6 The problem of explaining violence in the social sciences

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The papers presented in this volume raise a number of issues: does violence enter into the cultural construction of personhood in distinctive ways for women and men, and if so, how; is violence between the sexes instrumental in converting gender difference into gender hierarchy; are we to understand violence as a universal feature of male/female relations or should we be looking instead to the culturally specific forms which violence takes; is sexuality itself something which is inherently violent? When it comes to considering these and other related issues, we need to examine, of course, the theoretical and methodological tools available to us. The sociological, psychological and criminological theories about the origins and causes of interpersonal violence have been summarized elsewhere, and I do not have the space to review all these theories here, nor am I qualified to do so. Instead, I wish to work from two starting points. One is that in spite of a great mass of writing, research, and speculation, the concept of violence in the social sciences still seems remarkably undertheorized. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the causes of violence are clearly multiple and cannot be explained using a single set of determinants. From an anthropological perspective, there is an obvious need to integrate the sociological and psychological theories of interpersonal violence with theories about meaning, representation and symbolism.

A second starting point is the way in which discourses about sexuality and gender construct women and men as different sorts of persons. One very obvious example of this in many western cultures is the way that male sexuality and persons of the male gender are portrayed as active, aggressive, thrusting and powerful; while female sexuality and persons of the female gender are seen as essentially passive, powerless, submissive and receptive. The interesting fact about such constructions is that they have only the most tangential relation to the behaviours, qualities, attributes and self-images of individual women and men. Discourses about gender are

powerful precisely because, amongst other things, they engender women and men as persons who are defined by difference.

I should say that when I speak of women and men as different sorts of person, I have two interrelated, but very specific things in mind. First, I am not speaking of the differences between women and men which result from biology, and most particularly, I am not referring to those differences which according to various folk theories – including respectable ones like sociobiology – are thought to result from the naturalized differences imputed to biological difference, such as differences in levels of aggression, nurturance, propensity for emotion and so on. It follows therefore that I am not referring to the differences which can be said to exist between women and men as a result of socialization, which as a process so often works to miraculously reproduce those very naturalized differences whose origins the folklorists locate in biological difference. Thus, male children, in many societies, are encouraged to be more assertive, more aggressive, more thrusting and more powerful. I am instead talking of the differences which exist between women and men as a result of the workings of signification and discourse, the discursive effects which produce gender difference and which, therefore, produce the symbolic or culturally constructed category woman as different from that of man. Gender difference is not merely, however, an effect of signification or language. This brings me to the second sort of thing I have in mind when I speak of women and men as different sorts of person.

If we accept the idea that the concept of person is only intelligible with reference to a culturally specific set of categories, discourses and practices, then we have to acknowledge the different ways in which the categories woman and man, and the discourses which employ those categories, are involved in the production and reproduction of notions of personhood and agency. We have to recognize in addition the ways in which the categories, discourses and practices of gender are involved in the production and reproduction of engendered subjects who use them to produce both representations and self-representations, as part of the process of constructing themselves as persons and agents. It is for this reason that the symbolic categories woman and man, and the difference inscribed within and between them, have something to do with the representations, self-representations and day-to-day practices of individual women and men. It follows therefore that we need some way of theorizing how individuals become engendered subjects; that is, how they come to have representations of themselves as women and men, come to make representations of others, and come to organize their social practices in such a way as to reproduce dominant categories, discourses and practices. However, the interpellation

of individuals as subjects within particular discourses and discursive practices is never fully determined and is always open to challenge and resistance. This means that any theory must account both for the reproduction of dominant categories and discourses, and for instances of non-reproduction, resistance and change. In order to theorize how persons become engendered subjects, we need, of course, a theory of the subject, and we need a theory which will allow us to construct the links between representation, power, knowledge and subject. I want to argue in this paper that without such a theory of the subject we will be unable to respond adequately to questions concerning the interrelations of gender difference, gender hierarchy, violence and sexuality.

One of the most difficult sets of processes or relationships to grasp when it comes to a discussion of the construction of engendered subjects is how the social representations of gender affect the subjective constructions of gender, and how the subjective representation or self-representation of gender affects its social construction. In any functionalist theory in the social sciences, including, of course, certain Marxist theories, this relationship is unproblematic because social representations simply determine subjective representations of gender which, in turn, reproduce the social representations. Apart from the impossibility of imagining how change comes about in this tidy circle of production and reproduction, there is the added difficulty that this is not actually an accurate description of the relationship between social and subjective representations of gender. In order to work towards some kind of accurate description of this relationship we need to maintain both an emphasis on meaning and signification, and an emphasis on practices and their effects.

