Post-Colonial Feminism

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FYI: Post-Colonial feminism can be used to answer the Fem IR K, this means that a lot of the cards in Fem IR are useful aff answers to this position.

1NC (1/2)

Link - The aff victimizes Eastern women and place Western Feminists as inherently better.

Ansari 8(Usamah, graduate student in Sociology at York University “‘‘Should I Go and Pull Her Burqa Off?’’: Feminist Compulsions, Insider Consent, and a Return to Kandahar” Routledge group pg 51-52)AQB

That **the oppression of women was sold as a central reason for needing to topple the Taliban** (Kolhatkar & Ingalls, 2006) **also reveals that Orientalist imaginations are gendered**. Indeed, the type of developmentalist intervention that Orientalism furthers is often predicated on helping women. **Western feminism has not only been complicit in the Orientalist constitution of the non-Western woman as inherently victimized and in need of help, it has also constructed a Western feminist subject position in contrast to it**. **Western feminism** **has** often **produced a** supposedly **universally analyzable** and monolithic ‘‘**Third World Woman’’** **who is bound to tradition and domesticity** (Mohanty, 1991, p. 80). In contrast, Western women are portrayed as ‘‘educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities’’ (Mohanty, 1991, p. 85). **We see how Orientalist notions of modernity**, autonomy, and liberty **are coded in gendered ways and we can recognize how they invite intervention, as Third World women have ‘‘needs and wants’’ but never solutions**, choices, or agency (Mohanty, 1991, p. 83).

Homogenizations of women are inaccurate and dangerous – women should be described through their localized social interactions.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* p. 340)JM

Descriptive gender differences are transformed into the division between men and women. Women are constituted as a group via dependency relationships vis-a-vis men, who are implicitly held responsible for these relationships. When "women of Africa" as a group (versus "men of Africa" as a group?) are seen as a group precisely because they are generally dependent and oppressed, the analysis of specific historical differences becomes impossible, because reality is always apparently structured by divisions—two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive groups, the victims and the oppressors. Here the sociological is substituted for the biological in order, however, to create the same—a unity of women. Thus, it is not the descriptive potential of gender difference, but the privileged positioning and explanatory potential of gender difference as the origin of oppression that I question. In using "women of Africa" (as an already constituted group of oppressed peoples) as a category of analysis, Cutrufelli denies any historical specificity to the location of women as subordinate, powerful, marginai, central, or otherwise, vis-a-vis particular social and power networks. Women are taken as a unified "Powerless" group prior to the analysis in question. Thus, it is then merely a matter of specifying the context after the fact. "Women" are now placed in the context of the famiiy, or in the workplace, or within religious networks, almost as if these systems existed outside the relations of women with other women, and women with men. The problem with this analytic strategy is that it assumes men and women are already constituted as sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the arena of social relations. Only if we subscribe to this assumption is it possible to undertake analysis which looks at the "effects" of kinship structures, colonialism, organization of labor, etc., on women, who are already defined as a group apparently because of shared dependencies, but ultimately because of their gender. But women are produced through these very relations as well as being implicated in forming these relations. As Michelle Rosaldo states: " . . . woman's place in human social life is not in any direct sense a product of the things she does (or even less, a function of what, biologically, she is) but the meaning her activities acquire through concrete social interactions."" That women mother in a variety of societies is not as significant as the value attached to mothering in these societies. The distinction between the act of mothering and the status attached to it is a very important one—one that needs to be made and analyzed contextually.

1NC (2/2)

Alt – Reject the aff as an act of steping back from imposing Western notions of Feminism in the East allowing regional feminists to initiate local projects which work just as well.

Abu-Lughod 1(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies pg 110)AQB

The dilemmas arc sharp because of this global context. As the Women and Memory Forum, a group in Egypt, puts it, "identify­ing exclusively with the west means rejecting the Arab heritage, **while rejecting the west and cleaving to 'tradition means accept­ing patriarchal structures of subordination and inferiorization**."\* **The solution is to refuse the tradition/Western modernity divide**, but how sophisticated do you have to be to manage this? One strategy seems to be to publish in regional languages as well as English or French, and to **initiate local projects**, **both acad­emic and activist**. The recently established Women and Memory Forum in Egypt holds conferences, publishes a newsletter called *Letters from Memory* (as of the January 1999 issue, in both English and Arabic), and has published a few books in Arabic. The **edi­tors creatively rewrite Arab folktales from "a gender-sensitive perspective," recover the writings and activities of forgotten women from the past** (whether feminists like Malak Hifni Nassef or an eighteenth-century aristocrat who forced the invading French to respect her while standing up for the rights of others), and **rewrite Arab history from a gendered perspective**. Nour, a research and publishing house for work on and by Arab women, has commissioned and published books, including some translations; organized the first Arab women's book fair; and regularly publishes a book review journal by the name *Nour.* The journal, now in its fourteenth issue (with recent special issues devoted to Palestinian and Lebanese women), cover a wide range of books, some in English but most in Arabic, in the social sci­ences and literature. **These organizations are run by academic or professional women** and, like the Women's Studies Programs at universities in Palestine and Yemen, have been partially support­ed by European (especially Dutch) funds, opening them up to occasional suspicion. The work of the New Woman Research Center in Egypt is per­haps more controversial, however, because it concentrates on the problem of violence against women.1" The center's field research has shown how **widespread the problems are; but one can also imagine what uses publicity about this issue might be put to in the wider world, a world already primed to think of the Middle East as a place of violence against women**, especially because of the highly publicized issue of female circumcision. And what accusations will be leveled against these feminists by government authorities and other defenders of Egypt's image?

Link – East/West Split (1/2)

Link – Use of “liberation” as justification for action in the East furthers the East/West divide

Abu-Lughod 2(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others” )AQB

I want now to look more closely at **those Afghan women** Laura Bush **claimed were "rejoicing" at their liberation by the Americans.** This necessitates a discussion of the veil, or the burqa, because it is so central to contemporary concerns about Muslim women. This will set the stage for a discussion of how anthropologists, feminist anthropologists in particular, contend with the problem of difference in a global world. In the conclusion, I will return to **the rhetoric of saving Muslim women** and offer an alternative. **It is common popular knowledge that the ultimate sign of the oppression of Afghan women under the Taliban-and-the-terrorists is that they were forced to wear the burqa**. Liberals sometimes confess their surprise that even though **Afghanistan has been liberated from the Taliban, women do not seem to be throwing off their burqas**. Someone who has worked in Muslim regions must ask why this is so surprising. **Did we expect that once "free" from the Taliban they would go "back" to belly shirts and blue jeans, or dust off their Chanel suits**? **We need to be more sensible about the clothing of "women of cover**," and so there is perhaps a need to make some basic points about veiling. First, it should be recalled that the Taliban did not invent the burqa. It was the local form of covering that Pashtun women in one region wore when they went out. The Pashtun are one of several ethnic groups in Afghanistan and the burqa was one of many forms of covering in the subcontinent and Southwest Asia that has developed as a convention for symbolizing women's modesty or respectability. The burqa, **like** some other forms **of "cover" has, in many settings, marked the symbolic separation of men's and women's spheres, as part of the general association of women with family and home, not with public space where strangers mingled.**

Link – The aff places itself as the savior of other women in the East which reinforces a sense of superiority of the West.

