everyone is subject—a brutal and violent world. All of us live in a world where suffering and oppression are common material realities, accepted by many as inevitable. There is then, arguably, a subjective "we." Despite our group-specific differences, as members of a world and as receivers of its representations, few individuals (if any) know what it is like to "not know" a discourse of discord in which war, strife, rape, torture, subjugation, fear, shame, contempt, arrogance, racism, sexism, classism, humiliation, and degradation circulate, whether or not these items regularly occupy our conscious thoughts and whether or not we have directly experienced them.

I do not mean to trivialize or deny here the lived experiences of those who have directly experienced horror and have had the psychological and sociological stability of their lives and livelihoods wrenched from them by any number of brutal practices, as is the case for those civilians who have, say, survived a military attack that destroys their home and maims and/or kills their family members, or, for example, those individuals who have endured various physical and psychological abuses that greatly reduce their capacities for developing basal security and the ability to trust others.

Rather, I wish to draw attention to a privileged position—a Western disposition—that valorizes ideals of freedom, individualism, and "happiness" but that is imbued with a colonial and hierarchical orientation to difference underwritten by a sense of entitlement that enables it to achieve its self-interested ends at the expense of Others.

Thus, each of us who has internalized norms of privilege (and who variously occupy positions of privilege) is forced to learn in varying degrees to accept and become inured to suffering and oppression to such an extent as enables us to "function," a term loosely used here. Such "acceptance" does not necessarily indicate an intellectual acceptance of the status quo, but it does suggest that a significant part of our maturation process involves expending significant effort devoted to developing affective ways to filter out and make sense of an arbitrarily brutal world, essentially a lot of energy that most certainly could be re-directed toward more worthwhile pursuits than numbing ourselves. Full attention to the

nonideal, then, is imperative. Our failure to address hierarchical thinking as the driving force behind this nonideal world serves, I argue, to cohere past and present. The perpetuation of a brutal historical legacy reinforces "the given" as a kind of norm that precludes, or at least severely inhibits "the possible."

I have drawn from Smith's work to a large extent because she focuses on the individual as that which replicates the larger social organism and foregrounds performativity of *doxa*, particularly during childhood socialization, to demarcate a place for intervention. By doing so, Smith delineates an area of inquiry that, in my opinion, needs to be taken up more fully by scholars. Given that the "personal is political," the socialization of children is undeniably central to positive social change, as Smith repeatedly reminds us, yet the topic of how children are raised remains somewhat untouchable. As a topic of public debate, the rights of children remain more in the private than public realm (as the lives of women historically did and do in varying degrees, depending upon location). The vital importance of how children are socialized constitutes a subject to which Smith consistently returns and comprises a topic scholars would do well to heed because it emphasizes the importance of *individual* agency. It is individuals who negotiate multiple identities and mediate various schemes of perception when interacting with others. It is individuals who perform multiple and various subject positions that at times coincide with the unmarked position of the norm, and at other times don't, and at still other times operate outside the normative scheme of hierarchical thinking (at least somewhat), for instance, when reciprocal respect

122

occurs. Hierarchical thinking operates at the level of the individual, unconsciously or not, and it is my argument that we must therefore address and transform such thinking at the level of the individual as well as at the level of systems.

In the next chapter, we will examine additional affective modalities of being (other than shame and arrogance) generated by hierarchical thinking to understand why hierarchical thinking has had such staying power, especially after the widespread public embrace of democratic values.

CHAPTER 4

THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY

The question of how ignorance is sustained, cultivated, or allowed is one that must be asked explicitly and without assuming that the epistemic tools cultivated for understanding knowledge will be sufficient to understanding ignorance.

—Nancy Tuana

A critical reading of whiteness means that white ignorance must be problematized, not in order to expose whites as simply racist but to increase literacy about their full participation in race relations.   –Zeus Leonardo

The imperviousness in the West of the many branches of knowledge to everything that does not fall inside their predetermined scope has been repeatedly challenged by its thinkers throughout the years. They extol the concept of decolonization…Yet they do not seem to realize the difference when they find themselves face to face with it—a difference which does not announce itself, which they do not quite anticipate and cannot fit into any single varying compartment of their catalogued world; a difference they keep on measuring with inadequate sticks designed for their own morbid purpose. When they confront the challenge 'in the flesh,' they naturally do not recognize it as a challenge. Do not hear, do not see. They promptly reject it as they assign it to their one-place-fits-all 'other' category…They? Yes, they. But, in the colonial periphery (as in elsewhere), we are often them as well.   —Trinh T. Minh-ha

So, one can imagine—as Paul Gilroy would say (and has for years)—you don't get rid of black people by getting rid of race. You get rid of racism and you reconstruct the ecology of belonging. It looks like a different modality of belonging because it won't be built upon notions of individuated identity, difference, and negativity.   —Lawrence Grossberg

Everything is here except that which is missing.   —Richard Brautigan

In the previous chapter I argued that the problem of "difference" with

which humanities scholars have wrestled for the past few decades essentially

stalled out with identity politics. While identity politics undeniably has

contributed much to minority and difference scholarship by having directed

attention to difference as an intrinsic element of the human condition and by having raised awareness of the epistemological value of group-specific standpoints as democratizing resources, difference scholarship nonetheless stalled with identity politics, I suggest, because identity politics largely proceeds from the consequences, not from the causes of the problematic of difference. Identity politics essentially deals with the aftermath of discord created by difference and thus does not offer a resolution to politics of difference. That's why I have been arguing for an epidemiological approach to the problematic of difference, which addresses its causes rather than endlessly treating its symptoms.

Does difference *per se* cause discord, strife, and violence? While it is commonplace to think so, I have made clear that it is hierarchical thinking—not difference itself—that requires our primary attention. My intention in this project is to highlight the danger of the commonplace that difference is a problem that cannot be overcome and to demonstrate the damages this belief authorizes as well as the material practices it engenders. Difference *currently* causes discord but need not do so. As I hoped to show in chapter 3, the problems that difference presently causes are largely attributable to a historical transcultural legacy of perceptual training that teaches us to dehumanize ourselves and others by appraising the value of individuals and groups based upon categorical knowledge, memes, and norms. Founded upon hierarchies, this dehumanizing system teaches us to compare the worth of subjects, including ourselves, upon cultural norms that are learned and internalized, norms that privilege a central position (that

corresponds to the top of a hierarchy) and that thereby devalue positions outside the norm as inferior. I use the term "hierarchical thinking" derived from Iris Marion Young's term "hierarchical politics of difference" to describe this perceptual system,[24] which underwrites the interlocking of what Peggy McIntosh calls "privilege systems" (66).[25] Gender represents a privilege system, and gender norms provide ubiquitous examples of hierarchical thinking. Given the tide of globalization and the hybridity of culture, even if there had been cultures in which gender hierarchies were absent (i.e., not underwritten by hierarchical thinking), by now, nearly everyone has at the very least been exposed to gendered hierarchies, often in the form of racism (Fanon, Kitch). That is, it is likely that nearly everyone has performed and been subject to gendered norms despite their variations synchronically across cultures and diachronically across time.

Despite the seeming intractability of hierarchical systems via which we are trained to think hierarchically, in the previous chapter I argued that hierarchical thinking is a fear-based social fiction that can and must be abolished if humans are to accommodate and incorporate our present knowledge of what is required for the health and well-being of individuals and societies, natural ecosystems, and, indeed, all life on the planet. Such a dramatic change, however, requires a fundamental shift in the way people are trained to think about themselves and others. As I have been arguing, this shift requires that we learn to appraise each other and other forms of life based upon non-scalar worth. Although this may seem unfeasible to many readers, I argue it is well within the realm of possibility

126

when we consider the cultural variability of hierarchical thinking and its variable valencing; that is, some cultures are imbued with more hierarchical practices and institutions than others. For example, there are presently cultures that have actively eschewed economic and educational stratification (stratification that in extreme instances countenances starvation of members of the underclasses), opting instead for various forms of socialist democracy. If culture is variable, as it certainly is (e.g., Saudia Arabia v. Finland) and if we acknowledge the evident hardship and suffering experienced by individuals who occupy the lowest rungs of most hierarchies, then it would serve the common good to speak about the abolition of hierarchical thinking as a social goal.

I'd like to make clear, however, that I am not arguing for the instantiation of tolerance (i.e., cultural relativism) which requires a suspension of judgment. Judgment is intrinsic to the human, a component of invention (Aristotle). For example, neither the fact that the United States prison-industrial complex profits from the imprisonment of human bodies nor the fact that self-immolation is valorized in certain cultures makes either practice worthy of our "tolerance." Both practices are productions of hierarchical politics of difference and are enabled by hierarchical thinking. I'd also like to make clear that I don't wish to efface difference and call for any sort of universality because, again, neither is humanly possible. Were they possible, there would be no rhetorical invention, no human plasticity. Furthermore, in light of the deep pleasure and inventional possibilities difference affords (Atwill), effacing difference is not desirable.

What I am arguing for is the purposeful abolishment of hierarchical thinking. Hierarchical thinking is a dangerous and counterproductive social fiction, and, as with all social fictions, despite their materiality, they do not have to exist. Humans can instantiate other fictions, for example, non-hierarchical appraisal systems that don't rely upon reductive thinking that devalues people according to categorical worth. Transforming the perceptual dispositioning structured by hierarchical thinking, however, is a complex task that could not happen overnight but would take successive generations of evolving disarticulation and reflexive praxis.[26]

As I have suggested, at issue is the virility of hierarchical thinking: its hegemonic and largely naturalized place, its facile adaptability to new contexts (i.e., its inventional potential),[27] its historical use as a colonizing force (see chapter 1), and its part in sustaining the status quo (not only Eurocentric status quos, but oppression wherever it occurs). While I certainly do not wish to reinscribe eurocentrism or obviate the power of resistance to instantiate significant change, I do want to highlight hierarchical thinking as a narrative frame and as a disciplinary framework. As a narrative history, like all histories, hierarchical thinking is hermeneutic and reductive, yet with real and serious material consequences. As a disciplinary frame, hierarchical thinking, as shown in chapter three, functions similarly to gender and thus serves as a framework in which an individual "develops a discourse of self-reporting and self-understanding" (Butler 67).

Although such deeply ingrained epistemes seem intractable, as inheritors of polyphonic and pluritopic histories that demonstrate the dynamism and hybridity of groups and cultures, humans clearly have alternative options to hierarchical thinking—alternative modes for being in the world. The difference between "self-esteem" and "self-respect," for example, illustrates the difference between hierarchical thinking and non-hierarchical appraisal—what we might call "egalitarian thinking" (for a fuller explanation of this, see chapter 3). Self-respect is non-scalar and acknowledges the intrinsic worth of each individual. Self-esteem, on the other hand, relies upon scalar worth, with "one's merits and self-valuation," frequently determined by "the standards of value in one's society and how one compares oneself with other members of that society" (Neu 169). Jerome Neu insightfully concludes, "of self-respect one cannot have too much, of self-esteem one obviously can" (169). If indeed self-respect is such a good thing and we cannot have too much of it, why is there so little of it?

While non-scalar appraisal is not unknown to most people, its minority standing evidences the narrative hegemony of hierarchical thinking.[28] Cultural practices and social institutions in much of the world are based upon notions of self-esteem, not self-respect, and they thus reinforce hierarchical thinking,[29] which forms the basis of both self-and other-disesteem—the motor that drives strife and violence. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, most interpersonal, intrapersonal and collective lives are structured by scalar valuing more than non-scalar valuing, creating invidious cultural complexes that impede, and possibly

prevent, the large-scale changes that humans need to make in the next thirty years if we are to sustain ourselves and the planet. That some cultures exhibit practices or systems based upon respect (i.e., the non-scalar acknowledgement of the intrinsic worth of a being) should encourage us to imagine that hierarchical thinking can be overcome.

I am not suggesting that humans should, even if they could, stop categorizing, being critical, or prioritizing—that is, stop being hermeneutic beings who make meaning (salience) in a given situation. Construing the relative worth of something in a given situation (i.e., hierarch-ing) is inevitable, for example, ranking places to search for wild mushrooms or choosing candidates for a particular endeavor, but such critical thought can take place contingently, in a non-scalar perceptual frame that does not rely upon hierarch-ing the worth of living subjects according to the normative valuing scripted by privilege systems. Hierarchical thinking, then, does not refer to the critical capacity to compare items but refers to a deeply internalized assessment system based upon de-valuing the intrinsic worth of self and other. It is the antipode of a system based upon human dignity.

Furthermore, I am not necessarily rejecting the concept or development of self-esteem since comparative difference is an intrinsic attribute of the human. But self-esteem produced in a system based upon human dignity and self-respect and in which the feeling of belonging is felt by everyone would look very different from self-esteem as it is currently experienced.