THEORIZING THE ENGENDERED SUBJECT

Before going on to say something about the relationship between gender, violence, and sexuality, it is necessary to try and say something about how we might construct a theory of the subject which would allow us to look at the relationship between gender, violence, and sexuality, and to try and say something about what that subject would look like or what sort of a subject it might be.

Since the 1960s, work done by various scholars in a variety of disciplines has been concerned to undermine the western concept of the transcendental, unified, rational subject of Enlightenment thinking: Lacan's work in psychoanalysis, Barthes's semiotics, Derrida's work on deconstruction and Foucault's investigation into the historical production of knowledge and discourse – to mention only the more famous male figures. One of the cumulative effects of this type of work in the social

sciences has been that it has forced us to question whether such concepts as the 'individual' and 'society' can stand as pre-givens around which we structure our questions, or whether they have to be regarded as the effects of discourses and practices which require analytical specification (see, for example, Strathern 1988).

There is clearly a relation between the concept of the individual in the social sciences and a specific material entity, but what has to be explained is how and why that physical entity is constructed in its specificity through particular discourses, and how that specificity is anchored to social practices. Using this kind of approach, it is a relatively straightforward matter, as others have so convincingly argued, to trace the historical genealogy of the western concept of the unified, rational subject – which is identified with or corresponds to an individual agent – and show it to be a specific historical and cultural construction, rather than a description of a fixed and pre-given entity in the world. Thus, the facticity and naturalness of the western concept of the post-Enlightenment subject is an imaginary facticity. It is only one way of representing and understanding the subject and subjectivity. The resulting conclusion is that subjects are not therefore pre-given entities which exist in the world, but effects of social discourses and social practices which have to be specified.

The post-structuralist concept of the subject which has emerged from this debate is quite different from the unified, transcendental subject which it seeks to deconstruct. The basic premise of post-structuralist thinking on the subject is that discursive practices provide subject positions, and individuals take up a variety of subject positions within different discourses. Amongst other things, this means that a single subject can no longer be equated with a single individual. Individuals are multiply constituted subjects, and they can, and do, take up multiple subject positions within a range of discourses and social practices. Some of these subject positions will be contradictory and will conflict with each other. Thus, the subject in post-structuralist thinking is composed of, or exists as, a set of multiple and contradictory positionings and subjectivities. What holds these multiple subjectivities together so that they constitute agents in the world are such things as the subjective experience of identity, the physical fact of being an embodied subject, and the historical continuity of the subject which means that past subject positions tend to overdetermine present subject positions. The notion of the subject as the site of multiple and potentially contradictory subjectivities is a very useful one. If subjectivity is seen as singular, fixed and coherent, it becomes very difficult to explain how it is that individuals constitute their sense of self – their self-representations as subjects – through several, often mutually contradictory subject positions, rather than through one singular subject position.

Anthropology as a discipline has been slow to recognize the potential of this approach to the study of subjectivity and, in particular, to the study of gender and gender identity. The symbolic analysis of gender in anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s emphasized that gender systems were culturally constructed and therefore variable. This meant, paradoxically, that this important research stressed inter-cultural at the expense of intra-cultural variation. The implication was that since all cultures defined, constructed and enacted gender in specific ways, each culture had its own distinctive gender system. However, recent work in anthropology has demonstrated that cultures do not have a single model of gender or a single gender system, but rather a multiplicity of discourses on gender which can vary both contextually and biographically (Sanday and Goodenough 1990; Strathern 1987). These different discourses on gender are frequently contradictory and conflicting. Anthropology, therefore, has begun to move away from a simplistic model of a single gender system into which individuals must be socialized, towards a more complex understanding of the way in which individuals come to take up gendered subject positions through engagement with multiple discourses on gender. This move has enabled researchers to focus on processes of failure, resistance and change in the acquisition of gender identity, as well as instances of compliance, acceptance and investment. An emphasis on resistance and failure – that is, on the partiality of the effects of discourse – helps to explain the evident disparity between the range of discourses on gender which exist in any particular context and the actual self-representations of individual women and men as engendered subjects.