Abu-Lughod 2(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others” )AQB

Let us return, finally, to my title, "**Do Muslim Women Need Saving?**" The discussion of culture, veiling, and how **one can navigate the shoals of** cultural difference should put Laura Bush's **self-congratulation about the rejoicing of Afghan women liberated by American troops in a different light.** It is deeply problematic to construct the Afghan woman as someone in need of saving. When **you save someone, you imply that you are saving her from something. You are also saving her to something**. What **violences are entailed in this transformation**, and what presumptions are being made about the superiority of that to which you are saving her? **Projects of saving other women depend on and reinforce a sense of superiority by Westerners**, a form of arrogance that deserves to be challenged. All one needs to do to appreciate the **patronizing quality of the rhetoric of saving women** is to imagine using it today in the United States about disadvantaged groups such as African American women or working-class women. We now understand them as suffering from structural violence. **We have become politicized about race and class, but not culture**. As anthropologists, feminists, or concerned citizens, we should be wary of taking on the mantles of those 19thcentury Christian missionary women who devoted their lives to saving their Muslim sisters. One of my favorite documents from that period is a collection called Our Moslem Sisters, the proceedings of a conference of women missionaries held in Cairo in 1906 (Van Sommer and Zwemmer 1907). The subtitle of the book is A Cry of Need from the Lands of Darkness Interpreted by Those Who Heard It. Speaking of the ignorance, seclusion, polygamy, and veiling that blighted women's lives across the Muslim world, the missionary women spoke of their responsibility to make these women's voices heard. As the introduction states, "They will never cry for themselves, for they are down under the yoke of centuries of oppression" (Van Sommer and Zwemer 1907:15). "This book," it begins, "with its sad, reiterated story of wrong and oppression is an indictment and an appeal.... It is an appeal to Christian womanhood to right these wrongs and enlighten this darkness by sacrifice and service" (Van Sommer and Zwemer 1907:5).

Link – East/West Split (2/2)

Applying Western Feminist ideals to the East reinforces a system of colonialism and Imperialism.

Abu-Lughod 1(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies pg 106)AQB

In a collection of essays I recently brought together under the title *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (1998), some scholars took up these questions, showing indeed that colonial constructions of women as the locus of Eastern back­wardness shaped anticolonial nationalisms and that feminist pro­jects relied on Western discourses on women's public roles, mar­riage, domesticity, and scientific childrearing. But these essays also explored the selectiveness with which Western ideas and models were appropriated; the significant changes that were introduced when European ideas were translated into local con­texts; and the very ways that middle-class women themselves were able to make positive use of what seemed like new systems of discipline and regulation. Following one of the most produc­tive lines of thought made possible by *Orientalism,* with the divi­sion between East and West (and representation of each) to be understood *not* as a natural geographic or cultural fact but as a product of the political and historical encounter of imperialism, we argued that condemning "feminism" as an inauthentic West­ern import is just as inaccurate as celebrating it as a local or in­digenous project The first position assumes such a thing as cul­tural purity; the second underestimates the formative power of colonialism in the development of the region.

Link – “Liberation”

Link – Use of “liberation” as justification for intervention in the East furthers the East/West divide – Proven when “liberated” Afghan women refused to switch to Western styles of clothing.

Abu-Lughod 2(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others” )AQB

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Let us return, finally, to my title, "**Do Muslim Women Need Saving?**" The discussion of culture, veiling, and how **one can navigate the shoals of** cultural difference should put Laura Bush's **self-congratulation about the rejoicing of Afghan women liberated by American troops in a different light.** It is deeply problematic to construct the Afghan woman as someone in need of saving. When **you save someone, you imply that you are saving her from something. You are also saving her to something**. What **violences are entailed in this transformation**, and what presumptions are being made about the superiority of that to which you are saving her? **Projects of saving other women depend on and reinforce a sense of superiority by Westerners**, a form of arrogance that deserves to be challenged. All one needs to do to appreciate the **patronizing quality of the rhetoric of saving women** is to imagine using it today in the United States about disadvantaged groups such as African American women or working-class women. We now understand them as suffering from structural violence. **We have become politicized about race and class, but not culture**. As anthropologists, feminists, or concerned citizens, we should be wary of taking on the mantles of those 19thcentury Christian missionary women who devoted their lives to saving their Muslim sisters. One of my favorite documents from that period is a collection called Our Moslem Sisters, the proceedings of a conference of women missionaries held in Cairo in 1906 (Van Sommer and Zwemmer 1907). The subtitle of the book is A Cry of Need from the Lands of Darkness Interpreted by Those Who Heard It. Speaking of the ignorance, seclusion, polygamy, and veiling that blighted women's lives across the Muslim world, the missionary women spoke of their responsibility to make these women's voices heard. As the introduction states, "They will never cry for themselves, for they are down under the yoke of centuries of oppression" (Van Sommer and Zwemer 1907:15). "This book," it begins, "with its sad, reiterated story of wrong and oppression is an indictment and an appeal.... It is an appeal to Christian womanhood to right these wrongs and enlighten this darkness by sacrifice and service" (Van Sommer and Zwemer 1907:5).

Link – Projects of Help

Link – Aff implications of projects to help Eastern women produce and solidify Western authority in our education base.

Abu-Lughod 1(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies pg 105)AQB

It must be recalled, however, that Orientalism was not just about representations or stereotypes of the Orient but about how these were linked and integral to projects of domination that were ongoing. This raises an uncomfortable question about all our work of the combating-stereotype sort-and I would include here not just these books but manv others that show how active, practical, powerful, and resourceful (as opposed to passive, silent, and oppressed) Middle Eastern women are or how complex gender relations are, including my own ethnography of the Aw lad 'Ali, Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories, First, we have to ask what Western liberal values we may be unreflectively validating in proving that "Eastern' women have agency, too. Second, and more importantly, we have to remind ourselves that although negative images of women or gender relations in the region are certainly to be deplored, offering positive images or "nondistorted" images will not solve the basic problem posed by Said's analysis of Orientalism. The problem is about the production of knowledge in and for the West As Yegenoglu puts it, following Said's more Foucauldian point, the power of Orientalism comes from its power to construct the very object it speaks about and from its power to produce a regime of truth about the other and thereby establish the identity and the power of the subject that speaks about it" (pp. 90-91). As long as we are writing for the West about "the other," we are implicated in projects that establish Western authority and cultural difference.

Link/Impact – Western Feminism

Western feminism is not just inadequate, it is plan racist – the perspectives of women of color are routinely ignored.

Ebunoluwa 9 (Sotunsa, Head of Department of English and Literary Studies, Babcock University, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1), September, p. 228-229) JM

Although feminism claimed as its goal the emancipation of all women from sexist oppression, it failed to take into consideration the peculiarities of Black females and men of colour. In practice, feminism concentrated on the needs of middle class white women in Britain and America while posing as the movement for the emancipation of women globally. Patricia Collins (1990:7) contends: Even though Black women intellectuals have long expressed a unique feminist consciousness about the intersection of race and class in structuring gender, historically we have not been full participants in white feminist organizations. bell hooks (1998:1,844) also accuses feminism of excluding Blacks from participating fully in the movement, thus she criticizes Betty Freidan’s The Feminine Mystique (1963) because though it is heralded as paving the way for contemporary feminist movement, it is written as if the Black/lower class women did not exist. In hook’s opinion, racism exists in the writings of white feminist, and as a result, female bonding is difficult in the face of ethnic and racial differences.