Toward the end of chapter 3, I arrived at the conclusion that hierarchical thinking represents a ubiquitous (albeit individuated and individuating) colonizing force that overdetermines contemporary intersubjectivity. Furthermore, I suggested that what has been perceived as the theorizing of intersubjectivity in a universal way has instead actually been a thick description of hierarchical thinking, what many refer to as "Western" epistemology (see chapter three) and what critical race theorist Zeus Leonardo characterizes as "white epistemology," whose "history is filled stories of genocide, enslavement, and the general process of othering," a "regime of knowing that is inherently oppressive" and that "partitions the world for racial domination" ("The Myth of White Ignorance" 108). Leonardo isolates domination as "a process that that establishes the supremacy of a racial group," and while I respect his distinctions between "minority-to-majority attitudes" and white supremacy as necessary distinctions in anti-racist pedagogy,[30] as well as his distinctions among patriarchy, gender, and industrial capitalism as distinct regimes whose processes of domination produce differing epistemologies and material practices, my work highlights the underlying invidious foundation for, and cause of, the process of domination in any form—hierarchical thinking. I am saying that while there are many different regimes of domination that vary in time and place and that also produce distinct and disparate embodied knowledges and practices, all of them describe variations on the cast and hue of *a* particular intersubjectivity, a specific socio-historical

epistemology that has been around for so long that its originary cannot be readily discerned.

Homi Bhabha attributes the cohesiveness of this historical narrative of modernity to "a past whose iterative *value as sign* reinscribes the 'lessons of the past' into the very textuality of the present" (354). "To take this perspective," Bhabha rightfully observes, "would mean that we see 'racism' not simply as a hangover from archaic conceptions of the aristocracy, but as part of the historical traditions of civic and liberal humanism" (354). (See chapters 2 and 3 for more on this position.) Because of the protracted entrenchment of hierarchical thinking, which has spun many new hierarchical regimes (e.g., racism, disaster capitalism) and variations upon and productions of them (e.g., child sex industry, "honor" cultures, the prison-industrial complex), the postmodern critique has understandably linked hierarchical politics with intersubjectivity.

This association between hierarchical politics and intersubjectivity, however, has tended toward conflation. For example, far too often in the field of rhetoric and composition, "the social" and "the political" are often shorthand for the intersubjective, but both terms actually refer to hierarchical politics of difference and hierarchical thinking, not to intersubjectivity *per se*. This, then, suggests a need for theorizing intersubjectivity in ways that do not signify hierarchical politics. Doing so may lead us to cultivate alternative modes of interaction and engagement that lead us out of the morass of violence produced in the wake of hierarchical thinking.

132

This chapter contributes to the theorizing of intersubjectivity as a rhetorical construct, as a means of leading us beyond the constraints of hierarchical thinking. I hope that others will take up this thread and pursue its leads, as well as fill in the inevitable blind and vacant spots of my theorizing. Although there has been noticeable philosophical (Buber, Heidegger, Levinas, Sartre) and psychoanalytic (Freud, Kristeva, Lacan) theorizing of intersubjectivity and more recent theorizing with respect to child development, emotion, affect, and the "posthuman,"[31] the theorizing of what is possible with respect to intersubjectivity has received too little attention. While there has been some rhetorical scholarship concerning the role of "recognition" (Bourdieu, Hyde, Watkins) and "acknowledgement" (Hyde) in self-development and in the cultivation of intersubjective awareness (Flower, Holiday, Ratcliffe, Young "Assymetrical"), it seems to me that the majority of scholars who do take up "the possible" are difference scholars, and they either work to imagine ways to cross the lines of difference already instantiated (Higgins, Long, and Flower; Ratcliffe; West; Young), or they theorize subversion (Butler) and interruption of the iterative (Bhabha, Derrida) or training our rhetorical capacities for intervention (Atwill).

I attempt here a different tack, one that directs attention to how hierarchical thinking shapes one's orientation to the intersubjective realm itself.[32] I argue that in many ways, hierarchical thinking erodes empathy/sympathy and thereby attenuates forward-looking engagement with "the social." Consequently,

133

hierarchical thinking diminishes the human capacity to embrace the potential

pleasures difference offers as vitally stimulating resources for invention.[33]

Furthermore, I argue that the ways in which hierarchical thinking shapes both

externally-directed and internally-directed behaviors, thoughts, and feelings

prohibits possible "affordances" (Gibson) of being. I finish the chapter by

theorizing a potential affordance that goes uncultivated, in an attempt to give a

sense of the vastness of human intersubjective potential possibly available to

humans. Needless to say, it is difficult to glimpse what is possible when the

possible remains largely untapped.

I open the present chapter with several epigraphs that invoke theorizing

the possible, including Richard Brautigan's declaration of the ineffable,

"Everything is here except that which is missing" and Trinh T. Minh-ha's

observation that when faced with difference, "Western" minds cannot see or

experience its specificity (facticity), having learned "to promptly reject it as they

assign it to their one-place-fits-all 'other' category" (196). My own life

experiences have shown me that what was once indiscernible to me can become

discernible, so with that conviction, I attempt to push the envelope of what can be

said about intersubjective possibility. To that end, I briefly review what difference

scholarship advocates for expanding intersubjective understanding. I then adopt

McIntosh's theoretical approach to analyzing privilege systems: "To redesign

social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions"

(68).[34] While the "unseen" generally refers to that which is unseen by those who

134

occupy positions of privilege (their unearned privileges), this chapter examines other unseen dimensions to depict how hierarchical socialization operates as a disciplinary framework that structures individual orientation toward the intersubjective, operating conatively to reduce volition and to produce mental states that frequently mitigate engagement with the social, including complacency, denial, and entitlement.

In many respects, my argument complements recent critiques of the hegemonic positioning of late-market capitalism. I do not think as some do, however, that the disestablishment of the current economic system subscribed to by most of the developed world (referred to by many who would seek to abolish it as "crapitalism") is enough to bring about egalitarianism institutionally and interpersonally and that everything will fall in place as soon as the network of corporate-capitalist structures (underwritten by neo-liberal economics and neo-conservative discursive practices) tumbles. Even in flourishing socialist democracies, such as Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, that evince significantly more care for the material well-being of its inhabitants than do nations like the United States, Saudi Arabia, or North Korea, hierarchical thinking persists. Forms of social violence underwritten by hierarchical thinking manifest themselves (e.g., homicide, suicide, gendered inequality of income, immigration/minority population "issues"), demonstrating that hierarchical thinking is as much of an elephant in the room as is late-market capitalism. In this regard, I support Lawrence Grossberg's contention that, while "we have to follow Foucault to see

135

the economic…as a condition of possibility of other practices," we must also recognize that "culture is also a condition of possibility of the economic" (323-4). Grossberg additionally recommends that "the concept of 'condition of possibility' should be further explored in terms of articulation" (325).

This chapter explores the relationship between conditions for possibility and articulation. It examines the ways in which hierarchical thinking selectively tunes individual attention away from the intersubjective realm to focus on the subjective, thereby enabling many of us (to varying degrees and varying contexts) to overlook, disregard, dismiss or be stymied by the need establish the conditions for human flourishing that were discussed in the previous two chapters. The writings of Lillian Smith (1897-1966) initially directed me to think about the relationship between privilege systems and conditions for individual and collective development because of Smith's rich intersectional analyses of race, sex, gender, and class. Smith recognized that conditions circumscribe articulation, particularly with respect to human development.

Generally speaking, Smith considered the conditions offered to children and adults in privilege systems as damaging to all concerned, and she identified two necessary conditions for fostering human well-being, writing that "the two most fundamental rights of mankind [are] the right to grow and the right to be different" ("Vital" 672). As we saw in the previous chapter, oppression occurs when either of these conditions is absent, repressed, or oppressed.[35] I therefore argued in the previous chapter that, since most everyone in contemporary

societies is denied both of these fundamental rights, everyone is oppressed (see previous chapter for argument). The World Health Organization's first *World Report on Violence and Health* substantiates this viewpoint in that, according to the report, psychological harm and maldevelopment are considered violent acts by health practitioners.

Although it may seem obvious that oppression is violent, it is less obvious to argue that those in privileged positions are also oppressed, subjects of abuse. Yet as early as the 1930s, Smith (a white woman who grew up in an affluent southern household) took this position, arguing that the perception of difference structured by hierarchical thinking is embedded in our psyches during childhood, damaging everyone, even those in the most privileged subject positions. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, despite my having been raised in what would be generally considered a loving home (i.e., absent corporal punishment, physical violence, abusive language and so forth and filled with opportunities for learning and interaction with a wide variety of others) and despite my having attended well-funded public schools in Delaware (where corporal punishment was legal until my 4th-grade year),[36] like Smith, I too have felt since childhood that everything was "awry," that much of what I was exposed to in school (pedagogically and curricularly) and out of school was twisted, but I could not articulate my reasons for feeling that way.

For example, even something as simple as reading groups in my second grade class somehow felt injurious. By ranking ability, reading groups reinforced

137

each child's incipient hierarchical thinking and further taught acceptance of any discomfiting feelings children felt by being ranked. Members of each reading group were fully aware of and felt their social interpellation even though they would not have been able to say that they were learning to esteem and dis-esteem others or that they were developing their habitus (Bourdieu) with respect to such performances. Despite the efforts of teachers in my elementary school to efface hierarchy by assigning each reading group the name of a songbird, every student knew the implicit ranking of each group as well as the fact that he or she was being ranked. Members of the "Bluebirds," for example, felt superior to their classmates while "Robins" often felt frustrated and inferior, degraded by what they perceived as their lack of ability and intelligence.

As I hoped to show in the previous chapter, scholarship in moral psychology explains this discomfort, why all subject positions suffer within privilege systems: For one, because to devalue others, one must first learn to devalue oneself. Secondly, since witnessing abuse also constitutes abuse (see chapter 1), such a dehumanizing and violent basis for learning must, among other things, be fear-inducing (see chapter 3). As foundational conditions for interpersonal and intrapersonal development, self and other devaluation are more than merely symbolic; they have significant debilitating material effects.

In understanding that the symbolic and the real are interrelated, I argue that learning self-devaluation (and, consequently, other-directed devaluation) constitutes a psychological harm that not only inhibits "the right to grow" but also

138

engenders epistemic modes that generally do not serve the common or individual good (e.g., denial, fear, valorizing self-esteem rather than self-respect and so on). Hierarchical conditioning and hierarchical conditions clearly shape articulation, manifested in innumerable ways.

But before we look at some of these articulations, I'd like to first turn to difference scholarship for extant suggestions regarding changing those conditions currently structured by the problematic of difference.

Co-opting the Master's Tool: Difference as a Transformative Tool

In deference to the fact that this project is largely a historiography of Lillian Smith, I frame the following brief literature review on the politics of difference with Smith's contributions to difference scholarship so that I may give her credit for her remarkable insight into "the problem of difference," which persists as a social plague. Smith's analyses in many ways predate and predict contemporary scholars' work concerning politics of difference. For example, Smith identified difference as the master's tool (Lorde)—as a means to maintain dominance and privilege through "divide and conquer" (see her "Two Men and a Bargain" discussed in chapter 3). Smith also articulates a version of standpoint theory (Harding). In her recognition of the value of group-specific knowledge, she implicitly predicts epistemic privilege as the following excerpt illustrates:

> I have become convinced that *our right to be different* is, in a deep
> sense, the most precious right we human beings have, and the one
> most likely, if we hold to it, to ensure the human race a future. We

need to treasure human differences where they are important (I

can't see that skin color is more important than eye color); we need

to cherish the unique achievements of various groups…to value the

various beliefs and ideas and abilities that seem to grow more

easily in one culture than in another. We may need them all for our

survival—certainly we shall need some of them one of these days,

and we don't know which we shall need the most or where they

come to birth. ("Words" 151-4)

That "we may need them all [group-specific differences] for our survival," never

knowing in which culture a strategy may come to birth, also depicts Smith's

understanding of the potential for difference to be used as a feminist resource

(Lorde, Ratcliffe, and Young).

Smith can also be considered the mother of whiteness studies.[37] At a time

when it was common to read of "The Negro Problem," a phrase that blamed the

victims of race segregation, not its progenitors, Smith repeatedly reminded her

readers of the sickness of privilege systems—the problem was *not* "a Negro

Problem" but, rather, a problem of privilege—white supremacy. Smith writes,

"The white man himself is one of the world's most urgent problems today; not the

Negro, nor other colored races. We whites must learn to confess this" (*How* 86).

And elsewhere, "There is a problem facing all of us, black and white, but it is not

the Negro Problem." Rather, "[i]t is the problem, for Negroes, of some way to live

a good life with white people," and "for each white the problem of learning to live a good life with himself ("There are Things to Do" 137).