It seems clear that individuals do constitute their self-representations as engendered subjects through several different subject positions on gender. It is equally certain that, at different times, most individuals will be asked to act out a variety of these subject positions and will have, therefore, to construct themselves and their social practices in terms of a competing set of discourses about what it is to be a woman or a man. These competing notions are not just ideas, because as discourses they have both material and social force. Thus, the enactment of subject positions based on gender provides the conditions for the experience of gender and of gender difference, even as those positions may be resisted or rejected.

> Many women acknowledge the feeling of being a different person in different social situations which call for different qualities and modes of femininity. The range of ways of being a woman open to each of us at a particular time is extremely wide but we know or feel we ought to know what is expected of us in particular situations – in romantic encounters, when we are pandering to the boss, when we are dealing with children or posing for fashion photographers. We may embrace these ways of being, these subject positions whole-heartedly, we may reject them outright or we may offer resistance while complying to the letter with what is expected of us. Yet even when we resist a particular subject position and the mode of subjectivity which it brings with it, we do so from the position of an alternative social definition of femininity.
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> (Weedon, 1987: 86)

The experience of gender, of being an engendered subject, is given meaning in discourse and in the practices which those discourses inform. Discourses are structured through difference, and thus women and men take up different subject positions within the same discourse, or rather, the same discourse positions them as subjects in different ways. All the major axes of difference, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion intersect with gender in ways which proffer a multiplicity of subject positions within any discourse. This notion of the engendered subject as the site of multiple differences, and, therefore, of multiple subjectivities and competing identities is the result of the recent feminist critique of post-structuralist and deconstructionist theory. This work has been inspired, of course, by Lacan's notion of the subject in contradiction and process but, as de Lauretis points out, the feminist rethinking of the post-structuralist subject – what might be termed the post-post-structuralist subject – is crucially different. In particular, she argues that the notion of identity as multiple and even self-contradictory points to a more useful conception of the subject than the one proposed by neo-Freudian psychoanalysis and post-structuralist theories.

> For it is not the fragmented, or intermittent, identity of a subject constructed in division by language alone, an 'I' continually prefigured and pre-empted in an unchangeable symbolic order. It is neither, in short, the imaginary identity of the individualist, bourgeois subject, which is male and white; nor the 'flickering' of the posthumanist Lacanian subject, which is too nearly white and at best (fe)male. What is emerging in feminist writing is, instead, the concept of a multiple, shifting, and often self-contradictory identity. . . . an identity made up of heterogeneous and heteronomous representations of gender, race and class, and often indeed across languages and cultures. . . .
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> (de Lauretis, 1986: 9)

This feminist post-post-structuralist view of the subject is, of course, radically different from the traditional subject of anthropological enquiry, the unitary, whole, rational individual which is prototypically male. The 'person' in anthropological discourse is not only male by default, but is also

an individual whose identity is 'externally' guaranteed by difference. Thus, in its unitary nature, the anthropological individual is defined by difference from other individuals in the same culture, as well as by its difference from other individuals in other cultures. The post-post-structuralist subject, on the other hand, is the site of differences; differences which constitute the subject and are 'internal' to it. This notion of an 'internally' differentiated subject, constituted in and through discourse, is analytically powerful. It is of particular value in analysing the question of how individuals become engendered and acquire a gender identity in the context of several co-existent discourses on gender, which may contradict and conflict with each other. In order to demonstrate this point, it is necessary to discuss the relationship between multiple gender discourses within a single social setting.

DISCOURSE AND DOMINATION

Gender discourses are variable cross-culturally. It is clear that many gender discourses are oppositional, that is they are constructed around the idea that gender has two forms one female and one male, and that the categories woman and man which are produced from and through this discourse on difference are mutually exclusive. However, not all gender discourses are premised on the mutual exclusivity of the categories woman and man. In many cultures, gender is conceived of processually, and femininity and masculinity are qualities of persons, rather than categories (e.g. Meigs 1990). But, inter-cultural variation has to be understood in the context of intra-cultural variation, and the fact that within each social setting a number of discourses on gender will exist. The existence of multiple gender discourses means that in many situations, a discourse which emphasizes the oppositional and mutually exclusive nature of gender categories can exist alongside other discourses which emphasize the processual, mutable and temporary nature of gender assignment. The co-existence of multiple discourses, however, produces a situation in which the different discourses on gender are hierarchically ordered. This ordering may be both contextually and biographically variable, as well as being subject to historical change. The result is that some discourses overdetermine others, and various sub-dominant discourses develop in opposition to dominant ones.