Link/Impact – Totalization

Western feminists totalize women – this ignores historical specific historical conditions and kills political possibilities. Here’s an example:

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* p. 346-347)JM

Western feminist writings on women in the third world subscribe to a variety of methodologies to demonstrate the universal cross-cultural operation of male dominance and female exploitation. I summarize and critique three such methods below, moving from the most simple to the most complex methodologies. First, proof of universalism is provided through the use of an arithmetic method. The argument goes like this: the more the number of women who wear the veil, the more universal is the sexual segregation and control of women.^" Similarly, a large number of different, fragmented examples from a variety of countries also apparently add up to a universal fact. For instance, Muslim women in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, India and Egypt ail wear some sort of a veil. Hence, this indicates that the sexual control of women is a universal fact in those countries in which the women are veiled.^' Fran Hosken writes "Rape, forced prostitution, polygamy, genital mutilation, pornography, the beating of girls and women, purdah (segregation of women) are all violations of basic human rights" ("FGM," p. 15). By equating purdah with rape, domestic violence and forced prostitution Hosken asserts its "sexual control" function as the primary explanation for purdah, whatever the context. The institution of purdah is thus denied any cuitural and historical specificity and contradictions and potentially subversive aspects of the institution are totally ruled out. In both these examples, the problem is not in asserting that the practice of wearing a veil is widespread. This assertion can be made on the basis of numbers. It is a descriptive generalization. However, it is the analytic leap from the practice of veiling to an assertion of its general significance in controlling women that must be questioned. While there may be a physical similarity in the veils worn by women in Saudi Arabia and Iran, the specific meaning attached to this practice varies according to the cultural and ideological context. For example, as is well known, Iranian middle class women veiled themselves during the 1979 revolution to indicate solidarity with their veiled working class sisters, while in contemporary Iran, mandatory Islamic laws dictate that all Iranian women wear veils. While in both these instances, similar reasons might be offered for the veil (opposition to the Shah and Western cultural colonization in the first case, and the true Islamicization of Iran in the second), the concrete meanings attached to Iranian women wearing the veil are clearly different in both historical contexts. In the first case, wearing the veil is both an oppositional and revolutionary gesture on the part of Iranian middle class women; in the second case it is a coercive. Institutional mandate.'^ Only through such context-specific differentiated analysis does feminist theorizing and practice acquire significance. It is on the basis of such analyses that effective political strategies can be generated. To assume that the mere practice of veiling women in a number of Muslim countries indicates the universal oppression of women through sexual segregation would not only be analytically and theoretically reductive, but also prove quite useless when it comes to political strategizing.

Link/Impact – Pity

Western discourse on the plight of third world women is politically motivated and homogenize women to mask larger violence.

Ayotte and Hussein 5 (Kevin J., Prof in the Department of Communication at the California State U, and Mary E., lecturer in the Department of Communication at the California State U, *Feminist Formations*, 17(3), p. 116-118) JM

There seems to be considerable agreement that the burqa, the heavy garment that covers the entirety of a woman’s body with only a narrow mesh screen for vision, has become the universal symbol of women’s oppression in Afghanistan (Kensinger 2003, 2; Abu-Lughod 2002, 785). In the context of the Taliban’s harsh imposition of the mandatory burqa for all Afghan women, where the smallest deviation in dress was often met with public violence, such symbolism is easy to understand. It has been well documented that women in Afghanistan have been beaten simply for accidentally letting an inch of skin show (United Nations 2000, 7; Amnesty International 1999; Physicians for Human Rights 1998, 52). Of course, the Taliban’s overwhelming misogyny neither began nor ended with the imposition of the burqa, and the wide range of oppressive policies that the Taliban infl icted upon women has certainly been discussed in the U.S. news media. Yet in many cases, representations of the burqa have come to stand in for all of the other violence done to Afghan women by an either visual or linguistic synecdoche. It is not only the rhetoric of “the veil” that is signifi cant in U.S. discourses about Afghan women but also the position of the speaking subject.3 Especially problematic is the ventriloquism of Afghan women by discourses speaking for (both “on behalf of” and “in place of”) them. For example, Vicki Mabrey reported on CBS’s 60 Minutes II that, “for the women of Afghanistan, the veil, the burqa, has become the symbol of the Taliban’s power” (“Unveiled” 2001). Of course, in one sense this may very well be perfectly accurate, and the point of identifying this moment is not to suggest that U.S. women (or men) should not speak of other peoples’ oppression. The key is to maintain a constantly refl exive skepticism toward the adequacy of our own (U.S.) representations of the “plight” of third-world women. Although Mabrey does interview women from Afghanistan, we must recall that “Huma,” “Sonia,” and the others interviewed in the news program are always already ventriloquized by the media narrative. Even if their accounts could be unproblematically interpreted as immediate and generalizable refl ections of reality, that discourse has already been edited, prompted by certain lines of questioning, i.e., mediated. This is not to suggest that the women’s stories are false, but rather that even their indigenous narratives are infl ected by their representation in an inevitably Western discourse (Spivak 1999, 49). In writing primarily of the U.S. appropriation of the third world through representations of Afghan women, it would be a mistake to suppose that the criticism articulated here can adequately represent the essential content either of “the West” or of the subject position occupied by Afghan women. As Spivak urges, the imperative “is to fi x the critical glance not specifi cally at the putative identity of the two poles in a binary opposition, but at the hidden ethico-political agenda that drives the differentiation between the two” (1999, 331–2). Thus, while our primary concern is to deconstruct the agenda driving particular representations of Afghan women, we must also acknowledge the need for a simultaneous deconstruction of our decision to identify the particular poles in the binary critiqued by our own discourse. The last section of this essay will therefore make explicit that, in seeking to make visible the rhetorical operation of U.S. discourses about Afghan women, there is indeed a political agenda implied by our identifi cation of the fi rst/third worlds problematic in representations of the burqa. As we will see in the next section, the greater danger arises when such agendas are masked as pure benevolence. Postcolonial feminists have long recognized that paternalistic Western representations of third world women in need of saving by white Europeans are not benign (Mohanty 1991b, 72). Although the West’s appropriation and construction of the third-world Muslim woman is not a new phenomenon, in the aftermath of 9/11 the circulation of images of veiled females reached epic proportions. U.S. media quickly capitalized on the veil as a visual and linguistic signifi er of Afghan women’s oppression. Burqa-clad fi gures, potent political symbols of the “evil” of the Taliban, were suddenly everywhere.

Impact – Feminism

Western feminism’s racism fragments feminism, dooming progress.

Ebunoluwa 9 (Sotunsa, Head of Department of English and Literary Studies, Babcock University, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1), September, p. 229-230) JM

Overarching, Womanism as an alternative theory is distinguished by its focus on the Black female experience with writings detailing racial issues, classist issues and sexist issues with a cautionary notice via bell hooks (1998:1,845) who insists that:Racism abounds in the writings of white feminists; reinforcing white supremacy and negating the possibility that women will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries. To womanist writers, racial and classist oppression are inseparable from sexist oppression. Many womanist writers even portray racial and classist oppression as having precedence over sexist oppression. This is because the womanists believe that the emancipation of Black women folk cannot be achieved apart from the emancipation of the whole race. Womanists therefore believe in partnership with their men folk. This characteristic distinguishes womanism from feminism which is mainly a separatist ideology.

Feminism’s divisive nature fragments coalition building, stunting real change.

Ebunoluwa 9 (Sotunsa, Head of Department of English and Literary Studies, Babcock University, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1), September, p. 231) JM

In this regard we can look attempts to posit a theory that is indigenously African in gender discourse rooted in the peculiar experiences of the African female in Africa as suggested via Motherism presented by C.O. Acholonlu and Stiwanism presented by Omolara Ogundipe- Leslie. Fist, in her book Motherism (1995), Acholonu posits the concept of Motherisrn as an African alternative to feminism focused on the centrality of motherhood in the African female experience; and second Omolara Oqundipe-Leslie (1994:1) proposes Stiwanism which she defines as ‘social transformation including women of Africa’ and says she: “… wanted to stress the fact that what we want in Africa is social transformation. It is not about warring with men, the reversal of role, or doing to men whatever women think that men have been doing for centuries, but it is trying to build a harmonious society. The transformation of African society is the responsibility of both men and women and it is also in their interest. The new word describes what similarly minded women and myself would like to see in Africa. The word “feminism” itself’ seems to be a kind of red rag to the bull of African men. Some say the word by its very nature is hegemonic or implicitly so. Others find the focus on women in themselves somehow threatening ... Some who are genuinely concerned with ameliorating women’s lives sometimes feel embarrassed to be described as ‘feminist’ unless they are particularly strong in character.