Forecasting contemporary whiteness studies, Smith unpacks the "Negro Problem" ideograph (McGee) in understanding that ideographs "are not full arguments…but ideological icebergs: the visible bump of what lies beneath" (Coogan 670); ideographic analysis is one way to expose how commonplaces operate discursively to conceal history, obscure difference, and constrain change. Fiercely and vocally opposed to segregation, in *Killers of the Dream* Smith uses structural analyses of white supremacy, including narrative analyses of the "sanctity" of white womanhood, the hyper-sexualization of African American men and women, the narrative exploitation of the white underclass, the historical and socially-constructed roots of Jim Crow, and the imbrication of the church and state, to expose how whiteness kept the southern economic and social power structures intact during its transition from chattel slavery to the post-bellum south. Smith clearly believed in the power of "transformed understanding" (Flower) and "demystification" (West) to bring about social-justice, and, to do so she enacted Cornel West's "prophetic criticism," which "begins with social structural analyses" [but] also makes explicit its moral and political aims" (23).

Smith also advocated substitutive behavior (Roth, Tatum) as a means of transforming both individual habitus (Bordieu) and social norms. In "There are Things We Can Do" and, later, in *Now is the Time*, a handbook for racial integration, Smith lists specific practices that whites can undertake to facilitate

desegregation. In essence, in these works Smith "disclose[s] options and alternatives for transformative praxis," an approach, according to West, that upholds "the central role of human agency" (23). Additionally, Smith recognized the affectual constraints of habitus. She consequently hosted interracial gatherings for children and adults in understanding that purposeful intermingling could help individuals overcome the internalized abjection that results from racial segregation. For example, many people felt sick and vomited the first time(s) they ate together at interracial gatherings. Importantly, bodies are retrainable and such violent physical responses became quickly unlearned. Smith also advocated a pedagogy of play (Lugones, Tax), jouissance (Kristeva, Rickert), and prefiguring (Roth) as a means to alter habituated praxis.

While Smith often spoke of the material consequences of what she called "the mythic mind," thus referencing symbolic violence, and while she advocated subversive practices as a means to enact positive change similar to Judith Butler, one area of difference scholarship that Smith did not anticipate pertains to language philosophers' poststructural critiques of language that ground invention in the indeterminancy of language. Even though Smith may not have understood the postmodern theoretical precepts underlying change—differánce and alterity— she nevertheless employed deconstructive analyses and obviously theorized possibility and social transformation, calling for radicalism, teleological hope (Mathieu), substitutional behavior (Tatum), the prefigurative (Roth) and play (Lugones, Tax).

Smith also neglected to explicitly embrace conflict as an important resource for change and invention, but she did so implicitly. While Smith did not articulate the technique of rivaling (Flower, Long) or the role of acknowledgement (Hyde) in expanding rhetors' perspectives, she did embrace storytelling and literature as a means to bridge assymetrical positions (Young "Assymetrical") and as a means to increase empathy (Bracher). Smith clearly opposed the idea of homogeneity and consensus, explicitly opposing the colonialism inherent in the idea of assimilation, which explains her dislike of the word "integration." Disensus as a productive process has a long history in composition, cultural, and community studies (Bizzell, Clifford, Malinowitz, Pratt, Ryder, Smitherman).

Smith did, however, embrace oppositional discourse and took it as a matter of course to not only practice it herself but also to encourage others to do so. For this express purpose, Smith and her partner Paula Snelling started *Pseudopodia*, a journal of literary and social criticism that was successively called *The Georgia Review* and *South Today*. As both editor of and frequent contributor to the journal, which had more than 25,000 subscribers by the end of its decade-long existence, Smith's 1942 "Portrait of the Deep South Speaking to Negroes on Morale" demonstrates the rhetorical tactics of trickster consciousness (Branch) and métis (Atwill) deployed in the service of opposition. As Phyllis Mentzell Ryder explains, "rhetors who practice oppositional discourse do so in order to intervene in the stories that the dominant culture tells itself—to force the

143

dominant culture to see how its own myths of success, tolerance or benevolence cover over oppression" (520).

In "Portrait of the Deep South Speaking to Negroes on Morale," Smith exposes the racial hypocrisy of the majority of southern whites who, during the Second World War, expected African American men to fight abroad for racial equality while lacking it at home. Despite its title, "Portrait" is clearly intended for a white audience, particularly in its mimicry of commonplaces voiced by whites. The following excerpt is a highly redacted version that omits the poetic layout of the six-page original; the excerpt nevertheless conveys Smith's belief in the transformative and politically subversive power of art:

> *Begin on an indulgently friendly tone:* Listen, colored folks, listen to me: This is a time for unity! This is no time to be raising your hand with questions about our native land!... *Chest tone will give throbbing effect:* You ought to be thankful you live in a place where folks can *talk* of God and democracy and freedom and liberty and—(let's see, what's another? Yeah, that thing about brother—) Yeah, you oughta be thankful just to hear the white race talk of brotherhood—you oughta be thankful—and *stay in your place!...Put iron in voice and jut out jaw*: Don't you know defeatist talk about Jim Crow is exactly the kind of talk that pulls morale down-low? *Speaker's voice should rise hysterically and his face should flush deep purple*: And for God's sake, stop asking us to

call you mister! (*You think I'd want a nigger to marry my*

sister?)...Sensible , sane commonsense inflection: All you gotta do

is fight for what *I* hold dear. I can't see what's so hard for you to

face! Do what you're told to do and *stay in your place*. Leave

everything else to the dominant race. *Voice soothing and softly*

southern: Now how about a little singing? Huh? How about some

of your good old songs? Nobody can sing like a *darky* ...great

singing yeah/ I never hear it [that it] don't make me think of my

old mammy singing to me when I was a kid… God bless her…

nothing like those old mammies… God bless 'em all…*Voice*

booms and booms more and more and more victoriously: Yeah,

we'll fight and we'll fight to the last Jim Crow drop to rid the

world of Hitlerism and Nazism and all them OTHER ISMS and

save the American Way so that things can go on forever and ever

and ever and ever just as they are down here today. (110-15)

While all of Smith's writings could be characterized as oppositional, "Portrait"

clearly illustrates Ryder's description of oppositional discourse as a "rhetoric that

is used to attack the benevolent self-image of those who are complicit in

oppression" (521). According to my research, as I hope to show, that includes

virtually everyone.

Complicity

In addition to attacking demagoguery, particularly the collusion between

"free" media and demagogues, a position strikingly reminiscent of the critiques of

media control expressed by many journalists and scholars today,[38] Smith

recognized the immense and complicit role individuals play in the maintenance of

multiple and interlocking hierarchical systems that underwrite violence and

misery. While Smith smartly identified privilege operating within groups, as in

white privilege, her rich descriptions of interlocking privilege systems in the Jim

Crow South evidence her recognition that privilege operates at the level of the

individual as well. Much as with gender, privilege circulates within every

individual who grows up within privilege systems, surfacing within the individual

periodically and depending upon context (and in various forms, including esteem,

dis-esteem, hate, entitlement, contempt, shame and so on). As discussed in

chapter two and three, Smith spoke about the indoctrination that takes place by

rote and ritual during childhood before reflexive practice even emerges as part of

an individual's cognition. Smith therefore encouraged her adult readers to

contemplate their unchallenged assumptions and their unearned privilege, and she

further called upon them to radicalize.

Given on the anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott, Smith's 1956

speech "The Right Way is Not a Moderate Way" exemplifies Smith's call to

radicalize. Angered by Mark Ethridge's speech in which he "equated the NAACP

and Senator James Eastland by labeling both 'radical'" (Loveland 137), Smith

critiques such fallacious thinking. She argues for discrimination among kinds (quality), asking "Would you place the thief and the honest man in the same moral category?" Advocating the quality of extremism as that which has historically promoted positive social change, Smith remarks, "Moderation is the slogan of our times," but it has "never made a man or a nation great" (68). "Moderation never mastered ordeal or met a crisis successfully," nor did it discover or invent anything, or "dreamed a new dream" (Smith 68). Smith raises the subject of extremism to counter the force of Ethridge's remark, which disparaged the efforts of African Americans to achieve their constitutional rights and additionally accomplished the rhetorical work of inscribing fear in those whites who might otherwise actively speak out against segregation (Loveland 152).[39] Smith thus uses the ideals of extremism to mobilize her listeners to social action. To add momentum and to further her rhetorical purpose, Smith then analogizes cancer to the sickness of race relations, which "metastasize[s] throughout our country—and indeed, throughout the whole earth" (70) and thereby adumbrates the escalating urgency of dealing with global social problems that have since reached critical mass fifty-five years later. Smith incisively asks: "The question in crisis or ordeal is not: Are you going to be an extremist? The question is: What kind of extremist are you going to be?" (68).

Sadly, Smith's question would still strike the general U.S. public as radical, as a query of a radical extremist rather than a concerned citizen. For example, the scientific community projects a thirty-year window in which humans

147

must reduce carbon emissions to 350 parts per million, "the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere" if humans are to survive (350.org). Currently, carbon emissions exceed 388 parts per million (350.org). Yet despite the evidence that humans are now facing critical global social problems of epic proportions, we can see from the fact that whether or not "climate change" is human induced is still hotly contested among the public indicates Smith's call for incisive human intervention would be dismissed as radical rather than logical by many. While this shrinking from a reality that clearly needs facing may be explained, in part, by media misinformation, lack of information, and dissemination of the belief that human-induced climate change is "a theory" (i.e., as disprovable), I am convinced and hope to show that hierarchical conditioning contributes to a seemingly and overwhelming social torpidity, even among individuals who recognize climate change as a serious and urgent issue.

Hierarchical conditioning represents an invidious threat in that it pervades human existence and traverses domains, but it also presents an even greater threat, I argue, by serving as an overarching system in intersubjective training, much of which contributes to the maintenance of hierarchical structures. This intersubjective training interferes with the development of collective social consciousness in several ways that I show. For one, hierarchical thinking influences cognition by working ideologically, culturally delineating import and value, for example, training attention toward individualism and endless economic growth, interlocking ideologies that work against goals of collective well-being.

Secondly, as the previous chapter made clear, hierarchical politics are essentially shame-based and shame-producing systems. Shame, as we will see, is generally a debilitating emotion that inhibits empathy and thus positive other-directed action. Lastly, hierarchical conditioning produces additional socially-averse affects, such as denial and complacency, that vitiate thinking about humans as social beings, as parts of a social organism whose preservation and well-being are collective interests. Overall, hierarchical conditioning thus operates conatively, enervating individual motivation to improve collective well-being. Hierarchical conditioning can thus be seen as a process of disaffection that erodes moral engagement

Self-Contained Egos and the Training of the "Self"

The incredible degree to which humans are social beings who internalize and perform their narrative immersions has been a recurring theme throughout this work. The rhetorical human capacity to uptake the social is most noticeable during childhood when an individual's openness to social resonance is most pronounced. That children are "like sponges," picking up even the most intangible of primary and secondary literacies in their first few years of life suggests the porous and permeable nature of human boundaries and the social nature of the individual.

Although this openness to the intersubjective nature of the human may have a biological component that affects how porous we can be as we mature, how we learn to view ourselves, others, and how we learn to conceptualize the social realm are rhetorically influenced. Ironically, the innate human propensity

toward the social and the collective is paradoxically subverted through hierarchical conditioning, which teaches what Smith calls a dehumanizing vision of life. To highlight this dehumanizing vision of life, I use the term "autistic" as Jacques Derrida does in *Limited Inc.* (46) when he critiques the linguist John Searle's reading of Derrida's work. As a frame for social analysis, "autistic" moves beyond "narcissism" (self-absorption) to include emotional detachment, impaired communication, and excessive emotional rigidity according to the definition of "autism" in my *Webster's Dictionary*: "1. *Psychology*. A pervasive developmental disorder of children, characterized by impaired communication, excessive rigidity, and emotional detachment. 2. a tendency to view life in terms of one's own needs and desires" (139). If the hierarchical conditioning that Smith describes as intrinsic to privilege systems holds, then children immersed in these hierarchical systems learn through normative acculturation to be rigid assessors of ourselves and others (see chapter 3).

Hierarchical conditioning sculpts what I am calling an "autistic" intersubjectivity in several ways. Since, as I have been arguing, hierarchical thinking is a fear-based perceptual system in which human worth is continually assessed according to normative context, to function "successfully" in this fear-based system, one must learn, to some extent, to close oneself off from threat, which can be accomplished in part through emotional detachment. Emotional detachment explains my earlier mention of "skin thickening" and my adult ability to function in a world filled with suffering. Function, here, refers to more than

survival but also to the capacity to be "carefree," to, say, take vacations and to enjoy my daily life, indicating a learned capacity to dismiss and disregard what I know about the world (e.g., rare minerals from the eastern part of the Congo that are used in all cell phones, computers, and many other electronic products are currently funding a war in the Congo where, in the past seven years, more than 5.5 million people have been murdered and more than 300,000 women brutally raped ("Conflict Minerals") or that many California prisoners, many of whom are in jail for life for the possession of small quantities of illegal drugs, are currently waging (September 2011) a hunger strike against inhumane treatment riddling the California prison system.