In many cultures, oppositional gender discourses which emphasize the mutual exclusivity of the categories female and male are structurally and hierarchically dominant. It is a peculiar feature of gender discourses of this kind that the categories woman and man are not just mutually exclusive, but that the relationship between them is defined as one of hierarchical difference. Woman is man's other, what man is not, the lack and the object

of man's desire and knowledge. What is important here is that relations of difference are frequently hierarchically ordered both within the dominant discourse, and between discourses. This gives rise to a situation in which gender difference can come to stand for other forms of hierarchically organized difference, as, for example, in contexts where people who are deemed inferior for whatever reason are represented as feminized, controlled, and subordinate. It is a feature of the power of dominant discourses that they operate through the overdetermination of relations of difference within sub-dominant discourses, rather than through the total suppression of alternatives.

However, in those contexts, as, for example, many western cultures, where a hierarchical and mutually exclusive relation between the categories of difference defines the dominant discourse on gender, it is clear that this discourse should not be understood as an accurate reflection of what women and men actually do in social life. This is partly because the relations established between the categories woman and man in such instances are themselves ideal and naturalized relations, the broad outlines of a discursive schema which operates at a certain remove from variability in gender relations at a day-to-day level, and at some remove from the self-representations of engendered individuals. This gives rise, as Denise Riley points out, to a specific difficulty which is that women, *qua* individuals in specific historical circumstances, have a complex and shifting relation to the category 'woman'. They are both defined by it and simultaneously exceed it, in the sense that the gap between the categorical definition of woman and individual understandings of femininity is rather large (Riley 1988). The same difficulty pertains, to a certain extent, to the relationship established in specific circumstances between men and the category 'man'. However, there are a number of notable differences, one of which is that since the characteristics or attributes associated with the category 'man' are frequently predominantly positive, it is possible for male individuals – or, at least, some of them – to identify with the dominant cultural ideals which cluster around that category. The situation for women is far more problematic since the attributes associated with the category 'woman' are often predominantly negative, making identification not only risky, but potentially pathologizing.

Anthropologists recognize this difficulty in so far as they note the disparity between the cultural definitions or attributes of the categories 'woman' and 'man' and the actual context of gender relations and roles (Ortner and Whitehead 1981). However, anthropology has made little attempt to analyse the 'gap' which exists between dominant cultural categories and the actualities of day-to-day gender relations. This gap is filled with or inhabited by a whole variety of discourses and practices, all of

which are informed in some way or other by the dominant cultural discourse on gender. It is through engagement with and investment in the subject positions offered by discourses at this level that individual women and men succeed in reproducing the dominant cultural discourse, whilst simultaneously standing at some remove from the categories of that discourse. It is at this level that the multiple subject is positioned and constituted. It is also at this level that we can properly speak of the existence of multiple femininities and masculinities, multiple ways of being feminine or masculine, within the same context.

Bob Connell, for example, argues for the existence of a number of femininities and masculinities within the same social setting, and he provides a number of interesting examples from Australian and British life which illustrate the hierarchical relations between dominant and sub-dominant discourses. He describes one Australian school where two identifiable groups of boys are in conflict. One group is the 'Bloods', the traditional, sporting, physically active group who bully the members of the second group known as the 'Cyrils', who are described as 'quite clever little boys who are socially totally inadequate, and yet who have got very good brains. They've all got glasses, short, very fat and that sort of thing' (Connell 1987: 177). It would be wrong to represent the difference between these masculinities as one of simple choice. For one thing, this pattern of difference, as Connell points out, is a product of the possible subject positions offered to individuals in the school as part of a tension within school policy between success based on sporting achievement and success based on academic excellence. This tension reflects wider social and cultural dynamics about how to succeed in the world, and about what kind of successful masculine self one can be. The school, in order to be attractive to parents and pupils, needs both kinds of masculinity and rewards both as forms of achievement, albeit in very different ways. However, what is more interesting is the way gender difference is inscribed into this difference between masculinities. In this case, the perpetrators of violence, the bullies, are the Bloods, and they persecute the Cyrils because of their effeminacy, their lack of physical prowess, and their general passivity and weakness (Connell 1987: 177–8).