Feminism homogenizes women, rendering them powerless.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* p. 337-338)JM

By women as a category of analysis, I am referring to the critical assumption that all of us of the same gender, across classes and cultures, are somehow socially constituted as a homogeneous group identified prior to the process of analysis. This is an assumption which characterizes much feminist discourse. The homogeneity of women as a group is produced not on the basis of biological essentials, but rather on the basis of secondary sociological and anthropological universals. Thus, for instance, in any given piece of feminist analysis, women are characterized as a singular group on the basis of a shared oppression. What binds women together is a sociological notion of the "sameness" of their oppression. It is at this point that an elision takes place between "women" as a discursively con- structed group and "women" as material subjects of their own history. Thus, the discursively consensual homogeneity of "women" as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reaiity of groups of women. This resuits in an assumption of women as an always-already constituted group, one which has been labelled "powerless," "exploited," "sexually harrassed," etc., by feminist scientific, economic, legal and sociological discourses. (Notice that this is quite similar to sexist discourse labeling women weak, emotional, having math anxiety, etc.) The focus is not on uncovering the material and ideological specificities that constitute a particular group of women as "powerless" in a particular context. It is rather on finding a variety of cases of "powerless" groups of women to prove the general point that women as a group are powerless.

Impact – Us/Them Dichotomy (1/2)

Western discourse on the third world is ethnocentric and reinforces us/them dichotomies.

Ayotte and Hussein 5 (Kevin J., Prof in the Department of Communication at the California State U, and Mary E., lecturer in the Department of Communication at the California State U, *Feminist Formations*, 17(3), p. 120) JM

Second, the distinction between “liberated” U.S. women and “unenlightened” Afghan women is often amplifi ed by ethnocentric criticisms of a homogenized Islam. For example, one Time article entitled “The Women of Islam” implied that the oppressions it described in some countries are intrinsic to Islam, a notion emphasized by the subtitle “nowhere in the Muslim world are women treated as equals” (Beyer 2001, 50). Here, despite the article’s overt attempt to describe the diversity of Islamic practices among Malaysia, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Kashmir, there is still a discursive commitment to the religious and geographic homogeneity of Islam in the language of a “Muslim world.” The infi nite differences among these countries melt away as they become fi xed in the space of a separate Islamic “world” to which they are assigned. At the same time, the religious diversity within each of the countries named in the article vanishes as the label of Islam comes to exhaust the meaning of religion under those signifi ers.6 The ethnocentrism inherent in the idea of a “Muslim world” can be discerned when one contemplates the likely outcry that would follow the identifi cation of Euro-America as a “Christian world.” The neocolonial notion of Islam as a marginal Other to the West is particularly evident in the fact that “the women of Islam” are all portrayed as Middle Eastern or Asian, despite the enormous and growing Muslim population in North America and Europe. Once again, the signifi er “Islam” undergoes an Orientalist transformation into one pole of a binary opposition, the signifi ed “non-Western.”

Western feminism creates hierarchized dichotomies between women of different countries.

Wood 1 (Cynthia, prof of interdisciplinary studies at Appalachian State U, *Nepantla: Views From South*, 2(3), p. 431-432)JM

Calls for autonomous, democratic development policies empowering women and emphasizing the variety of their experiences preceded Mohanty’s critique of representations of third world women in the gender and development literature (e.g., Sen and Grown 1987, 18-19). However, academics and development practitioners exploring the implications of postcolonial and poststructuralist feminist theories are particularly preoccupied with the deconstruction of development discourse based on homogenizing visions of third-world-women-as-victims and first-worldwomen- as-experts (Marchand and Parpart 1995, 17). Combined with a general rejection of top-down approaches to development, these criticisms have led to widespread acknowledgment in development circles of third world women’s diversity, their privileged knowledge of the circumstances facing them, and their right and ability to work for changes they perceive to be necessary. The transformations of development theory and practice required by these acknowledgments are seemingly distilled in the demand that academics and practitioners must listen to the previously silenced voices of third world women. Marianne Marchand argues, for example, that scholarly analyses of women’s movements in Latin America confirm Mohanty’s perspective by establishing a hierarchized dichotomy between “modern” first world feminists and Latin American women who are traditional even in their activism. In order to challenge the dominance of first world women in development theory and policy, she contends that we must “create discursive spaces which will allow the voices of Latin American and other Third World women to be heard” (Marchand 1995, 64–65). In particular, she suggests that life histories in the form of testimonies such as Elvia Alvarado’s in Don’t Be Afraid, Gringo, Señora Aurora’s in Por amor y coraje, and Rigoberta Menchú’s in I, Rigoberta Menchú are one way (probably the only way) that “Third World women with little formal education can actively participate in the production of knowledge about Gender and Development” (58, 71). These testimonies reveal “a goldmine of information, ideas, and knowledge” about such issues (70).

Impact – Us/Them Dichotomy (1/2)

Feminism reinforces the status quo and generates dangerous hierarchies.

Wood 1 (Cynthia, prof of interdisciplinary studies at Appalachian State U, *Nepantla: Views From South*, 2(3), p. 433-434)JM

The result of listening to “previously silenced voices” in this context is to replace the vision of third-world-woman-as-victim with the no less essentialist vision of third-world-woman-as-authentic-heroine, a woman who is close to the earth, self-aware, self-critical, nurturing of culture, community, and family. This vision has been lurking on the edges of the gender and development literature for some time, of course. Gita Sen and Caren Grown dedicate their book Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women’s Perspectives (1987) to “the poor and oppressed women of the world whose anonymous struggles are the building blocks of a new society” and suggest that “when we start from the perspective of poor third world women, we give a much needed reorientation to development analysis” (18). Other empowerment approaches, such as the ecofeminism of Vandana Shiva, “have a tendency to lapse into a romantic, essentializing vision . . . in their effort to valorize poor Third World women” (Chowdhry 1995, 38; see also Agarwal 1992). Postmodern and postcolonial approaches to gender and development may also participate in the creation of this romantic vision, but more subtly. In general, this literature asserts the validity and importance of arguments that the theory and practice of development are based on (neo)colonial representations of third world women, then insist on a rejection of these stereotypes and an acknowledgment of women’s diversity. However, so much insistence that the view of third world women as traditional, irrational, and uneducated is unfounded implies that the opposite is true. This is reinforced when the only examples of “diversity” used to counter essentializing and homogenizing (neo)colonial representations are those of women who are articulate, political, and active, as in Marchand’s discussion of third world women’s testimony. In effect, even as representations based on oppositions between first and third world women are rejected, the hierarchies simultaneously asserted by these oppositions—that traditional, uneducated, and irrational is inferior to active, political, and articulate—are not. This may be framed in terms showing the successes women have had in getting past these (their?) impediments: “Despite her lack of education, so-and-so became a leader and organized women to victory in such-andsuch a place.”

Impact – Colonization

Through discursive practices, western feminism has homogenized and colonized third world women.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, p. 334)JM

The relationship between "Woman"—a cultural and ideological composite Other constructed through diverse representational discourses (scientific, literary, juridical, linguistic, cinematic, etc.)—and "women"—reai, material subjects of their collective histories—is one of the central questions the practice of feminist scholarship seeks to address. This connection between women as historical subjects and the re-presentation of Woman produced by hegemonic discourses is not a relation of direct identity, or a relation of correspondence or simple implication.\* It is an arbitrary relation set up by particular cultures. I would like to suggest that the feminist writings I analyze here discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular "Third World Woman"—an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, but never- theless carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse.' I argue that assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality on the one hand, and inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of Western scholarship on the "third world" in the context of a world system dominated by the West on the other, characterize a sizable extent of Western feminist work on women in the third world. An analysis of "sexual difference" in the form of a cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance leads to the construction of a similarly reductive and homogeneous notion of what I call the "Third World Difference"—that stable, ahistorical something that apparently oppresses most if not all the women in these countries. And it is in the production of this "Third World Difference" that Western feminisms appropriate and "colonize" the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes in these countries. It is in this process of homogenization and systemitization of the oppression of women in the third world that power is exercised in much of recent Western feminist discourse, and this power needs to be defined and named.