Examples of suffering among humans and other living systems are virtually endless, and the complacency that most individuals evince with respect to such widespread misery indicates a learned disengagement and a training in self-interest. Social praxis that is characterized by "view[ing] life in term's of one's own needs and desires" is indeed autistic from a rhetorical perspective. If autism is a developmental disorder characterized by excessive rigidity, emotional detachment, and a self-centered perspective on life, then we might say that hierarchical dispositioning represents a developmental disorder among humans that registers on a global scale.

What I am calling "autistic" intersubjective training is largely accomplished through the learning of devaluation of human worth that was extensively discussed in chapter 3. Learning self-devaluation trains the self to

151

protect itself against threat, which can be accomplished variously: through emotional detachment, by acquiring "value" through the eyes of others or oneself (i.e., self-esteem), by domination and feelings of power (see chapter 3), and by learning to place more importance upon the self than the social, upon "one's own needs and desires." Even under circumstances that teach subordination to the social in which the worth of the individual often goes unrecognized (e.g., martyrdom, motherhood, military service, Confucianism), the first three items in the preceding list offers individuals protection from the pain that accompanies self-devaluation.

Hierarchical thinking thus represents a training that paradoxically constricts the human capacity to interpersonally engage in modes of reciprocal self-respect by shoring up the boundaries of the self. In chapter 3 we saw that Iris Marion Young refers to this learned solidification of boundaries between the self and the social as a "non-overlapping otherness" that "wells from the depths of the Western subject's sense of identity, especially, but not only in the subjectivity of privileged groups" (170). Teresa Brennan refers to this shoring up of boundaries as the "self-contained ego" (95), which she explains, "maintains itself by projecting out the affects that otherwise interfere with its agency (anxiety and any sense of inferiority)" (113). The resultant emotional detachment that self-containment affords individuals, Brennan terms "sealing of the heart." However named, this deeply-felt sense that each of us is self-contained is learned and so naturalized that it is difficult to imagine a world in which non-self containment

were cultivated. At the end of the chapter, I briefly expand upon the idea of cultivating non-self containment.

This deeply-learned autistic focus on "one's own needs and desires" is further solidified ideologically through the cultural construction of the sovereign self, the apotheosis of which has been reached in the American stereotype. Fueled by intertwined beliefs in endless growth, profit, individualism, equal opportunity, and competition within a meritocratic playing field, the modern self-contained subject (whose perceives feelings and beliefs as being generated internally) has received extensive attention from scholars to numerable to enumerate. Their work underscores the need to alter such narrative training of the self if we are eradicate the autistic tendencies to view life through the lens of myopic self-interest that accompanies the formation of the self-contained ego, the sense that the self is atomistic.

Michel Foucault promotes destabilizing and subverting "the government of individualization" that constructs contemporary subjects. He writes, "the government of individualization is comprised of the forms of power that both subject us to control by others and those that subject us to ourselves via self-identification" (331), and he advocates understanding the multiple interlocking narratives by which we define ourselves and others as a means by which we can challenge such power. Heeding Foucault's advice, I hope to show in the next section that, while each of us identifies with multiple yet varying narratives, many

narratives, even care-based, socially-minded, and maturation (self-development) narratives, can work in service of the metanarrative of privilege.

The Hegemony of Privilege

The question of how aporetic narratives co-exist (e.g., democracy and Jim Crow) framed chapter two, as this question drove Smith to theorize difference. Smith was understandably baffled by the ability of people to integrate Christian and democratic values into a segregationist (Jim Crow) worldview as well as by the learned ability of white children in the Jim Crow South to simultaneously love and dis-esteem their Black nannies, servants, and friends. Sharon Crowley coins the term "ideologic" to refer to the interlocking nexus of narrative beliefs in service of an ideology, and she suggests the "concept of ideologic may serve rhetorical criticism insofar as its analysis can demonstrate how beliefs connect to one another" (77).

That seeming disparate and contradictory narratives work in tandem to support an ideology is quite evident in the case of hierarchical thinking, which, as I have been arguing, operates as an underlying perceptual scheme, a metanarrative so inventionally flexible and productive that it can accommodate a seemingly endless variety of narratives that ultimately reinforce the ideology of hierarchy and privilege. The myths of meritocracy, capitalism, and the sovereign self represent some of the more well-known interlocking narratives that are deployed in the service of privilege systems, but even the most benign narratives and literacies can serve an ideologic of privilege. The following anecdote illustrates

154

how our childhood experiences sear those hierarchical values of privilege deep into our very selves.

Apparently I was already instilled with a work ethic when I asked my father if I could help him work in the yard one summer when I was five or six. As I don't remember a single instance when my father refused my company, he enthusiastically agreed and opted to teach me to weed, probably thinking that weeding would be an age-appropriate task for me. Ultimately, he was right. Weeding might seem like an easy task for a young child, but my recollection of events indicates that even the simplest tasks teach much deeper lessons. Along with having to learn to classify plants, I had to learn a much more difficult lesson to successfully weed. I had to learn that some life was more valuable than others. Although I can now think of weeding in utilitarian terms of sacrifice, I distinctly remember feeling when I was first shown how to weed, as I stared at the exposed roots of a rapidly wilting plant lying deathlike in the full rays of the sun, that I had to learn to kill in order to weed. The thought of killing was agitating (my initial descriptor "disturbed" leaves out the melodramatic and turbulent feel of the experience). Why did I have to yank out my favorite flower, the dandelion, but not its neighbor, a similar looking plant?

To calm my evident dismay, I now realize, my father moved me from a flower bed to the vegetable garden where he introduced two additional literacies that would not supplant my rapidly-consolidating hierarchical awareness but would, at least, provide possibilities for tempering it—utilitarianism and

155

expertise. Taking me by the hand, my father patiently gave me a tour of the vegetable garden, showing me and naming the plants that we would eat, each of which needed room to grow. By teaching me to distinguish between edible plants and non-edible weeds (a distinction that itself was probably spurious since many of the weeds were likely edible plants), my father imbued me with a sense of expertise through taxonomy. Expertise augmented my self-esteem, for which I had already developed a seemingly endless desire. In addition, by situating weeding within a frame of utilitarianism, my father also taught me a kind of "enlightened," albeit Machiavellian, paternalism. "See?" he said, as he demonstrated. "By thinning out the lettuce, we make room for some of the lettuce to live and grow big. If we don't weed it, the lettuce will become overcrowded and all of it will die." Expertise quickly supplanted my sense of egalitarianism, and soon after I could as easily weed a flower bed as a vegetable patch.

While expertise and utilitarianism are clearly not narratives that are damaging in and of themselves,[40] they can be, when used, as they frequently are, in the service of hierarchical systems. Milton Freedman's free-market economic theory for which he won a Nobel Prize is a prime example of how a narrative of expertise was consciously deployed and cultivated in service of corporate privilege with severely damaging consequences worldwide (Klein). The discourse of utilitarianism has also operated similarly, as in the example of "gradualism" (see chapter three) which was circulated to purposefully diffuse the momentum of both the suffrage and Civil Rights movements. Narrative intersection and

156

integration to support various ideologics offers an endless source for rhetorical analysis, but for my purposes, the relevance of how narratives operate rests in showing how aporetic narratives can work in the service of privilege systems to teach acceptance of a dehumanized and dehumanizing status quo.

As Smith understood, immersion in and performance of dehumanizing privilege systems takes place during childhood when children learn a sense of self. The first epigraph to this chapter refers to the sustenance of ignorance, and one of the primary ways by which we learn to ignore the truly intersubjective nature of the individual is through, as mentioned, the training of the self-contained ego during childhood when the illusion of opposition between the individual and the social is learned and solidified. While that illusion may vary according to nation, ethnicity, and family, hierarchical thinking works to make the boundaries between the individual and the social more pronounced, strengthening the inside/outside dichotomy. In chapter three, I argued that hierarchical intersubjectivity can be seen as a distinct historical phenomenon, the abolition of which can only be glimpsed more than felt. Moving beyond this "zeitgeist" is hampered, however, by its hegemonic positioning (and our "dispositioning").

Sharon Crowley succinctly explains how hegemonic assumptions work: "[h]egemonic discourses construct and inform community experience to such an extent that their assumptions seem natural, 'just the way things are'" (12). The "self-contained" ego exemplifies hegemony as defined by Crowley: "any set of signifiers and practices that achieves a powerful, near-exclusive hold on a

community's beliefs and actions" (63). Hierarchical politics also maintains hegemony through its naturalization of human violence and suffering as intrinsic to the human condition. It is important to remember that hegemonic, as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva explains, "means that domination is achieved more through consent than by coercion" (27 N21). As schemes of perception, hierarchical (privilege) systems predispose individuals to naturalize values and concepts, such as war and capitalist economics that trump other "universal" values, such as life and liberty, with the common sense discourse of human nature. The hegemony of hierarchical thinking is equally invidious in its ability to accommodate narratives and daily praxis that contradict it, including narratives that build self-confidence and a sense of belonging (e.g., self-esteem and expertise) as well as praxes of democracy, empathy, and cooperation.

Eroders of Empathy

The hegemonic positioning of hierarchical thinking is further maintained through the circulation of shame, which as we saw in chapter 3, is a common epistemic production of hierarchical systems and hierarchical thinking, the "pathogen" by which the pandemic of violence is circulated (Gilligan). In *Shame and Guilt*, the authors, June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing, both clinical psychologists who review recent research as well as conduct several clinical studies of their own, explain that, while shame and guilt are both self-directed attributions of blame, shame erodes empathy whereas guilt motivates "other-oriented empathy" and thus other-directed reparation (87): "[R]ather than

158

promoting other-oriented empathic concern, the acute self-focus of shame is likely to foster self-oriented personal distress responses" (83). "When people feel shame over a particular failure or transgression, they are berating themselves not just for the specific event; rather they are damning *themselves*—the core of their being—as flawed, useless, despicable" (92), which again evokes the correlation between shame and the hierarchical learning of self-devaluation of which I have been speaking. This correlation also speaks to the need to broadly cultivate self-respect (c.f. self-esteem) as a foundation for the development of socially-just societies.

Interestingly, guilt operates much differently than shame. Guilt emerges from a focus on a specific behavior rather than the entire self, thereby de-centering the behavior from the self. The separation of behavior from the self, Tangney and Dearing note, most often results in a person considering the effects of his or her behavior on others rather than, as in the case of shame, "others' evaluations of the self" (82). Unlike shame, guilt is other-directed and thus likely leads to empathy, according to the authors. The importance of empathy, they claim, should not be underestimated in moral affairs: "Researchers and clinicians alike would readily agree that the capacity for empathy" not only "facilitates positive, mutually rewarding interpersonal relationships" but also "inhibits aversive destructive behaviors toward others" (89). Empathy, then, is integral to a well functioning society.

Beyond eroding empathy and attention toward the social, shame also engenders other destructive social behaviors, including rage and withdrawal. Tangney and Dearing were surprised to find that, contrary to their hypotheses, shame does not "curb socially unacceptable impulses such as anger and aggression" as was previously assumed (90). Previously, psychological research had assumed that a preoccupation with one's own blame would make "the question of others' blame moot." (91). Recent research, however, demonstrates that blaming others "can serve an ego-protective function" (92). Hence shamed people, especially those who have few or no avenues for developing self-esteem as was discussed in chapter 3 (Gilligan), resort to anger and aggression quickly, developing a "shame-to-anger" response that often projects blame inaccurately upon anyone that the shamed person perceives as disapproving:

> A shamed person is acutely conscious of what other people might be thinking about them. From there, it's a short step to attribute the *cause* of painful feelings to others who are perceived as disapproving…Feeling shamed, feeling diminished in comparison to others, and simultaneously scrutinized and *evaluated* by others…The point is that the phenomenology of shame itself involves a heightened awareness of others' presumed evaluations. (Tangney and Dearing 94)

The shame-to-anger response well illustrates the internalization of hierarchical thinking and the appraisal of human worth upon which it relies. But more to the

point of this chapter, we can see that processes of shame often result in inaccurate externalizations of blame—material manifestations of a denial that protects the ego but inhibits self-reflection and, consequently, self development and self repair. Overall it seems that shame deflects attention away from the collective good and away from ourselves as intersubjective beings.