The inscription of gender difference onto the difference between or within multiple femininities and masculinities within the same social setting is of particular interest. One of the things revealed through an investigation of this point is the extraordinary variety in the type of social practices, discourses, and institutions which proffer and work over these multiple femininities and masculinities. The degree to which individuals recognize the alternatives which are available to them is obviously very variable, and the lack of any conscious reflection on the possibility of choosing alternatives

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does not mean, of course, that individuals do not 'select' from amongst possible alternatives, this is something they can do through practice, and is not something they have to be consciously or intellectually aware of. However, the recognition of possible alternative femininities and masculinities is facilitated, to a certain degree, by the fact that competing discourses are constructed in counterpoint with one another. This oppositional relation is emphasized by the constant reinscription of hierarchical difference between the genders, and thus by the constant reference to the mutually exclusive categories woman and man.

Connell provides an example drawn from British advertising, in which he describes two posters. On one, which is an advert for a perfume, a woman strides out boldly in trousers, and this image is clearly intended to depict various things about activity, professionalism, self-determination and so on. In a second poster – and it is worth bearing in mind how often these posters might occur in the same magazine or on the same hoarding – a company advertises its sheer stockings, accompanied by the caption 'For girls who don't want to wear the trousers' (Connell 1987: 179). In the case of both posters, the images of femininity they convey are only comprehensible within wider gender discourses, but their comprehensibility is crucially dependent on the overt reference to the mutually exclusive nature of dominant gender categories. However, in the case of the advert for perfume, it is precisely that gap between dominant gender categories and the actualities of individual women's experience of gender identity and gender roles which the poster seeks to play with. It is this element of play which makes the advertisement, and hence the product it promotes, seductive. The poster which advertises stockings plays with the same gap, but from the opposite perspective, and engages subtly with anxieties about changing definitions of gender and gender roles. In a sense, both posters play with each other, interrupt and continue each other's narratives. This parodic play is a noticeable feature of much contemporary advertising. What is interesting about it, of course, is that it continually reinscribes dominant categories and discourses through reference to a fixed relationship of difference, whilst appearing to embody challenge, resistance, and change.

Connell's argument is that in western societies, and perhaps globally, a particular type of hegemonic masculinity orders the structural relationship between alternative femininities and masculinities. This is the masculinity which is associated with global capitalism and the domination of the west in economic and political life, and it is also the masculinity which constructs the self-representations of those men who actually do rule the world – of which, perhaps, the most blatant recent example is Ronald Reagan. Connell also argues that through the workings of this hegemonic form of

masculinity, the dominant constructions of gender are strongly implicated, if not actually inscribed within, other social relationships. Thus, hegemonic masculinity penetrates political and economic relationships in a way which guarantees that domination itself is gendered. Groups or cabals of powerful heterosexual – that is represented as heterosexual – men dominate both the running of modern states and relations between states, and they thus control the means of public force and violence. These means are not simply, of course, military, but also economic and political. As a result, it is not usually necessary to reinforce their domination through the use of actual physical force, unless – as in the recent Gulf War – there is a breakdown of economic and political control. The current treatment of Iraq by the west shows the importance not just of dominating, but of feminizing and passifying that which is dominated, in order, at least in part, to establish a hierarchical relationship of domination which appears as natural as gender difference itself. The result is that violence at the national and international level is strongly sexualized, and the distinction between perpetrators and victims of violence is a genderized difference. This means, of course, as Penelope Harvey points out in Chapter 3, that gender or rather genderized difference represents, or comes to stand for, very real differences in power between groups of people and between individuals. Gender idioms are frequently used to order differences in power and/or prestige, with the result that power itself is represented in many contexts as sexualized. This is evident both in western discourse and in much ethnographic material.

The hegemonic masculinity described by Connell is recognizably western. However, it is worth pointing out that this particular form of hegemonic masculinity is now global, and it is significant that it has found resonances with a number of local or indigenous masculinities. It is not possible to analyse discourses on gender, wherever they occur, without recognizing the ways in which they are implicated in larger processes of economic and political change well beyond the control of local communities. This is a point which Peter Wade makes in Chapter 5. The personal experience of gender and gender relations is thus bound up with power and political relations on a number of different levels. One consequence of this is that fantasies of power are fantasies of identity. This point is made very forcefully by a number of chapters in this volume, and it is a point from which it is possible to begin to make sense of the connections between gender, violence, and sexuality.