Impact – Co-Option

Impact – Always assuming “liberated” women will change their live style to that of their liberator encourages people to abandon their morals and social traditions. Co-ops people into Western Values.

Abu-Lughod 2(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others” )AQB

The obvious question that follows is this: **If this were the case, why would women suddenly become immodest**? Why would they suddenly throw off the markers of their respectability, markers, whether burqas or other forms of **cover**, which **were supposed to assure their protection in the public sphere from the harassment of strange men by symbolically signaling to all that they were still in the inviolable space of their homes, even though moving in the public realm**? Especially when these are forms of dress that had become so conventional that most women gave little thought to their meaning. To draw some analogies, none of them perfect, why are we surprised that Afghan women do not throw off their burqas when we know perfectly well that it would not be appropriate to wear shorts to the opera? At the time these discussions of Afghan women's burqas were raging, a friend of mine was chided by her husband for suggesting she wanted to wear a pantsuit to a fancy wedding: "You know you don't wear pants to a WASP wedding," he reminded her. New Yorkers know that the beautifully coiffed Hasidic women, who look so fashionable next to their dour husbands in black coats and hats, are wearing wigs. This is because **religious belief and community standards of propriety require the covering of the hair**. They also alter boutique fashions to include high necks and long sleeves. As anthropologists know perfectly well, **people wear the appropriate form of dress for their social communities and are guided by socially shared standards, religious beliefs, and moral ideals, unless they deliberately transgress to make a point or are unable to afford proper cover**. If we think that U.S. women live in a world of choice regarding clothing, all we need to do is remind ourselves of the expression, "the tyranny of fashion."

Impact – Progress

Feminism disempowers women by portraying them as weak and defenseless and men as strong and aggressive.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, p. 337-338)JM

Fran Hosken,'' in writing about the relationship between human rights and female genital mutilation in Africa and the Middle East, bases her whole discussion/condemnation of genital mutilation on one privileged premise; the goal of genital mutilation is "to mutilate the sexual pleasure and satisfaction of woman" ("FGM," p. 11). This, in turn, leads her to claim that women's sexuality is controlled, as is their reproductive potential. According to Hosken, "male sexual politics" in Africa and around the world "share the same political goal: to assure female dependence and subservience by any and all means" ("FGM," p. 14). Physical vioience against women (rape, sexual assault, excision, infibulation, etc.) is thus carried out "with an astonishing consensus among men in the world" ("FGM," p. 14). Here, women are defined consistently as the victims of male control—the "sexually oppressed." Although it is true that the potential of male violence against women circumscribes and elucidates their social position to a certain extent, defining women as archetypal victims freezes them into "objects-who-defend themselves," men into "subjects-who-perpetrate-violence," and (every) society into powerless (read: women) and powerful (read: men) groups of people. Male violence must be theorized and interpreted within specific societies, both in order to understand it better, as well as in order to effectively organize to change it.'\* Sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender; it must be forged in concrete, historical and political practice and analysis.

Impact – Gender Inequality

Feminism presumes a totalizing stable category of women – this reinforces gender inequality.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* p. 344)JM

What is problematical, then, about this kind of use of "women" as a group, as a stable category of analysis, is that it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination. Instead of analytically demonstrating the production of women as socio-economic political groups within particular local contexts, this move limits the definition of the female subject to gender identity, completely bypassing social class and ethnic identities. What characterizes women as a group is their gender (sociologically not necessarily biologically defined) over and above everything else, indicating a monolithic notion of sexual difference. Because women are thus constituted as a coherent group, sexual difference becomes coterminus with female subordination, and power is automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (read: men), and people who do not (read: women). Men exploit, women are exploited. As suggested above, such simplistic formulations are both reductive and ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions. All they do is reinforce binary divisions between men and women.

Impact – Imperialism

Impact – Expansion of East/West split allows unchecked imperialism in these regions.

Abu-Lughod 1(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies pg 106)AQB

One central question is whether **local feminisms,** especially those of the early decades of this century, **should be considered "indige­nous" or imported, liberating or disciplinary**. This debate has con­sequences for current discussions about what kind of feminism is appropriate for the Middle East. In a collection of essays I recently brought together under the title *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (1998), some scholars took up these questions, showing indeed that **colonial constructions of women as the locus of Eastern back­wardness shaped anticolonial nationalisms and that feminist pro­jects relied on Western discourses on women's public roles, mar­riage, domesticity, and scientific childrearing**. But these essays also explored the selectiveness with which Western ideas and models were appropriated; the significant changes that were introduced when European ideas were translated into local con­texts; and the very ways that middle-class women themselves were able to make positive use of what seemed like new systems of discipline and regulation. Following one of the most produc­tive lines of thought made possible by *Orientalism,* with **the divi­sion between East and West** (and representation of each) to be **understood not as a natural geographic or cultural fact but as a product of the political and historical encounter of imperialism,** we argued that condemning "feminism" as an inauthentic West­ern import is just as inaccurate as celebrating it as a local or in­digenous project The first position assumes such a thing as cul­tural purity; the second **underestimates the formative power of colonialism in the development of the region.**

Impact – Progress

Western feminist theory fails – universal proclamations end effective resistance to a whole host of “isms”.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, p. 347-348)JM

Second, concepts like reproduction, the sexual division of labor, the family, marriage, household, patriarchy, etc., are often used without their specification in local cultural and historical contexts. These concepts are used by feminists in providing explanations for women's subordination, apparently assuming their universal applicability. For instance, how is it possible to refer to "the" sexual division of labor when the content of this division changes radically from one environment to the next, and from one historical juncture to another? At its most abstract level, it is the fact of the differential assignation of tasks according to sex that is significant; however, this is quite different from the meaning or value that the content of this sexual division of labor assumes in different contexts. In most cases the assigning of tasks on the basis of sex has an ideological origin. There is no question that a claim such as "women are concentrated in service-oriented occupations in a large number of countries around the world" is descriptively valid. Descriptively, then, perhaps the existence of a similar sexual division of labor (where women work in 347 service occupations like nursing, social work, etc., and men in other kinds of occupations) in a variety of different countries can be asserted. However, the concept of the "sexual division of labor" is more than just a descriptive category, it indicates the differential value placed on "men's work" versus "women's work." Often the mere existence of a sexual division of lab is taken to be proof of the oppression of women in various societies. This results from a confusion between the descriptive and explanatory potential of the concept of the sexual division of labor. Superficially similar situations may have radically different, historically specific explanations, and cannot be treated as identical. For instance, the rise of female-headed households in middle class America might be construed as greater independence and feminist progress, whereby women are considered to have chosen to be single parents (there are increasing numbers of lesbian mothers, etc.). However, the recent increase in female-headed households in Latin America where women might be seen to have more decision-making power, is concentrated among the poorest strata, where life choices are the most constrained economically." A similar argument can be made for the rise of female-headed families among Black and Chicana women in the U.S. The positive correlation between this and the level of poverty among women of color and White working ciass women in the U.S. has now even acquired a name: the feminization of poverty. Thus, while it is possible to state that there is a rise in female-headed households in the U.S. and in Latin America, this rise cannot be discussed as a universal indicator of women's independence, nor can it be discussed as a universal indicator of women's impoverishment. The meaning and explanation for the rise obviously varies according to the socio-historical context. Similarly, the existence of a sexual division of labor in most contexts cannot be sufficient explanation for the universal subjugation of women in the work force. That the sexual division of labor does indicate a devaluation of women's work must be shown through analysis of particular local contexts. In addition, devaluation of women must also be shown through careful analysis. Concepts like the sexual division of labor can be useful only if they are generated through local, contextual analyses." If such concepts are assumed to be universally applicable, the resultant homogenization of class, race, religious, cultural and historical specificities of the lives of women in the third world can create a false sense of the commonality of oppressions, interests and struggles between and amongst women globaliy. Beyond sisterhood there is still racism, colonialism and imperialism!