Withdrawal is likewise an internalized shame-producing strategy that also trains attention away from engagement with others. According to Tangney and Dearing, "Research has consistently shown that feelings of shame are associated with a desire to hide and escape" (92). While withdrawal constitutes an avoidant behavior, as a strategy it is not a very effective option because withdrawal leaves the shamed "saddled with a loathsome self" (Tangney and Dearing 92). Contrasted with externalized blame (manifested via aggression), withdrawal does not enable an individual to deny his or her "badness" (Tangney and Dearing 92). Nevertheless, both strategies erode empathy, detract from interpersonal and intrapersonal well-being, and divert individual attention from reflecting upon individual and self-development, upon who and what we'd like to become. Furthermore, shame further enervates attention toward and motivation to contributing to social well-being because it "evokes such strong feelings of anger and hostility toward the self" that shamed individuals "may feel overwhelmed and paralyzed by it" (Tangney and Dearing 97)

So Where Does This Leave Us?

In short, what I have been arguing as an autistic orientation toward the social (intersubjective) realm leaves individuals alienated from themselves and each other, creating conditions that unfortunately vitiate social awareness and social action. Scholarship on alienation still largely draws upon Melvin Seeman's 1959 article, "On the Meaning of Alienation," in which he lists five classical dimensions of alienation, all of which remain "essential in a wide variety of fields (e.g., in studies of work, health, collective behavior, and political life)" (783): 1) powerlessness (vs. personal mastery) 2) social isolation and loneliness (vs. community) 3) intrinsic engagement in work (vs. extrinsic, self-estranged activity) 4) distrust, meaninglessness, and 5) cultural estrangement (vs. shared values). The list is striking in that it describes much of what is wrong in people's lives. Most individuals have experienced one or more of these at some point in their lives while many experience alienation from others or from their work regularly. Assuming that one accepts the validity of the listed items as indicators of sociality, then alienation remains a prevalent and disturbing social issue. Periodic alienation may, of course, produce occasional psychological and social benefits (e.g., renewed appreciation of one's friend or of one's work), but occasional benefits do not outweigh its costs on the whole. Generally speaking, most individuals are not afforded meaningfulness throughout the domains of their existence. The fact that a lack of meaningfulness (in at least one or several of

162

these five indices) can be attributed to most individuals in the world is an indicator that we live in a sociality that accepts alienation as a given.

Lauren Berlant terms this network of widespread alienation "political depression." Political depression, she writes, "persists in affective judgments of the world's intractability—evidenced in affectlessness, apathy, coolness, cynicism, and so on—modes of what might be called detachment that are really not detached at all but constitute ongoing relations of sociality" (97). At issue, Berlant continues, is "the difficulty of detaching from life-building modalities that can no longer be said to be doing their work" (97). In other words, if I understand Berlant accurately, the sociality that alienation engenders, even for those who are purportedly living "the good life," actually "wears out the subjects who nonetheless, and at the same time, find their conditions of possibility within it" (97). It becomes imperative, then, that we interrogate these modes of alienation as forms of attachment that constrain intersubjective engagement.

The concept of alienation invokes outsider/insider knowledge that, I argued in chapter three, forms the basis of learning to devalue oneself and others that underwrites hierarchical politics and hierarchical thinking. Learning to devalue oneself, I explained, must engender a deep-seated fear, a mistrust of people centered at the core of our intersubjective experience. Although we may have learned to naturalize that fear, depending upon context, naturalization merely obscures a fear that is so deeply learned as to be "forgotten." Brian Massumi defines fear as "the anticipatory reality in the present of a threatening future," a

163

"felt reality of the nonexistent" which, despite being nonexistent is always present (54). I hope to make clear that the always present fear that underwrites and catalyzes hierarchical appraisal represents a real threat to individual and collective well-being, particularly since this fear operates at the level of perception. Recently, the neurophysiologist Joseph LeDoux has found evidence of an appraisal system that sounds much like what I have been talking about. LeDoux has located "a fear circuit in the brain that operates very fast and without awareness" and that is capable of "comput[ing] the affective significance of a stimulus without the organism's being able to recognize what the stimulus is" (35).

Given these circumstances, we must take the fear-based and shame-based system of hierarchical thinking into consideration if we expect to make any significant change in the realm of social justice. I therefore suggest that we heed McIntosh's advice that if we are to redesign social systems, "we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions." This chapter has reviewed some of the unseen dimensions of hierarchical politics and hierarchical thinking: widespread alienation and its many facets and epistemic and affective modalities that enervate social inclination. While tackling such an enormous task is beyond my reach, I can at least point us in a direction to begin. That space of inquiry, as I have hoped to make clear, is intersubjective training, specifically moving away from autistic intersubjectivity (based upon fear) toward a cultivation of intersubjectivity that is not based fear-based. Collectively speaking, however, to

164

cultivate such intersubjective knowledge we must foray into fairly unexplored

terrain throughout the disciplines.

The Role of Rhetoric and Composition

Having drawn from Marxist and sociological discussions of alienation to

promote student engagement (e.g., student-centeredness, mutual recognition, the

construction of non-hostile learning climates), the combined fields of rhetoric and

composition as a whole have insightfully recognized and eagerly taken up the

subject of fostering inclusive and cooperatively-oriented engagement. In fact,

since the "social turn," so many scholars have taken up the subject that it is

impossible to choose a representative sample. While the original focus of

scholarship about fostering engagement may have generally been directed toward

the underprivileged and the traditionally disenfranchised, more recent feminist

work, however, has recognized that student engagement entails more than

opening spaces for those who have been silenced but also entails getting students

from privileged groups to engage with their own privilege, for example white

privilege, hetero-normative privilege, and gender privilege. Queer studies, gender

studies, whiteness studies and even general ethnic studies programs, however, are

often resisted and dismissed by students and the public as unworthy curricula

forwarded by left-leaning ideologues. Nevertheless, many scholars within the

field of rhetoric and composition have attempted to counter this trend.

Resistance to such socially relevant topics, however, reinforces the point

that privilege operates as a rhetorical system that often blinds people to their own

positions of privilege. One's context(s) of privilege is obviously important to an individual's social awareness. For example, hearing people who have lived with (or spent a lot of time with) a deaf person are more likely to perceive their own hearing privilege than do those uninitiated to deafness. The "initiated" have more access to comparison, to witnessing and experiencing the exclusion frequently felt by their deaf companions.

Group-specific privilege is an extremely important topic, yet as I hope to have brought to light in this and preceding chapters, the topic of privilege as an extremely complex system that inhibits social progress deserves and needs much more scholarly attention than it has received, particularly because as an arrangement (disposition), privilege (hierarchical thinking) virtually stifles social invention.

We need, then, to invent. While it may seem strange at first, and while many of us will start out upon what will ultimately turn out to be dead-ends, especially since there is no full-scale non-hierarchical system in place, we must work to un-do hierarchical thinking, which is, as I have been arguing, an internalized episteme that affects and is performed by everyone. Taking up Judith Butler's term "intelligibility," which is "that which is produced as a consequence of recognition according to prevailing social norms" (3), we must figure out how to make non-hierarchical thinking and systems based upon non-hierarchical thinking intelligible.

Postmodern theory has opened the door for work on interconnectivity and more detailed studies of humans as social beings. Brennan claims that "The ego, in turn, at least in part is a vehicle for distorting our place in the scheme of things, and it does this most effectively when we have no idea any longer of what that place is" (157). We may not know "of what that place is" and we may not yet have all of the epistemic tools needed to counter our ignorance, as the epigraph to this chapter by Nancy Tuana indicates. Nevertheless, I hope that discussion of hierarchical thinking and its influence upon contemporary intersubjectivity and intersubjective knowledge-making may direct our attention away from the atomistic self and toward the tremendous importance of the social—particularly the human making of it as well as its inventional potential. Attention to the human social body—as a corporeal collective body—is as yet largely untheorized. Human interconnectivity is, however, theoretically tenable. Like all concepts, it must first be noticed in order to be cultivated and made "intelligible" (Butler). As Brennan once powerfully remarked, "Of that we cannot speak, thereof we must learn" (164).

CHAPTER 5

RHETORICAL IMPLICATIONS: PERSONS INCORPORATED

We saw only—though we could not yet admit it—that our burden, that burden which our fathers had believed to be the "colored races," was our own past, that the heavy weight that lay on our hearts was our own childhood, that the change we felt unable to make was a change in ourselves. —Lillian Smith (*Killers of the Dream* 234)

Community lives on difference, on the touch of difference of other bodies that cannot be assimilated to mine…A politics of exclusion presents a picture of community with which community cannot live. —Rosalyn Disprose qtd. in Bertelsen and Murphie 152)

I would like to imagine that we could approach the social world the way Aristotle did the natural world, believing that the delights of the senses bear witness to our desire to know, and that our desire to know consists in the pleasure of bringing differences to light. —Janet Atwill

Most people with a sense of aesthetic appreciation would agree that difference is a beautiful thing. Apples will never be oranges, nor would it be in our best interest to make them so. Any modern day biologist will attest to the supreme importance of difference (diversity) in the natural world for creating and maintaining healthy and balanced ecosystems. Similarly, difference is a crucial and inescapable element in building and maintaining healthy human societies. Difference is the fly in the ointment whose presence there is necessary and essential to the ointment's healing properties.

Since the 1990's, difference scholars have been urging humanists to reframe difference, to reconfigure it. As Janet Atwill explains, "difference can no longer be the anomaly, the enemy, or the problem to be solved. Difference is the

condition" (212). Despite their understanding that a global perceptual change

must occur if difference as an intrinsic underlying condition of human existence is

to be universally accepted, welcomed, and embraced, difference scholars have not

sufficiently attended to how such a dramatic epistemic shift might be

implemented. What are the most efficacious strategies that we might undertake to

bring about such a dramatic epistemic shift?

This dissertation provides a point of departure from which to begin

answering this question. Difference is an intrinsic and immutable condition of

humanity. If we humans are to overcome obstacles to social equality and justice,

we must not make difference itself an obstacle to overcome, but a thing to be

cherished. I have argued that if the idea of difference is to be perceptually

reconfigured as such, it must first achieve epistemic acceptance by becoming

commonplace. Scholars therefore need to turn their attention away from

difference, which in itself is not the underlying cause of societal problems. How

could difference be the problem if it is a given of the human condition?

Instead of taking up the problem of difference, I have argued that scholars

need to take up the problem of hierarchical thinking, which, as the previous

chapters show, *is* the predominant underlying cause of societal failures.

Hierarchical thinking derails well-intentioned efforts toward a just and equitable

human society at all levels, to say nothing of its deleterious effects on the quality

of human life and the health of environmental ecosystems. As that which

instigates, legitimates, sustains, and perpetuates violence of all sorts and at all

levels (e.g., intrapersonal, institutional), hierarchical thinking is the substructural prime mover of a violent world whose brutal practices and legacy seem too durable and too concatenated to untangle. Taking on the problem of hierarchical thinking as a mode of intervention provides just the means to begin undoing the damage hierarchical thinking has done.

This work has so far demonstrated that hierarchical thinking is a deeply learned and internalized appraisal system based upon the devaluing of self and others (extendable to non-human life as well). Not to be confused with the human propensity to make sense of the world through the ranking of objects, hierarchical thinking relies upon the callous ability to see ourselves and others as "less than" fully human, or less than sentient or feeling (as is most often exhibited where non-human life is concerned). Learned and naturalized by individuals prior to their development of conscious reflection and metacognition, the cross-cultural prevalence of hierarchical thinking described in foregoing chapters indicates that, despite commonplaces that suggest that life is ideologically valorized as sacred in many cultures (via frequent lip-service, literature, and ceremony devoted to the importance of, e.g., democracy, individuality, and/or collective well-being), hierarchical thinking represents an invidious self-generating system that counteracts ideologies that esteem the intrinsic worth of life. Practically speaking, reverence for human dignity and the worth of living beings cannot fit within the parameters of a system that rejects the intrinsic worth of self and other.

Since social justice progress depends upon a conception of life as intrinsically worthy, hierarchical thinking, then, presents the problem space scholars need to take up, and soon. While the preceding chapters demonstrate the value of discussing hierarchical thinking and the need to establishing equity institutionally, for example educationally and economically,[41] this chapter focuses on the rhetorical implications of my project: 1) privilege as a rhetorical construct and 2) the untapped inventional potential of the postmodern understanding of intersubjectivity. A thorough and ongoing examination of these two concepts reveals a significant relationship between hierarchical thinking (i.e., the epistemic reduction of others) and the postmodern understanding of embodiment. This relationship suggests that deliberate collective attention to the problem of hierarchical thinking will provide a mode of intervention that is productive, in the sense that Atwill uses the term, as a means by which we may change "what is" to "what can be otherwise" (173) to create "new versions of the real and valuable" (206).

Privilege as a Rhetorical Construct

Discussed earlier, Lillian Smith's vivid descriptions of Jim Crow serve to show how privilege is a damaging construct that operates fluidly, internalized by all and performed by individuals depending upon situation, much as power or gender operates. For example, Alma, the stern mother of the white male protagonist in *Strange Fruit*, wields power and privilege by reinscribing the mores of southern tradition upon her children (thus exerting a hold over her son's

thoughts and actions even when he is not in her presence). Yet the very same

character, Alma, in another scene abdicates that privilege when cowed by her

husband's harsh criticism of her. As with gender, Smith's characters (both black

and white) are variously beneficiaries and agents of an exploitative social order

while being bound by the constraints of that same order.