THEORIZING INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

The discussion in the previous section emphasized that there is no single femininity or masculinity for individual women and men to identify with in

their social settings, but a variety of possible femininities and masculinities which are provided by the contradictory and competing discourses which exist, and which produce and are reproduced by social practices and institutions. However, sexuality is intimately connected with power in such a way that power and force are themselves sexualized, that is they are inscribed with gender difference and gender hierarchy. This connection does not have to be confined to a discussion of dominant forms of western masculinity or discourses on gender, although it does presuppose the existence of a dominant discourse on gender, which can in theory be an indigenous one. There are two points which arise from this argument. First, femininity and masculinity cannot be taken as singular fixed features which are exclusively located in women and men. We must agree to this if we recognize that subjectivity is non-unitary and multiple, and that it is the product, amongst other things, of the variable discourses and practices concerning gender and gender difference. Women and men come to have different understandings of themselves as engendered persons because they are differentially positioned with regard to discourses concerning gender and sexuality, and they take up different positions within those discourses.

The advantage of a theory which stresses that at any one time there exist competing, potentially contradictory discourses on gender and sexuality rather than a single discourse, is that we can ask the question, how is it that people take up a position in one discourse as opposed to another? If becoming an engendered person is not just a question of acquiescing to or identifying with a single femininity or masculinity, then what is it that makes people take up particular subject positions as opposed to others? What accounts for the differences between people with regard to their self-representations as engendered individuals? Why do men differ from each other with regard to their understanding of masculinity, and why do women differ with regard to their understandings and representations of femininity, of what it is to be a woman?

Wendy Holloway has suggested that we can come to an understanding of what makes people take up certain subject positions by developing a notion of 'investment'. If, at any one time, there exist several competing, possibly contradictory, discourses on femininity and masculinity, then what motivates individuals to take up one subjective position as opposed to another is their degree of 'investment' in a particular subject position. Holloway conceives of an investment as something between an emotional commitment and a vested interest. (Her use of the term has a strong connotation of cathexis.) Such interest or commitment resides in the relative power, conceived of in terms of the satisfaction, reward, or payoff, which a particular subject position promises, but does not necessarily provide (Holloway 1984: 238). It is clear that the term 'investment' could

be problematic here because of its economistic overtones. However, it is useful precisely because it allows us to retain a link between questions of power and questions of identity. If we imagine that individuals take up certain subject positions because of the way in which those positions provide pleasure, satisfaction, or reward on the individual or personal level, we must also recognize that such individual satisfactions only have power and meaning in the context of various institutionalized discourses and practices, that is, in the context of certain sanctioned modes of subjectivity. Holloway emphasizes the very important point that taking up a position or variety of positions within competing discourses is not just about the construction of self-identity and subjectivity. She argues that to be positioned is always to be positioned in relation to others, and thus, one's interrelations with other individuals – intersubjectivity – will also determine what positions one takes up. In addition, there is the question of the institutional power of dominant or hegemonic discourses, where there are very tangible benefits to be gained from constructing oneself as a particular sort of person and interacting with others in specific sorts of ways. It is important to recognize that investment is not just a matter of emotional satisfaction, but of the very real material, social, and economic benefits which are the reward of the senior man, the good wife, the powerful mother, or the dutiful daughter in many social situations. It is for this reason that modes of subjectivity and questions of identity are bound up with issues of power, and with the material benefits which may be consequent on the exercise of that power.

It would be a mistake, however, to represent the process of taking up a subject position as one of simple choice. For one thing, the historical contextualization of discourses means that not all subject positions are equal: some positions carry much more social reward than others, and some are negatively sanctioned. The role of dominant or hegemonic discourses on gender and gender identity are crucial here. The reason being that, while non-dominant discourses certainly provide subject positions and modes of subjectivity which might be individually satisfying and which might challenge or resist dominant modes, those individuals who do challenge or resist the dominant discourses on gender and gender identity frequently find that this is at the expense of such things as social power, social approval, and even material benefits. The same argument may also explain why those in power are so vulnerable to accusations about their sexuality and sexual behaviour. The second reason why the taking-up of a subject position cannot be seen as a matter of choice is linked to the multiple and contradictory nature of subjectivity. The fact that individuals take up multiple subject positions, some of which may contradict each other, obviously cannot be explained in terms of a theory of rational choice. Holloway's notion of investment reminds us of the emotional and sub-conscious