Impact – Resistance

Homogenization produces binary power relations which doom effective resistance.

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, p. 346-347)JM

What does this imply about the structure and functioning of power relations? The setting up of the commonality of third world women's struggles across classes and cultures against a general notion of oppression (primarily the group in power—i.e., men) necessitates the assumption of what Michel Foucault calls the "juridico-discursive" model of power,'\* the principle features of which are: "a negative relation" (limit and lack); an "insistence on the rule" (which forms a binary system); a "cycle of prohibition"; the "logic of censorship"; and a "uniformity" of the apparatus functioning at different levels. Feminist discourse on the third world which assumes a homogeneous category—or group—called women necessarily operates through the setting up of originary power divisions. Power relations are structured in terms of a source of power and a cumulative reaction to power. Opposition is a generalized phenomenon created as a response to power—which, in turn, is possessed by certain groups of people. The major problem with such a definition of power is that it locks all revolutionary struggles into binary structures—possessing power versus being powerless. Women are powerless, unified groups. If the struggle for a just society is seen in terms of the move from powerless to powerful for women as a group, and this is the implication in feminist discourse which structures sexual difference in terms of the division between the sexes, then the new society would be structurally identical to the existing organization of power relations, constituting itself as a simple inversion of what exists. If relations of domination and exploitation are defined in terms of binary divisions—groups which dominate and groups which are dominated—surely the implication is that the accession to power of women as a group is sufficient to dismantle the existing organization of relations? But women as a group are not in some sense essentially superior or infallible. The crux of the problem lies in that initial assumption of women as a homogeneous group or category ("the oppressed"), a familiar assumption in Western radical and liberal feminisms.''

Impact – Slayer

Western feminism reproduces colonialism –

Mohanty 84 (Chandra, women's studies department chair at Syracuse University, *Under Western Eyes:*

*Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* p. 351-352)JM

What happens when this assumption of "women as an oppressed group" is situated in the context of Western feminist writing about third world women? It is here that I locate the colonialist move. By focusing on the representation of women in the third world, and what I refered to earlier as Western feminisms' seif-presentation in the same context, it seems evident that Western feminists alone become the true "subjects" of this counter-history. Third world women, on the other hand, never rise above their generality and their "object" status. While radical and liberal feminist assumptions of women as a sex ciass might elucidate (however inadequately) the autonomy of particular women's struggles in the West, the application of the notion of women as a homogeneous category to women in the third world colonizes and appropriates the pluralities of the simultaneous location of different groups of women in social class and ethnic frameworks. Similarly, many Zed Press authors, who ground themselves in the basic analytic strategies of traditional Marxism also implicitly create a "unity" of women by substituting "women's activity" for "labor" as the primary theoretical determinant of women's situation. Here again, women are constituted as a coherent group not on the basis of "natural" qualities or needs, but on the basis of the sociological "unity" of their role in domestic production and wage labor." In other words. Western feminist discourse, by assuming women as a coherent, already constituted group which is placed in kinship, legal and other structures, defines third world women as subjects outside of social relations, instead of looking at the way women are constituted as women through these very structures. Legal, economic, religious, and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by Western standards, it is here that ethnocentric universality comes into play. When these structures are defined as "underdeveloped" or "developing" and women are placed within these structures, an implicit image of the "average third world woman" is produced. This is the transformation of the (implicitly Western) "oppressed woman" into the "oppressed third world woman." While the category of "oppressed woman" is generated through an exclusive focus on gender difference, "the oppressed third world woman" category has an additional attribute—the "third world difference!" The "third world difference" includes a paternalistic attitude towards women in the third world."' Since discussions of the various themes I identified earlier (e.g., kinship, education, religion, etc.) are conducted in the context of the relative "underdevelopment" of the third world (which is nothing less than unjustifiably confusing development with the separate path taken by the West in its development, as well as ignoring the directionality of the first-third world power relationship), third world women as a group or category are automatically and necessarily defined as: religious (read "not progressive"), family-oriented (read "traditional"), legal minors (read "they-are-still-not-conscious-of-theirrights"), illiterate (read "ignorant"), domestic (read "backward") and sometimes revolutionary (read "their-country-is-in-a-state-of-war-they-must- fight!"). This is how the "third world difference" is produced. When the category of "sexually oppressed women" is located within particular systems in the third world which are defined on a scale which is normed through Eurocentric assumptions, not only are third world women defined in a particular way prior to their entry into social relations, but since no connections are made between first and third world power shifts, it reinforces the assumption that people in the third world just have not evolved to the extent that the West has. This mode of feminist analysis, by homogenizing and systematizing the experiences of different groups of women in these countries, erases all marginal and resistant modes of experiences. It is significant that none of the texts I reviewed in the Zed Press series focuses on lesbian politics or the politics of ethnic and religious marginal groups in third world women's groups. Resistance can thus only be defined as cumulatively reactive, not as something inherent in the operation of power. If power, as Michel Foucault has argued recently, can really be understood only in the context of resistance," this misconceptualization of power is both analytically as well as strategically problematical. It limits theoretical analysis as well as reinforcing Western cultural imperialism. For in the context of a first/third world balance of power, feminist analyses which perpetrate and sustain the hegemony of the idea of the superiority of the West produce a corresponding set of universal images of the "third world woman," images like the veiled woman, the powerful mother, the chaste virgin, the obedient wife, etc. These images exist in universal, ahistorical splendor, setting in motion a colonialist discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding and maintaining existing first/third world connections.

Alt – Alt Solves Turkey

Alt Solves Turkey – Empirical proof that when given space regional projects can foster a unified sense of feminism.

Abu-Lughod 1(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies pg 111)AQB

The problems faced by feminists in various countries of the Middle East vary because such groups work in such different political contexts, both internally and vis-a-vis the West. For example, feminists in Turkey have similarly taken up the question of violence against women, opening the Purple Roof Women's Shelter in Istanbul, and a similar one in Ankara, along with taking on less controversial projects such as founding the Women's Library and Information Center. Each national context is config­ured differently. Turkish feminists are subject to less criticism in the name of Turkey's image abroad, instead they must confront not just the growing presence of Islamists (whom they, as secular­ists, find threatening) but also the challenge they represent to the state which, based on Kemalist ideology and reforms, sees itself as having solved "the woman question" long ago. In Iran under the Islamic Republic, feminism in its various guises and ex­pressed through various media, including a number of women's journals, faces vet other alignments and minefields.

Alt– Womanism

Alternative is womanism – its distinct methodology recognizes the plurality of oppression.

Ebunoluwa 9 (Sotunsa, Head of Department of English and Literary Studies, Babcock University, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1), September, p. 230) JM

Therefore, Womanism differs from feminism because it recognizes the triple oppression of Black women wherein racial, classist and sexist oppression is identified and fought against by womanists, as opposed to the feminism main concern with sexist oppression. Womanism thus makes it clear that the needs of the Black women differ from those of their white counterparts, and by recognizing and accepting male participation in the struggle for emancipation it again differs from feminism in its methodology of ending female oppression. And unquestionably, Womanism is rooted in Black culture which accounts for the centrality of family, community and motherhood in its discourse and as an ideology has extending beyond the frontiers of Black America to being embraced by many women in and from Africa, and in other parts of world.

Masculine Epistemology Bad

Knowledge is not value free – view their impacts as suspect as men control the epistemological means of production.