Chapter two demonstrated why Smith deserves recognition for articulating

a comprehensive rhetorical theory that alludes to and describes large systems of

privilege of which Jim Crow is merely representational, systems that enable

people to feel intrinsically superior or inferior to others, not merely along the lines

of white superiority, but by any terms of normative judgment. Delineating the

contours of this networked system of privilege provides several rhetorical lessons.

But before I discuss the rhetorical implications of my reading of Smith, I

would like to defend my use of the term "privilege." Zeus Leonardo cautions

against using the term "privilege" in a way that conceals the exploitation of

underclasses by the dominant majority. He writes, "Instead of emphasizing the

process of appropriation, the discourse of [white] privilege centers the discussion

on the advantages that whites receive" ("The Color of Supremacy" 38). "As a

result," he explains, "the theme of privilege obscures the subject of domination, or

the agent of actions, because the situation is described as happening almost

without the knowledge of whites, rather than on the backs of people of color"

("The Color of Supremacy" 38). Admittedly, this project does sketch a politics of

privilege that precedes and exceeds its practitioners and that could, therefore, be critiqued for obscuring the "subject of domination."

My hope, however, in using the concept of privilege is not to minimize the suffering felt around the world but to emphasize it, to show that a world underwritten by hierarchical thinking (whose reliance upon the concept of privilege is key) is a roiling networked disaster. I use the term because this complex network, constituted by the "macro" (hierarchical systems) and the "micro" (individual performance/hierarchical thinking), relies upon the concept of "privilege" to function, I use the term. Additionally, privilege as a rhetorical construct provides the added benefit of conveying a notion of distributed agency that supports a network model of systems of domination. That is, hierarchical politics relies upon the participation and performance of every-body. Virtually everyone is a victim of the colonizing force of hierarchical thinking. Ironically, then, the material and symbolic violence inflicted by becoming hierarchically dispositioned ironically turns the very victims of hierarchical thinking into its perpetrators via narrative immersion.

An additional benefit of seeing privilege as a rhetorical construct is that it conceptually enables rhetoricians and other scholars to capture the intersectionality of critical lenses (e.g., race, nationality, sex, class, ability) as well as its productive power (*dynamis*). Unyoking privilege from group privilege in this fashion does not mitigate the importance of scholarship about group privilege that has been undertaken in critical race theory (CRT) (Hill-Collins, Leonardo),

political philosophy (Alcoff, Young), or education (Kozol, Prendergast) but rather should be seen as an additional theoretical lens that enables a more accurate hermeneutic of individual performance. Depicting privilege as a rhetorical construct permits a vision of performance that is neither over- nor under-determined yet that nonetheless exhibits the effects of narrative immersion, how narratives of privilege (categories of difference) "live through individuals who interpret [them] and operationalize [them] into a set of social practices" (Alcoff 114). Privilege as a rhetorical construct can thus explain variance within an individual, who might adopt normative privilege depending upon context, feelings of agency, and identification. We see such individual variance, for example, in Smith's characters, such as the figure of Alma who was described earlier.

Because a rhetorical perspective of privilege acknowledges both the multiplicity of an individual's group memberships as well as her agency, it also accounts for variance within a group, for instance, why some members of a group might recognize their position(s) of privilege and consciously work to resist the normative force of privilege by interrogating its assumptions and by making the normative position transparent rather than universalized.

Lastly, privilege as a rhetorical construct acknowledges the force of multiple oppressions (categories of difference) and explains the epistemic productions and material practices such overlapping oppressions (or privileges) produce. Un-tethered from group identity, privilege as a rhetorical construct thus offers a means to speak about the articulation of multiple categories of difference

174

(or normative positions) within an individual. It thus does not flatten out the lived feeling that privilege systems generate. Whereas the unearned advantages that come with group-specific privilege (McIntosh) are often spoken about as intangible assets that are separate from the individual who benefits from them, my findings suggest that, just as the accumulation of oppressions is not merely additive (Crenshaw, Lugones), the amalgamation of privilege can be epistemically productive, producing hybrid subjectivities as well.

Hierarchical Thinking as Poesis

Many examples of the productive and mutable nature of hierarchical thinking and hierarchical systems have been discussed in previous chapters, for instance how the outlawing of chattel slavery in the United States prompted an equally brutal, widespread system of convict leasing that lasted until World War II (Blackmon). That perhaps a hundred thousand African Americans were enslaved after slavery was officially abolished in the U.S. (Blackmon) attests to the productive and, maybe more importantly, naturalized nature of hierarchical thinking and the systems it produces. Seeing hierarchical thinking in the productive sense (Atwill), as an interpretive scheme that structures perception and material practices helps to explain its vitality and persistence, as well as humanity's socio-historical legacy of inequity and social stratification that has been around so long, we do not know its origins. The seeming permanence of a violent inequitable world works to engender its hegemonic positioning, according to Pierre Bourdieu, by "inclin[ing] agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is to

175

refuse what is anyway refused and to love the inevitable" (qtd. in Atwill 159). We can see, then, that hierarchical thinking and privilege systems operate plastically and productively, as poesis, making.

Yet, as I argue in the next two sections, while the poesis of hierarchical thinking may be endlessly generative (as humanity's sustained socio-historical "moment" of social stratification, inequity, and violence would suggest), hierarchical thinking "places" us physically (and historically), limiting our intersubjective potential in ways that call in question our understanding of invention, particularly what constitutes "available means" (Aristotle).

"Embodiment of Limits": Marks in a Con Game

As we saw in chapter two, Smith exposes individuals' complicity in perpetuating larger systems of inequity by describing the ways in which exclusionary boundaries are learned by the body, etched and re-etched by individuals daily. Smith shows how privilege and exclusion are learned by rote and ritual to become naturalized performances:

What white southerner of my generation ever stops to think consciously where to go or asks himself it if is right for him to go there! His muscles know where he can go and take him to the front of the streetcar, to the front of the bus, to the big school, to the hospital, to the library, to hotel and restaurant and picture show, into the best that his town has to offer its citizens. These ceremonials in honor of white supremacy, performed from babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles and

176

glands and on into that region where mature ideals rarely find entrance.

(*Killers* 96)

Well ahead of current body and performance scholarship, Smith understands such performances as cultural fictions that nevertheless become corporeal and "real," sedimented and naturalized over time through repeated practice.

The beauty of Smith's work here resides in her ability to highlight how hierarchical systems of injustice (the "macro") rely upon "the micro"—individual performance—for their perpetuation. She helps us see ourselves as marks in a field of play, much as words function in language to cohere meaning. In symbolic systems, meanings are constructed within fields of difference so that, like words, each mark contains no essential meaning, yet collectively agreed upon meanings—often with slight alterity—take up residence in the mark.

While Jacques Derrida reminds us that contexts are unsaturable, an idea pregnant with hope and inventional possibility—"the capacity to be otherwise" (Atwill 175)—Smith's work has urged me to instead reflect upon the "relative stability of the dominant interpretation" (Derrida *Limited* 143), what Atwill refers to as "the embodiment of limits" (160). My project suggests that social and political intransigence (which is underwritten by hierarchical thinking i.e., the ability to reduce and dehumanize ourselves and others)—is not only embedded within our language but is embodied within our very selves, poised to be passed on to the next generation.

We are the marks of a larger symbolic system underwritten by hierarchical thinking and privilege, and as I argued in chapter three, each of us has been constrained by the limitations imposed by our becoming hierarchically disposed. In fact, if we take up the metaphor of cancer that Smith uses for a politics of exclusion, we might say that we are not only diseased, but actually nourishing the disease that debilitates us by way of our learned capacity to dehumanize ourselves and others. Our learned capacity for "symbolic" (read: real) violence, however, circumscribes and constrains our very beings because, as chapter three explicates, hierarchical thinking solidifies boundaries epistemically and ontologically, particularly the boundaries of the self. The perceptual foundations of hierarchical thinking, which are learned by nearly everyone on the planet, are based in fear and loathing of ourselves and others, or put more gently, in learning to perceptually "place" ourselves and others in relation to each other via interpellation, and as a result, we physically become what we are taught— having learned to embody a politics of exclusion, we withdraw from ourselves and others. As we grow up, we learn to "toughen our skin." Drawing upon the work of phenomenologists, Alcoff explains that "it makes more sense to think of the body as, oddly enough, a kind of mind, but one with physical appearance, location, and specific instantiation" (114). If indeed, as I suggest, hierarchical thinking serves as "the mind" of our corporeal selves, then we have learned—at the very deepest levels—to shrink away from intimacy with ourselves and others (and with the natural world). We learn to perform what, Atwill explains, is the

178

most serious injustice, according to Jean-François Lyotard, "the failure to address or to be addressed by the other—a failure that amounts to the refusal of a relationship" (212). In other words, because each of us has internalized hierarchical thinking, each of us is a both victim and perpetrator of this "mind."

The Untapped Inventional Potential of the Postmodern Understanding of Intersubjectivity

A postmodern understanding of intersubjectivity provides us with a means to think about what a differently embodied "mind" might look like, a "mind" that doesn't refuse self-other relationships. While the postmodern critique has theoretically, at least, fully demonstrated the mythic nature of the categorical borders between oneself and others, I want to point out that our perceptual and lived experiences remain modern, not postmodern. Our understanding of the porous nature of human existence is far more intellectual than embodied, and, as scholars, we haven't sufficiently delved into the inventional potential of our understanding that human boundaries are indeed porous.

How do we make those porous boundaries "real," ontologically speaking? I believe Smith understood the need to make our intellectual work corporeal, and I ask readers to imagine what the world would look like were we to stop incorporating—in the truest sense of incorporate as "embody"—embodied practices of exclusion. What would it feel like for people from anywhere and any culture to meet without being constrained by their affective knowledge of being

boundaried?[42] None of us can presently know what that would feel like. It is difficult even to imagine.

I suggest, however, that a good place to begin is to explore our intersubjective potential as social beings who are as capable of embodying the epistemology of porous boundaries as we are of embodying our present practice of strict boundary patrol.

Concluding Discussion: A Way Out of Our Discursive Imprisonment

One of the conclusions of this project concerns how hierarchical thinking, embodied and performed by our very selves, impedes our good efforts to bring about a more socially-just world. I take from this that, as rhetoricians, we must attend to how arrangement constrains invention. Genre studies have shown that meaning is both constrained and enabled by discourse communities, and one of the objectives of this project is to present humans as marks comprising a larger social organism that is having difficulty making the significant strides it needs to for the sake of social justice because each individual has internalized and variously performs privilege (or the lack thereof). Truly different—and better— ways of being and relating are precluded by hierarchical dispositioning, which is why I draw upon the term "disposition" for this project. "Disposition" is the Latinate term for the second canon of rhetoric and refers to arrangement. If we consider humans as embodied texts of multiple discourses, and if we think of rhetoric as not only the study of the known and knowable, but also as the study of the knower, then humans are subject to arrangement, in this case, a hierarchical

180

ordering that shapes the ways in which we interact with ourselves and others. Clearly, intersubjectivity is as much a social construct as is subjectivity. Therefore, intersubjectivity is available for epistemic reframing, and as I have been arguing, it is crucial that we reframe it. This could be a wonderful collective project. I hope to have shown that despite variation in degree, in essence we are all members of a discourse community whose narrative immersion in hierarchical thinking prevents us from establishing a different gestalt (Smith) upon which we might build social systems and epistemologies based upon reciprocal respect (See chapter 3).

My study thus calls into question what we mean by "available means." A vision of a world based upon non-hierarchical thinking necessitates a gestalt that is, as I have argued, currently unknowable to us, so in that sense, knowing what cooperation and community are like within that gestalt is not available to us. We have been truly in-corpora(ted) otherwise.

Yet we do have glimmers of non-hierarchical thinking, for instance, moments of mutually reciprocal respect and feelings of lightness and laughter. Also, many of us can recall childhoods filled with the liberated feeling derived from egalitarian relationships, the tenor of engagement in which we didn't worry about the past, present, or future, yet were alert and capable of responding to new situations as circumstances changed. Our physicality had not been solidified and we had not been fully incorporated into our historical time period. Drawing upon childhood memories of being relaxed and at play conveys an inkling of the

dramatic epistemic shift that would end the socio-historical "moment" that, I contend, remains more intellectual than embodied.

To conclude this project, I would like to leave readers with a brief discussion of a mode of intervention that I believe can provide a path to a more socially just world. I hope to persuade readers that Atwill's discussion of the normalizing force of description, her theory of productive knowledge (technē) and my articulation of a problem space (hierarchical thinking) provide the tools to dismantle the master's house (Lorde).