motivations for taking up various subject positions. In this context, fantasy, in the sense of ideas about the kind of person one would like to be and the sort of person one would like to be seen to be by others, clearly has a role to play. Such fantasies of identity are linked to fantasies of power and agency in the world. This explains why concepts, such as reputation, are connected not just to self-representations and social evaluations of self, but to the potential for power and agency which a good reputation proffers. The loss of reputation could mean a loss of livelihood, and the lack of good social standing can render individuals incapable of pursuing various strategies or courses of action. The use of the term fantasy is crucial here because it emphasizes the often affective and subconscious nature of investment in various subject positions, and in the social strategies necessary to maintain that investment.

Holloway herself does not discuss the relationship between identity, subjectivity, power, and violence. However, a close reading of a number of papers in this volume suggests a link between the thwarting of investments in various subject positions based on gender and interpersonal violence. Thwarting can be understood as the inability to sustain or properly take up a gendered subject position, resulting in a crisis, real or imagined, of self-representation and/or social evaluation. Such crises can be of various degrees of seriousness and of variable duration. Thwarting can also be the result of contradictions arising from the taking-up of multiple subject positions, and the pressure of multiple expectations about self-identity or social presentation. It may also come about as the result of other persons refusing to take up or sustain their subject positions *vis-à-vis* oneself and thereby calling one's self-identity into question. A phrase such as 'she/he wasn't a proper wife/husband to me' emphasizes the intersubjective nature of questions of gender and gender identity. It is equally a phrase which can cover everything from a failure of sexual relations to the failure of economic provisions. Thus, thwarting can characterize the inability to receive the expected satisfactions or rewards from the taking-up of a particular gendered subject position or mode of subjectivity. It is, of course, not necessary for an individual to have a specific conscious view of what the satisfactions or rewards ought to be for them to experience thwarting.

Many writers in this volume report that violence is often the outcome of an inability to control other people's sexual behaviour, that is other people's management of themselves as engendered individuals. This explains not only violence between women and men, but also between mothers and daughters, between sisters-in-law, and between men themselves. In all such situations, what is crucial is the way in which the behaviour of others threatens the self-representations and social evaluations of oneself. Thus, it is the perpetrator of violence who is threatened and experiences thwarting.

Interestingly enough, many of the violent events described in this volume occur in situations where the thwarted party is likely to suffer direct material loss, whether in terms of social status or access to economic resources, as a result of the insufficiencies – so perceived – of the victim of the violence. Once again, fantasies of identity are linked to fantasies of power, which helps to explain why violence is so often the result of a perceived, rather than a real, threat. As Christina Toren notes in Chapter 1, wives are frequently beaten for imagined infidelities; a fact which makes violence and the threat of violence so much more effective as a means of social control.

In Chapter 5, Peter Wade's discussion of gender relations and violence in Colombia demonstrates the existence of multiple and contradictory discourses on gender, and the way in which the dominant discourse on gender emphasizes that the differences between women and men are categorical. This chapter is particularly useful because it shows extremely clearly how the goals of identity and personhood are different for women and men, and how engaged individuals are in strategies which invest in and maintain particular self-representations and social evaluations. Dominant discourses, and the differential subject positions which those discourses proffer women and men, work to limit the strategies which individuals can pursue. The clear satisfactions and rewards, many of them actually economic, which follow on the successful management of modes of gendered subjectivity – most particularly for men – are directly demonstrated. The relationship between fantasies of masculine identity and fantasies of power is especially volatile. Men have a clear investment in two competing discourses, one the providing husband/father and the other the *hombre parrandero*. The fantasy of masculine identity is predicated on the ability to balance these two modes. Men, therefore, have to pursue strategies to get their wives to submit to their interests, with the result that there is often conflict between spouses over the man's extra-domestic commitments. Discourses on gender identity, as Wade points out, not only structure relations with women, but also with other men. To be an *hombre parrandero* is a source of prestige among men, as well as an expression of male solidarity. Participation in *parrandas* not only establishes close and affective relations with other men, but it provides a man with a crucial economic network. Thus, successful economic strategies involve successful management of gender identity. The volatile relationship between fantasies of identity and fantasies of power frequently gives rise to violence both between women and men, and between men. The successful man is a man who manages the relationship between the role of husband/father and the *hombre parrandero*, and thus contains and controls his domestic situation, while at the same time keeping up his reputation as a good friend.