Smit 2 (Patricia, writer for Agenda Feminist Media, *More Than One Way of ‘Seeing’ The World*, No. 54, p. 108) JM

Knowledge is seen as objective and value free (Harding, 1991a; Stanley, 1997; Jackson and Jones, 1998; Mbilinyi, 1992). The assumption is that knowledge makers put nothing of themselves into its production; they only look at facts obtained through rigorous mechanical investigations. They use 'proper' scientific criteria. This is a very clinical process that supposedly produces a very 'pure' product. This also assumes a universal viewpoint of the world. Men, and particularly white heterosexual men, are still the principal producers of knowledge. There are changes - various other people are now contributing to knowledge production, but not in the same proportions as their representation in society. Knowledge produced in and from a masculine framework dominated and continues to dominate the academe, and it was in this framework that I received my theoretical foundation. Feminism made me aware of my passive role in this process; I was a 'receiver' of knowledge rather than taking an active role by contributing to the process. I could not identify with the knowledge so 'received' because I could not recognise anything of myself, or the groups to which I belong, in this knowledge. I therefore became a silent participant in the greater academic project. Marrying my lived experience with feminism, however, taught me that continuous interaction takes place between human beings and their environments, that experiences are rooted in the environment, and that experiences cannot be detached from social and other conditions. I came to the understanding that human beings are complex, 'whole' beings carrying this 'wholeness' and therefore social, historical, economic plots, everywhere.

Discourse Shapes Reality (1/2)

Essentialized representations of third world as powerless have material effects on the world.

Wood 1 (Cynthia, prof of interdisciplinary studies at Appalachian State U, *Nepantla: Views From South*, 2(3), p. 430-431)JM

Representations of women in development theory and practice have been a particular focus of postcolonial and postmodern feminist critics.2 According to Chandra Mohanty, much of the literature on women and development "discursively colonize[s] the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world" and thereby "produces the image of an ‘average third world woman'" who is the object of development (Mohanty 1991, 53, 56; see also Ong 1988). This homogenization is problematic in itself; without acknowledgment of women's diversity, universal principles of gender and development can be and are applied uncritically across region, culture, class, and ethnicity. Beyond the problem of homogenization, however, is the one of how women are homogenized. The average third world woman defined in the women and development literature, Mohanty argues, has very specific attributes that are presented as essential to her character: she is ignorant, irrational, poor, uneducated, traditional, passive, and sexually oppressed (see Mohanty 1991, 56, 72). So defined, the third world woman cannot be anything but a victim—of a similarly homogenized third world man, of universal sexism, of globalization, and of history. The essentialist characterization of the third-world-woman-as-victim serves simultaneously to define the first world woman as liberated, rational, and competent (Mohanty 1991, 56). In the context of development theory and practice, first world women appear as academic specialists on [End Page 430] gender and development or as development practitioners at international agencies and NGOs. Mohanty suggests that the third world woman is constructed as essentially "other" to a similarly essentialized and homogenized first world woman. As Aihwa Ong (1988, 85, 87) points out, since "non-western women are what we are not," the passive and ignorant figure of the third world woman points to the cultural and intellectual superiority of the first world development expert. Construction of the third world woman as Other and victim thus functions to authorize the role of the first world academic and development practitioner as her savior. Since the third world woman cannot save herself from the forces that oppress her, the development expert must save her. Because the third world woman is irrational, ignorant, and uneducated, it is not only unnecessary for the development expert to consult her about the process of development, it would be a mistake to do so. As she is "identical and interchangeable" (Ong 1988, 85) with every other third world woman in the ways that matter for development, knowing one woman, what she needs, and how to fulfill those needs, is sufficient for the development expert to know and develop all other third world women. These representations of third world women in the field of gender and development supplement what Anna Tsing (1993, 172) describes as the "invocation of the narrative of progress and development" to justify why and how development is "done," particularly to women. The power of such representations cannot be overstated. Between 1967 and 1996, the World Bank alone either implemented or approved eight hundred projects with some "gender-related action," and this is in addition to "the gender content of selected sector work" (Murphy 1995, xi, 1; 1997, 1). To the degree that the ideology of "third-world-woman-as-victim" dominates development discourse, it enacts the romantic (post)colonial drama, as Gayatri Spivak (1999, 284) suggests, of "white [wo]men saving brown women from brown men."

Discourse Shapes Reality (1/2)

Our discourse has empirically shaped our understanding of women in the third world.

Ayotte and Hussein 5 (Kevin J., Prof in the Department of Communication at the California State U, and Mary E., lecturer in the Department of Communication at the California State U, *Feminist Formations*, 17(3), p. 128) JM

The expansion of “security” in feminist international relations beyond the confi nes of realist defi nitions of nation-state interest was a prerequisite for taking seriously the myriad gendered practices that oppress both women and men throughout the world. The neocolonialism in many Western representations of third-world women demonstrates the extraordinary power of discourse to shape our understanding of the world. As has been argued in this essay, the epistemic violence infl icted on Afghan women through the U.S. appropriation and homogenization of covering practices makes possible (and more likely) the continuation of physical and structural violence against women in Afghanistan. The argument at hand has sought to identify the irreducible diversity of women’s lived experience “against the grain of ‘public’ or hegemonic history” in order to challenge dominant political discourses that have elided Afghan women’s agency as subjects (Mohanty 1991a, 38–9). Of course, counter-memory cannot nostalgically long for some lost “truth” of women’s experience, but it can add texture to the always already woven tapestry that is the discursive representation of women.

\*\*AFF\*\*Aff - Perm Solvency (1/2)

Perm – Use the aff as a way to shift our focus and allows us to focus on discourse of “coalition” instead of “salvation”.

Abu-Lughod 2(Lila, professor of anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University “Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others” )AQB

Could we not leave veils and vocations of saving others behind and instead train our sights on ways to make the world a more just place? The reason respect for difference should not be confused with cultural relativism is that it does not preclude asking how we, living in this privileged and powerful part of the world, might examine our own responsibilities for the situations in which others in distant places have found themselves. We do not stand outside the world, looking out over this sea of poor benighted people, living under the shadow-or veil-of oppressive cultures; we are part of that world. Islamic movements themselves have arisen in a world shaped by the intense engagements of Western powers in Middle Eastern lives. A more productive approach, it seems to me, is to ask how we might contribute to making the world a more just place. A world not organized around strategic military and economic demands; a place where certain kinds of forces and values that we may still consider important could have an appeal and where there is the peace necessary for discussions, debates, and transformations to occur within communities. We need to ask ourselves what kinds of world conditions we could contribute to making such that popular desires will not be over determined by an overwhelming sense of helplessness in the face of forms of global injustice. Where we seek to be active in the affairs of distant places, can we do so in the spirit of support for those within those communities whose goals are to make women's (and men's) lives better (as Walley has argued in relation to practices of genital cutting in Africa, [1997])? Can we use a more egalitarian language of alliances, coalitions, and solidarity, instead of salvation? Even RAWA, the now celebrated Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, which was so instrumental in bringing to U.S. women's attention the excesses of the Taliban, has opposed the U.S. bombing from the beginning. They do not see in it Afghan women's salvation but increased hardship and loss. They have long called for disarmament and for peacekeeping forces. Spokespersons point out the dangers of confusing governments with people, the Taliban with innocent Afghans who will be most harmed. They consistently remind audiences to take a close look at the ways policies are being organized around oil interests, the arms industry, and the international drug trade. They are not obsessed with the veil, even though they are the most radical feminists working for a secular democratic Afghanistan. Unfortunately, only their messages about the excesses of the Taliban have been heard, even though their criticisms of those in power in Afghanistan have included previous regimes. A first step in hearing their wider message is to break with the language of alien cultures, whether to understand or eliminate them. Missionary work and colonial feminism belong in the past. Our task is to critically explore what we might do to help create a world in which those poor Afghan women, for whom "the hearts of those in the civilized world break," can have safety and decent lives.