In "Arts of Virtue and Democracy," Atwill uses Bourdieu's discussion of "theory effect" to explain the coherence of past and present, in other words, the prescriptive force of description. She writes, "'Theory effect' refers to the rhetorical force inherent in any socially authorized account of 'what is'": "[d]escription not only creates the world but also who we are engaging that world" (207-08). Narrative immersion thus shapes who we become and what is possible for us to achieve. I have drawn upon the work of Smith whose emphasis on the impact of individual performativity upon the communal demonstrates why, as Atwill contends, "Description may even be more powerful than prescription in eliciting compliance to limits of behavior and desire" (208). Focusing on how description limits what is available to us as human beings is important because, as I have been arguing, the world as description (i.e., a violence-ridden world), which is underwritten by hierarchical thinking, structures our perception and thus

182

prescribes our reality. In other words, hierarchical thinking dominates the narrative fabric of the real.

When combined with Bourdieu's theory effect, Atwill's theory of productive knowledge (of which rhetoric is a prime example) helps to explain how hierarchical thinking is perpetuated through description. An important aspect of productive knowledge (technē) it that a technē has no end in itself. Rather, as an art, productive knowledge, according to Atwill, "is defined by an act of exchange" because "[a]n art's source of change or motion is always different and always split between producer and user; in other words, neither producer nor user is capable of determining productive knowledge" (175). A technē thus has the potential to influence any and all aspects of a rhetorical situation: user, producer, text, and context. The permutations are endless. Hierarchical thinking thus illustrates how rhetoric epitomizes a productive art. By permeating the weave of the narrative fabric of the real, hierarchical thinking operates as a structuring structure malleable to situational change (e.g. how convict leasing easily replaced chattel slavery. See Blackmon). Because hierarchical thinking can respond to contingency while maintaining its structural force, we can see how hierarchical thinking proscribes the real while simultaneously permitting change within the narrative fabric.

The point here is that change fundamentally operates *within* the narrative fabric. As an example of rhetoric as a technē, hierarchical thinking adjusts

situationally to cultural influence, which, then, creates the semblance of historical and cultural change. Certainly, people's lived experiences (depending upon place) look dramatically different from those a hundred years ago. Such evident change in the narrative fabric (i.e., description) might be taken as sign of significant progress, but my work suggests that we need to ignore such ostensible change. The profound change we need is being thwarted by the narrative hegemony of hierarchical thinking. As a structuring schema that can potentially shape any aspect of a rhetorical situation, hierarchical thinking not only adjusts to new situations but it also generates material, symbolic, and affective behaviors and practices (see chapter 4), making it a prime example of how productive knowledge works. Yet this is not the type of productive knowledge that serves the best interests of humanity and all life. Hierarchical thinking heavily constrains the profound epistemic change that this project calls for and that must be enacted at the level of the underlying substructure of human perception.

We can see the power of this constraint in the commonplace acceptance of human violence. As I mentioned in chapter 1, each of us has been trained and learned to train ourselves to function in an extremely violent world. For instance, we may know that more than a quarter of the children in the United States live in poverty and face hunger, many daily, yet we nevertheless learn how to continue on with our own lives with little or no daily grief over the fact. The consequence of learning to live relatively distress-free in a world of wide scale quotidian suffering, from animal rendering to systematic rape of Congolese women, I hope

184

to have shown, indicates a ubiquitous compliance that goes largely uninterrogated. Whether we like it or not, as an organism of marks, we contribute to the making of the world (poesis). Smith was right—privilege as a rhetorical construct *is* a cancer that affects all of us.

Privilege is not a free-floating signifier that offers absolute freedom to those in privileged positions. Rather, hierarchical thinking, both the engine and the fuel of privilege systems, is a damaging colonizing force that needs to be recognized, at the very least, as being a really bad idea that took hold and flourished. Yes, hierarchical thinking has served pragmatically for purposes of domination and control, but it has proven itself impractical for purposes of establishing social economies that value diversity and equity. More than it does anyone else, hierarchical thinking serves the most privileged—the very top of the hierarchical pyramid, namely, a handful of corporations ("persons," according to the U.S. Supreme Court) that largely determine everything from healthcare, the environment, how children are educated, what we read, how we are entertained and informed to who governs us and how we are governed. Of course, hierarchical thinking simultaneously operates as a colonizing episteme that colonizes not only those who garner corporate profit. As a darkly substantial part of our individual cultural and social construction, hierarchical thinking extensively constrains everyone's perceived needs, desires, thoughts, and behaviors. From any angle, hierarchical thinking exemplifies poesis in the worst possible way.

But poesis as a descriptive, prescriptive, and productive force provides us an exit from this mess. If the poesis of the current world is derived from hierarchical thinking as I have argued, than the cultivation of non-hierarchical thinking—learning to perceive all life as intrinsically worthy—offers us not only the means to rebuild our attenuated empathy but also a foundation and a start in constructing truly new versions of the real. I have drawn upon Smith's attention to the individual because the need to enact change at the level of the individual directs us to understand that systemic change relies upon epistemic change, and epistemic change requires change at the level of each individual body. I elucidate and build upon Smith's work to emphasize the importance of attending to bottom-up processes with at least as much attention as top-down systems currently receive.

So I conclude this project with a look at contemporary educational policy in Finland because it demonstrates how attention to non-hierarchy—or equity— can serve as a structuring structure that bridges the micro and macro and that counters the structuring structure of hierarchical thinking. According to Anu Partanen in "What Americans Keep Ignoring about Finland's School Success," Finland restructured its schooling system in the late 1980's with only one objective: equity for all. Partanen explains that "since the 1980s, the main driver of Finnish education policy has been the idea that every child should have exactly the same opportunity to learn, regardless of family background, income, or geographic location. Education has been seen first and foremost not as a way to

produce star performers, but as an instrument to even out social inequality." So all schooling is free. There are no private institutions, including university, and all students are fed for free and receive free counseling as they wish it. Furthermore, there are no standardized tests throughout the grades (except one national exam that takes place during what would be considered the equivalence of high school in the United States); report cards are individualized by teachers, and there are no accountability rites for teachers. Pasi Sahlberg, director of the Finnish Ministry of Education's Center for International Mobility explains that "There's no word for accountability in Finnish" because "[a]ccountability is something that is left when responsibility has been subtracted."

While the objective of educational reform in Finland was equity, the unanticipated result of the reform was excellence. Since 2000, Partanen informs readers, Finnish students test as well as or better than Chinese and South Korean students. Yet, "compared with the stereotype of the East Asian model—long hours of exhaustive cramming and rote memorization—Finland's success is especially intriguing because Finnish schools assign less homework and engage children in more creative play" (Partanen). Furthermore competition is not valorized, Partanen explains:

> While Americans love to talk about competition, Sahlberg points
> out that nothing makes Finns more uncomfortable. In his book
> Sahlberg quotes a line from Finnish writer named Samuli
> Puronen: "Real winners do not compete." It's hard to think of a

more un-American idea, but when it comes to education, Finland's

success shows that the Finnish attitude might have merits. There

are no lists of best schools or teachers in Finland. The main driver

of education policy is not competition between teachers and

between schools, but cooperation.

Reminiscent of the educational innovations that Smith implemented in her

summer camp (see chapter 2), Finnish educational policy illustrates how the force

of description is a technē, a mode of intervention that theoretically supports a

view of rhetoric as productive knowledge.

Janet Atwill argues that "One of the most important dimensions of ancient

conceptions of technē is its complex relationship to subjectivity," and that the

roots of the verb refer to fabrication, production and construction while the roots

of the noun refer to instrument or tool as that which is both manipulated by

humans and as that which is intrinsic to humans (53-4). Atwill claims that "both

descriptions suggest that technē is inseparable from the subject it enables, and

reciprocally, the intervention enabled by technē redefines the subject" (54).

Equity may have been the goal in Finnish educational policy but excellence was

the unanticipated by-product.

Clearly, the Finnish educational model does not make the comprehensive

descriptive changes that undoing hierarchical thinking would require. For one, the

Finnish model merely provides the first of two conditions that this book has used

as necessary conditions (the right to grow, the right to be different) for the

abolishment of hierarchical thinking. The second condition, the right to be

different, is not addressed in the Finnish model. Without wishing to diminish the

importance of equity to emotional and physical health (see chapter 3 for a

discussion of absolute vs. relative equity), just imagine what might happen were

both conditions implemented! That such significant and productive change was

brought about by minimally satisfying only one condition (the right to grow)

augurs hope for the immense potential for positive change were both conditions to

be implemented and nurtured. If, along with equity, difference itself became

welcomed and embraced at level of perception, the narrative fabric of reality

might indeed shift.

The Finnish model does, however, suggest that Lacan's claim that desire

is constantly deferred needs to be challenged if hierarchical thinking is to be fully

addressed. Clearly, we literally embody and become "what is" since we actualize

(learn, embody, and perform) those narrative structures that structure our

perception. Deferral of desire, then, does not account for embodiment and lived

experience.

Furthermore, the concept of lack both underwrites and serves privilege

systems. If we are to embody truly new ways of being, then it is imperative to

disavow hierarchical thinking and its underlying epistemology, which is based

upon "lack" (Lacan). To do so, we must purposefully provide children conditions

of equity that respect difference so that the dominant epistemic weave of the

narrative fabric shifts from hierarchy to egalitarianism or, in terms of the worth of

189

a life—a shift from reductive interpellation (even in the case of identification, see Fuss) to personhood. As we saw in chapter 3, the logic of identity is based upon a learned and naturalized assessment system in which individuals learn to assess their own and others' self worth based upon normative knowledge. That which sits outside a norm is deemed deficient or inferior and is stigmatized. Conceptually, lack (lack of oneself and lack of the Other) underwrites this assessment system. Assessing ourselves and others from a perspective of lack, clearly teaches fear and invites shame and arrogance, two of the socio-pathogens that drive the epidemic of violence that this work interrogates. The concept of personhood opposes the concept of lack and provides an alternative episteme upon which to base self- and other- assessment. Given that children learn to embody what is via "theory effect" (indeed the "personal is political"), clearly the socialization of children is central to positive social change, as Smith's summer camp and Finnish educational models demonstrate.

Yet the topic of how children are raised continues to be largely ignored, as somewhat of an untouchable subject—at least in the United States—as long as adults don't egregiously transgress certain visible taboos of violence or sexual perversion.[43] As a topic of public debate, the rights of children remain more in the private than public realm (as the lives of women historically did and do in varying degrees, depending upon location). The vital importance of how each of us learned to embody "the social" and "the political" prior to our development of conscious reflection provides all the lessons we need to see precisely *where* we

190

can successfully intervene, and a comprehensive examination of the damage inflicted by hierarchical thinking as well as the rhetorically productive force of description provides the blueprints for *how* we can successfully intervene.

The current state of global civilization prevails upon us to undertake a serious study of the phenomenon of hierarchical thinking immediately, especially since we are living in a time when an international community, it would appear, is increasingly impotent with respect to putting an end to global atrocities and human rights violations. Eventually (and the sooner the better) we must all become consciously and acutely aware of the great harm that hierarchical thinking does to ourselves, our planet, and our potential to become social beings with an embodied sense of responsibility for taking care of each other and our world. To the extent that we do not, we shall never know what kind of world we're missing.

[1](see Kitch for a fascinating examination of the "gendered foundations of racial formation in the United States").

[2] Of course, individuals may willingly collude in unjust systems. Such collusion may range from conscious exploitation advantage to a less conscious performance of advantage. See, for example, Zeus Leonardo's discussion of the latter in "The Myth of White Ignorance."

[3]I use "patriarchal regimes" here as a shorthand for all systems based upon domination in the assumption that gender hierarchy came first. See Kitch for a similar argument.

[4]For example, Smith's fervent belief that the field of psychology was an emerging science whose findings would transform societal ills or her assertion in the chapter's epigraph that the U.S was "the first nation" to embark upon democracy. See Johansen regarding the Iroquois confederacy's democratic precedence and its influence upon the founding of the U.S. constitution.

[5] Lillian and Paula kept their relationship closeted. For discussion of why, see Margaret Rose Gladney, "Personalizing the Political, Politicizing the Personal: Reflections on Editing the Letters of Lillian Smith."

[6] *How am I to Be Heard?*, a collection of Smith's letters with supplementary biographical information from Margaret Rose Gladney, *From the Mountain* (Sugg and White), an anthology of selections from Snelling and Smith's literary journal, and *The Winner Names the Age*, various notable speeches and essays by Smith.

[7] See Margaret Rose Gladney's "A Letter from Lillian Smith" for details about the 1944 bannings of *Strange Fruit* that took place within a couple of months of its publication in Detroit, Boston, and by the U.S. Postal Service. The United State Postal Service lifted the ban after Delano Roosevelt lifted the ban at the request of Eleanor. There was also a "gentlemen's" ban in Detroit and a legal ban in Boston. The Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld the ban. Never overturned, the ban remains on the books today.