The crucial point here is representation and others' interpretation of that representation. The perfect husband and the perfect friend do not exist, but their images and effects must be kept constantly in play. In this sense, violence, when it occurs, is the result of a crisis of representation, as well as the result of conflict between social strategies which are intimately connected to those modes of representation.

Wade's paper emphasizes, as do many others in the volume, that the experience of identity is bound up with the experience of power, and that challenges to the exercise of power, or to its effects in terms of status, strategies, and interests, are perceived as threats to identity. The obverse appears equally true, so that challenges levelled at an individual's gender identity and gender management, specifically as these are reflected in the behaviour of others to whom that individual is closely connected, may be perceived of as a threat to power, position, control, and even assets. Penelope Harvey provides two interesting examples in her paper. The first is of a woman regularly beaten by her husband, who reported that his behaviour could be attributed to the fact that he was seeing another woman, and that this always makes men vicious towards their wives, especially when their lovers are not really under their control. It was significant in this case that the man's lover was also the lover of one of the local policemen. The second is the example of a woman who was severely beaten by her husband, who had allegedly beaten her for all the faults of his other lovers, calling them by name as he did so. In both cases, the violence is explicable as the thwarting of the expected outcome of particular modes of gendered subjectivity. In both cases, the self-representations of the individual men as gendered persons includes the right and the power to have extra-marital relations, as part of a definition of masculinity as active and aggressive, and hierarchically defined in relation to femininity. The wider Andean cultural understanding of complementarity as predicated on hierarchical difference is particularly relevant here, as Harvey points out. However, the ability to pursue extra-marital relations is both a consequence of gender discourses and the hierarchical nature of gender difference, and a confirmation of a gender identity, as well as a particular set of gender relations, which are intimately bound up with those discourses. However, the reality of the situation, as the ethnography makes clear, is that in the context of these specific extra-marital relations, attributes of desirable masculinity far from being confirmed are challenged, perhaps even denied. The men cannot control their lovers as they would wish, they cannot control other men's access to these women, and therefore they cannot control the definition of their own masculinity because they cannot control the definition of or the social practices surrounding the femininity of their lovers. The only women they can control are their wives, and it is they who confirm their husbands'

masculinity, by their proper adoption of the opposite feminine subject position, and so their husbands hit them. Once again, violence is the consequence of a crisis in representation, both individual and social. The inability to maintain the fantasy of power triggers a crisis in the fantasy of identity, and violence is a means of resolving this crisis because it acts to reconfirm the nature of a masculinity otherwise denied.

In those social settings, where dominant discourses on gender construct the categories woman and man as mutually exclusive and hierarchically related, the representation of violence itself is highly sexualized, and is inseparable from the notion of gender, and, in particular, from the notion of gender difference. However, gender difference is not the only form of difference employed in the representation of violence. Other forms of difference, notably class and race, are crucial in the formation of discourses on social identity, and will thus be constitutive of modes of subjectivity in the same way as gender. It follows, therefore, that these forms of difference will be strongly implicated in the relationship established between fantasies of power and fantasies of identity. Whenever that relationship is called into question, violence, or the threat of violence, may result. In making this argument, I do not want to fall into the trap of suggesting that all violence is of similar origin, and/or that there is no difference between the forms and degrees of violence, or in terms of its incidence. However, I do want to suggest that in terms of interpersonal violence, and with regard to the relationship between violence and particular forms of difference – gender, race, class – we might come closer to an understanding of the phenomenon if we shift our gaze and move from imagining violence as a breakdown in the social order – something gone wrong – to seeing it as the sign of a struggle for the maintenance of certain fantasies of identity and power. When we come to a final consideration of the relationship between violence and gender, it is clear that violence of all kinds is engendered in its representation, in the way it is thought about and constituted as a social fact. In its enactment as a social practice, therefore, it is part of a discourse, albeit a contradictory and fragmented discourse, about gender difference. The difficult thing to explain is not why gender relations are so violent, but why violence is so gendered, so sexualized.

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