The permutation is possible – feminists working together solves.

Muthoni 2k (Wanjira, African feminist activist and former lecturer at Nairobi University, in an interview with Susan Arndt, writer for the Chicago Journals, *Signs*, 25(3), Spring, p. 721-722) JM

WM: In my opinion, names are not all that important. What is important is what we do, is the work we are doing. So, depending on the group I am working with, I could say this is feminist work, or African-womanist work, or community work, or whatever. The name emphasizes the way I look at things. But what is more important than the names we choose-- Westernfe minism, Africanf eminism, whatever-is what we are doing and the goal that we are aiming at. I think what is more important is the work and then to look for common ground. We have to find out the common issues. In yesterday's lecture, for instance, there was the question of this story of forceps delivery. I think we could have had a very interesting debate. This comes from a Western country and in Africa not all women have access to a forceps delivery, whereas in the West every woman has access to it. From here, we could have started a common debate - a debate even on those issues. There is a way of reaching consensus on some points and then saying: OK, these are the problems. You concentrate on this, because maybe that is what you specialize in, and you concentrate on, maybe, the economic issue, and you concentrate on the political issue. You know, it is very important that all of us concentrate on our areas of expertise. That is why I do not find that there is a problem.

Aff – Perm Solvency (2/2)

Perm solves best – we can combine third world and western approaches to prevent a better theory that doesn’t result in fragmentation.

Arndt 2k (Susan, writer for the Chicago Journals, *Signs*, 25(3), Spring, p. 720-721) JM

SA: What both of you have written and said has enriched me a lot. Above all, my feminist horizon has been broadened. But still, I want to challenge you. To my mind, there is not "the feminism." Feminism is heterogeneous. Its plurality makes me speak of feminisms. But there is a kind of smallest common denominator of all feminisms. I would describe feminism as the worldview and way of life of women and men who, as individuals, groups, or organizations, actively oppose social structures responsible for discrimination against and oppression of women on the basis of their biological and social gender. Feminists not only recognize the mechanisms of oppression, they also aim at overcoming them. Changes are envisaged in three vital areas: First, social discrimination against women must be ended. Second, gender-specific roles in the family, and with them the oppression and disadvantaging of women in the familial sphere, must be overcome. Third, an amendment of unwholesome individual and collective conceptions of manhood and womanhood is to be striven for. I think that this basic definition may be applied to the African context, too. Ultimately, it even harmonizes with the central idea ofwomanism, doesn't it? I do not want to deny that, due to cultural, economic, and social differences, globally, there are many variations on this feminist theme, that there are culturally specific differences and varieties of feminism. African feminism is one such variety. There is no doubt that, when transferred to the African context, the general understanding of feminism must be modified, since the nature of official discrimination, discrimination within family structures, and discriminatory gender conceptions is defined differently for each given African society. However, is it really inevitable that this specificity results in separatism as is suggested by the concept of African womanism? To my mind, it does not seem helpful to answer the ignorance and cultural imperialism of many Western feminists with the creation of a new term and the foundation of a completely separate or even separatist movement, while leaving feminism undertheorized as it is. For it does nothing to change the "gender- and Western-centeredness" of most white Western feminisms, which poses a serious threat to the survival of the world's feminisms. Moreover, if we have several separated movements, then in a way we weaken our power as women who are concerned with challenging prevailing gender relationships and who aim at an improvement of the situation of women all over the world. Hence, in my opinion it is prudent to lead a discussion among various kinds of feminists in order to redefine it, rather than to split the women's movement by changing the terminology. Another argument against separatism is that once started it is difficult to confine it. This comes already to light with the fact that African women have developed purely African counterconcepts to feminism, while African-American women have proposed womanist concepts for all black women. Similarly, within Africa you have differences, too. Ultimately, South African feminism differs from Nigerian feminism; and the feminism of Igbo and Yoruba women in Southern Nigeria differ from those in the north of Nigeria and so on. To my mind, the apparently endless possibility of founding autonomous groups already shows that ultimately separatism is no solution for anything. Is it really necessary to introduce a new gendercommitted emancipatory concept?

Aff – Discourse Fails

Critique grounded in discourse fails – it can’t undermine larger power structures.

Brown 1(Wendy, prof Political Science UC Berkeley, *Politics Out of History*, p. 35-37)JM

But here the problem goes well beyond superficiality of political analysis or compensatory gestures in the face of felt impotence. A moralistic, gestural politics often inadvertently becomes a regressive politics. Moralizing condemnation of the National Endowment for the Arts for not funding politically radical art, of the U.S. military or the White House for not embracing open homosexuality or sanctioning gay marriage, or even of the National Institutes of Health for not treating as a political priority the lives of HIV target populations (gay men, prostitutes, and drug addicts) conveys at best naive political expectations and at worst, patently confused ones. For this condemnation implicitly figures the state (and other mainstream institutions) as if it did not have specific political and economic investments, as if it were not the codification of various dominant social powers, but was, rather, a momentarily misguided parent who forgot her promise to treat all her children the same way. These expressions of moralistic outrage implicitly cast the state as if it were or could be a deeply democratic and nonviolent institution; conversely, it renders radical art, radical social movements, and various fringe populations as if they were not potentially subversive, representing a significant political challenge to the norms of the regime, but rather were benign entities and populations entirely appropriate for the state to equally protect, fund, and promote. Here, moralism’s objection to politics as a domain of power and history rather than principle is not simply irritating: it results in a troubling and confused political stance. It misleads about the nature of power, the state, and capitalism; it misleads about the nature of oppressive social forces, and about the scope of the project of transformation required by serious ambitions for justice. Such obfuscation is not the aim of the moralists but falls within that more general package of displaced effects consequent to a felt yet unacknowledged impotence. It signals disavowed despair over the prospects for more far-reaching transformations.

Reality creates language, not the other way around.

Fram-Cohen 85 (Michelle, M.A in Comparative Literature at the State U of New York in Binghamton, [enlightenment.supersaturated.com/essays/text/michelleframcohen//possibilityoftranslation.html] AD: 6/28/10)JM

Nida did not provide the philosophical basis of the view that the external world is the common source of all languages. Such a basis can be found in the philosophy of Objectivism, originated by Ayn Rand. Objectivism, as its name implies, upholds the objectivity of reality. This means that reality is independent of consciousness, consciousness being the means of perceiving ?reality, not of creating it. Rand defines language as "a code of visual-auditory symbols that denote concepts." (15) These symbols are the written or spoken words of any language. Concepts are defined as the "mental integration of two or more units possessing the same distinguishing characteristic(s), with their particular measurements omitted." (16) This means that concepts are abstractions of units perceived in reality. Since words denote concepts, words are the symbols of such abstractions; words are the means of representing concepts in a language. Since reality provides the data from which we abstract and form concepts, reality is the source of all words--and of all languages. The very existence of translation demonstrates this fact. If there was no objective reality, there could be no similar concepts expressed in different verbal symbols. There could be no similarity between the content of different languages, and so, no translation. Translation is the transfer of conceptual knowledge from one language into another. It is the transfer of one set of symbols denoting concepts into another set of symbols denoting the same concepts. This process is possible because concepts have specific referents in reality. Even if a certain word and the concept it designates exist in one language but not in another, the referent this word and concept stand for nevertheless exists in reality, and can be referred to in translation by a descriptive phrase or neologism. Language is a means describing reality, and as such can and should expand to include newly discovered or innovated objects in reality. The revival of the ancient Hebrew language in the late 19th Century demonstrated the dependence of language on outward reality. Those who wanted to use Hebrew had to innovate an enormous number of words in order to describe the new objects that did not confront the ancient Hebrew speakers. On the other hand, those objects that existed 2000 years ago could be referred to by the same words. Ancient Hebrew could not by itself provide a sufficient image of modern reality for modern users.