[8] I draw here, from Janet Atwill who contrasts "ancient logōn technē tradition" with "the normalizing tendencies of the Western humanist tradition of the liberal arts," arguing that "this ancient rhetoricial tradition was far more concerned with challenging and recalculating standards of value than with protecting" them (2).

[9] As one of my reader's astutely pointed out, "That's Smith's genius—that she didn't distinguish between the psychological and political." Precisely. Smith understood that the "personal is political."

[10] This is Young's term. In this chapter I analyze "hierarchical politics of difference."

[11] As Leslie McCall notes in "The Complexity of Intersectionality," the concept of intersectionality has been recognized as perhaps the most significant contribution to feminist theorizing (1771) since Kimberle Crenshaw introduced the term in "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" in 1989. Crenshaw reviews discrimination suits in which the plaintiffs are groups of black women who lose their cases because discrimination claims are based upon single-axis frameworks of either race or sex. In one case, the court dismisses the black women's claim because the black women neither represent their "sex" (since the white female co-workers claimed to suffer no discrimination) nor their "race" (since black male co-workers also claimed to suffer no discrimination).

[12] In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Young offers a penetrating analysis of how the trope of assimilation "structure[s] privilege and oppression" (164-165). Young writes that "ignoring difference has oppressive consequences in three respects." First, while "the strategy of assimilation aims to bring formerly excluded groups into the mainstream," those groups enter "the game after it has already begun" and thus do not define the standards and rules of the game, which are always "culturally and experientially specific," thereby placing those groups always at a disadvantage. Secondly, "blindness to difference perpetuates cultural imperialism" of the privileged social group, and thirdly, the "denigration of groups that deviate from an allegedly neutral standard often produces an internalized devaluation by members of those groups themselves."

[13] Although Smith's affluent white background suggests that materially, if not theoretically, Smith proceeds from a standpoint of privilege, several scholars have argued that Smith's lesbianism provided her with a non-dominant subject position from which to extrapolate other subordinated subject positions.

 Many scholars, including Brinkmeyer, Lewis, and O'Dell refer to Smith as a lesbian. Gladney's research indicates that, with respect to practice, Smith was bisexual, according to Snelling. It is difficult to attribute "political" lesbianism to Smith who never publically acknowledged the intimate nature of her relationship with Snelling.

[14] Young uses the term "Western," a designation that I discuss later in the chapter.

[15] Disposition is the Latinate term for the second of the five classical Greek "canons" of rhetoric and is most commonly referred to as "arrangement."

[16] While I find the distinction between oppression and domination useful in many contexts and discussions, particularly with respect to the cultivation of cultural

capital and the ability to be heard, I disagree with Young's assertion that "not everyone subject to domination is also oppressed" (38). If oppression refers to constraints on self-development, then, as Lillian Smith's and my works demonstrate, everyone in contemporary societies is indeed oppressed. Each of us is socialized into systems underwritten by hierarchical politics of difference that constrain our self-development with respect to how we perceive and relate to others. Hierarchical thinking structures individuals' intersubjective relationships variously, yet situates everyone within the realm of the nonideal.

[17] See *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* by Naomi Klein for an excellent discussion of the relationship between free-market capitalism and corporate militarism.

[18] A rhetorical view sees power as relational and not fixed.

[19] The necessity of a climate of respect ("the right to be different") for unhindered development ("the right to grow") has long been acknowledged within the fields of education and psychology. Yet discussions concerning social justice commonly take two very different approaches, both of which I briefly review below. Neither approach takes into account the rhetorical (plastic) nature and autopoietic possibilities of humankind.

The first approach, while still common popularly in the guise of "social darwinism," has been discredited in the academy. Social justice from this perspective argues that greed, self-interest at the expense of others, and the devaluing of others via ranked hierarchies is "hardwired" into the human "animal," an inevitable aspect of human nature. In the academy, however, such commonplaces have been challenged, and greed, war, poverty, and even gender, are understood by many to be learned concepts, part of a historical legacy that has permeated human institutions for millennia.

In contrast, a traditional distributive model of justice recognizes the historical dimensions of social inequity and attempts to restore "equilibrium" to this historical inbalance through an equitable distribution of resources and capital. Young, however, explains why such models fail to bring about social justice, and, interestingly, draws upon the same conditions Smith does—"the right to grow and be different"—to explain that distributive models neglect to account for the issue of difference underwriting societal injustice. Young writes that "social justice concerns the degree to which a society contains and supports the institutional conditions necessary for the realization of" the good life, and the good life "can be reduced to two" general values: (1) developing and exercising one's capacities and expressing one's experience… and (2) participating in determining one's action and the conditions of one's action" (37). Fifty years after Smith, Young lists virtually the same conditions for social justice that Smith's does. "The right

194

to grow" involves the free development and exercise of one's capacities, and "the right to be different" concerns having equal participatory access "in deliberation and decisionmaking" (Young 37). Therefore, while a traditional distributive approach rightfully underscores the need to meet the material and social needs of every individual, it nevertheless proves untenable because the equal distribution of capital, even cultural capital offers an impossible and unrealizable ideal that denies the actuality of difference, culturally and individually. As Nancy Fraser puts it, the public sphere cannot "be a space of zero degree culture" (121), an ahistorical space that offers equal participatory access to everyone.

[20] Humans are not alone. Numerous studies indicate that dogs and other mammals recognize when they are being treated unfairly in comparison to the others in their group.

[21] See Sally Kitch's *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States* for a detailed exposé of how Othering was deployed in the U.S. legal system to construct race and was a concerted but imperfect process that took years in the making.

[22] Categorical knowledge, however, does not automatically instantiate the ranking of those categories. Although language categorizes and organizes thought, it does not automatically set those categories in play against each other, nor does it set those categories into a fixed relationship. While taxonomies allow humans to draw similarities and differences among categories, humans have developed them into pre-fixed hierarchies that rank its constituent categories against a norm. Hence, hierarchical thinking. While group difference (among humans) is fundamental to the human condition, hierachically ranking those groups into pre-fixed categories is not. To recognize difference as a fundamental human condition, then, does not automatically render difference itself the problematic at hand, as evidenced by the fact that hierarchical systems based upon the ranking of Others are culturally variable. Historically, for example, skin color did not indicate "race" and ranking of individuals based upon skin color has been clearly shown to be a historical process. See Sally Kitch's *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States* for a detailed exposé of the construction of race in the United States.

[23] Edward Said does acknowledge, however, a shared history, broadly speaking. Writing that "far more than they fight, cultures coexist and interact fruitfully with each other," Said argues that cultures are intertwined and, over history, mingle more than clash (qtd. in Alcoff 97). Whether hierarchical conditioning emerged within cultures or as a result of cross-pollination, I do not know. Probably a combination of both.

[24] Although some readers may argue with the term "thinking" as something that must occur on the conscious level, as a rhetorician, I view decision-making as a

complex undertaking that may occur on several "levels," often involving conscious deliberation but also often involving memory, affect, and emotion.

[25] Although she uses the term "privilege," McIntosh dislikes it, rightfully critiquing its connotations, which are "too positive to fit the conditions and behaviors which 'privilege systems' produces." She writes "privilege confers dominance," and the "kind of privilege that gives license to some people to be, at best, thoughtless and, at worst, murderous should not continue to be referred to as a desirable attribute" even though "widely desired" (68).

[26] In "The Ontology of Whiteness," Zeus Leonardo takes a similar developmental stance with respect to the eradication of racism. Speaking of the value of whiteness studies for white students, Leonardo argues that whites must first face up to their participation in the maintenance of white supremacy—"white racial ownership" (105)—before abolition can take place since "opting out of whiteness is a racial privilege that people of color cannot enact (99).

[27] For example, although chattel slavery was outlawed in the U.S., the enslavement of minority populations has nevertheless continued by morphing, first in the instantiation of "convict leasing" prior to World War II (see Blackmon *Slavery by Another Name*) and contemporarily within the prison-industrial complex (see Alexander *The New Jim Crow*). These examples indicate, as I argue in chapter 5, that hierarchical thinking is malleable and can be construed as a productive art (technē).

[28] See chapter one for a discussion of how hierarchical thinking operates as a colonizing force, which always requires partial assimilation. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva puts it succinctly: "*Hegemonic* means that domination is achieved more through consent than by coercion" (27).

[29] I imagine that narratives of self-esteem are not damaging in themselves, especially when grounded in cultures based upon self-respect. Narratives of self-esteem, however, can unfortunately reinforce hierarchical thinking because it constitutes an overarching framework.

[30] In "The Myth of White Ignorance," Leonardo comments upon these distinctions as particularly useful for those students whose "white racial knowledge seduces [them] to equate these historical forms." He explains that they are quite distinct in that supremacy invokes institutionalization and control of "apparatuses of power" (119).

[31] There are many additional scholars who deserve mention, so the following is by no means a comprehensive list. With respect to child development, see Megan Watkins who theorizes the role of "mutual recognition" in pedagogy and Carol Gilligan whose "ethic of care" reveals the role of gender influence upon moral

development. Regarding affect, see Teresa Brenan on "entrainment," Alison M. Jaggar on the social construction of emotion, and Lawrence Grossberg, Brian Massumi, Robert Solomon in *The Affect Theory Reader*. For a review of cognitive theories of emotion see Jesse J. Prinz's *Gut Reactions*. Posthumanism extends the intersubjective to the non-human. See Cary Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism* for a good overview.

[32] Intersubjective refers not only to the way subjects learn to interact with and interpellate themselves and others but also refers to how subjects learn to imagine sociality and themselves as social beings.

[33] Janet M. Atwill argues for the pleasures difference provides in *Rhetoric Reclaimed*.

[34] In "The Color of Supremacy," Zeus Leonardo insightfully cautions against teaching about those "colossal unseen dimensions," that is, the unearned advantages of whiteness [privilege] in ways that downplay white agency or obscure the subject of domination. The "theme of privilege" is often "described as happening almost without the knowledge of whites," an "image of domination without agents," which "conjures up images of domination happening behind the backs of whites, rather than on the backs of people of color" (38).

[35] In chapter three I used Iris Marion Young's definition of oppression: Oppression is "the institutional constraint on self-development" and domination is "the institutional constraint on self-determination" (37). I argued that " If oppression refers to constraints on self-development, then, as Lillian Smith's and my works demonstrate, everyone in contemporary societies is indeed oppressed. Each of us is socialized into systems underwritten by hierarchical politics of difference that constrain our self-development with respect to how we perceive and relate to others. Hierarchical thinking structures individuals' intersubjective relationships variously, yet situates everyone within the realm of the nonideal" (7n).

[36] Corporal punishment remains legal in 22 states in the U.S.

[37] According to Eileen Boris, "A 1994 conference on Smith's life and work at Georgetown University" revitalized Smith and "marked her arrival as the white woman commentator on whiteness and race" (13N 6).

[38] See critiques of media control and the illusion of a free media in the U.S. by Bill Moyers, Amy Goodman, and Noam Chomsky.

[39] See Brian Massumi's, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat," and Kyle Jensen's, "A Matter of Concern: Kenneth Burke, Phishing, and the Rhetoric of National Security," for illuminating discussions

about how fear is used to maintain a rhetoric of terror to justify rescinding U.S. civil liberties and increasing militarism.

[40] I also imagine that narratives of self-esteem are not damaging in themselves, especially when grounded in cultures based upon self-respect.

[41] For discussions of educational equity, see Kozol, Prendergast, and Sahlberg. For a wonderful critique of the myopic economic vision of traditional capitalistic models, see Manfred Max-Neef's discussion of "barefoot economics."

[42] Boundaries certainly serve important protective functions, particularly in a world in which domination, exploitation, and oppression thrive, and an aspect of maturation is learning how to "be good to oneself" by establishing boundaries. It would seem, however, that if a world gestalt based upon reciprocal respect and the intrinsic worth of life were to exist, the acquisition of self- and other-respect would automatically lead to subjectivities who would already be bounded in such fashion, suffused with an understanding of self-worth.

[43] For example, what constitutes "discipline" remains vague. Many of the students in my classes have fiercely argued for the type of discipline they received as children, for example, being whipped with a belt. In an altogether different vein, many states (e.g.,) still legally permit child farmworkers to work alarming hours. According to a Human Rights Watch report, "Fields of Peril," "child farmworkers risked their safety, health, and education on commercial farms across the United States." According to the author of the report, Zama Coursen-Neff, "The United States spends over $25 million a year — more than all other countries combined — to eliminate child labor abroad, yet is tolerating exploitative child labor in its own backyard…I saw kids as young as 7 picking blueberries. Eight-year-olds shucking peas in Virginia. Children picking strawberries at 9 in North Dakota" (qtd. in Nikolchev) The report, Alexandra Nikolchev explains, "found children as young as 12 legally working more than 10 hours a day."

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