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Be-coming subjects: reclaiming a politics of location as radical political rhetoric

Catherine Olive-Marie Fox
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Be-coming subjects:
Reclaiming a politics of location as radical political rhetoric

by

Catherine Olive-Marie Fox

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Rhetoric and Professional Communication

Program of Study Committee:
Carl Herndl, Co-Major Professor
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For the Major Program
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Abstract

In this dissertation I theorize and analyze the rhetorical deployment of a "politics of location" within the context of poststructural theories of discourse, subjectivity, and agency. In her book, *Blood Bread and Poetry*, Adrienne Rich coins the phrase "a politics of location," which marks an effort to move away from a hegemonic Western feminism that universalizes all women's experiences and constructs a normative (and hence limiting and exclusionary) subject of feminism. Rich forwards a politics of location as a radical materialist political stance that grounds feminist theory in accountability for the situatedness of knowledge production. I extend Rich's phrase to theorize how radical, lesbian feminists have used a politics of location as a signifying practice to construct alternative subjectivities and assert discursive agency.

More specifically, in this project I historicize and contextualize a politics of location as it developed within lesbian feminist interchanges during the 1980s and early 90s. This is a significant historical juncture for two reasons. First, the universal concept of "woman" came under radical critique by third-space feminists. Second, feminist publishing houses began to proliferate as a counter-public context for the dissemination of new voices and knowledges, thus allowing for the invention of new discursive strategies within feminist conversations. After historicizing a politics of location, I trace its development as a rhetorical strategy deployed specifically within interchanges between radical, lesbian feminists. Additionally, I use a Foucauldian theory of discursive formations to show how this rhetorical strategy interrupts the normative subject of the rhetorical tradition. Finally, I show how a politics of location contributes to the growing field of research on feminist rhetorical theory.
Introduction

Chela Sandoval argues that we must reclaim "theory from the halls of the academy where it has been intercepted and domesticated" (7) by looking to the survival skills of marginalized people because the "oppositional consciousness developed by subordinated, marginalized, or colonized Western citizen-subjects who have been forced to experience the so-called aesthetics of 'postmodern' globalization as a precondition for survival...[is the] constituency that is most familiar with what citizenship in this realm requires and makes possible" (9). This dissertation follows the insights of and call forwarded by Sandoval. I contend that a politics of location is a discursive survival strategy used by radical, lesbian feminists working in coalitions to assert discursive agency and to realize new forms of subjectivity. In effect, I believe that these marginalized subjects enact poststructural theory by utilizing a politics of location as a discursive strategy for self-representation. In their writing they theorize multiple, contradictory, non-innocent subjectivities, discover potentials for (constrained) agency, and maintain hope for the possibility of social change by invoking a politics of location. Thus, this project speaks to some of the current theoretical problems of subjectivity and agency (particularly the nihilistic tendencies of discursive determinism) in poststructuralism by looking to one of the survival skills of the oppressed for clues about how marginalized subjects cope in a postmodern world as fragmented, multiple, fluid selves without losing a vision of social transformation.

Before I proceed I want to explore my own complicated and non-innocent positionality as I potentially "domesticate" a politics of location in this academic dissertation. I understand my project as an act of representation, a representation of writings of a group of
radical, lesbian feminists, but perhaps more significantly, an act of self-representation. As indicated above, my desire is to reclaim a discursive strategy used by radical, lesbian feminists to write new subjectivities, to allow the voices of an oppressed group to speak to current academic conversations about discursive agency, subjectivity, and the potential for social change. However, in accord with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, I understand that representation of an "Other" always involves some degree of "epistemic violence" on the part of an intellectual/critic ("Can the Subaltern Speak"). Such violence is inescapable and is particularly dangerous when intellectuals suggest that we create spaces for the oppressed to "speak for themselves" (276). In the case of this project, to suggest that my representation of the writings of radical, lesbian feminist affords them the opportunity "to speak for themselves" would elide my own subject position—my interests, my motives/desires, my epistemological framework—which, according to Spivak, would effectively mute these voices even further.

Spivak advocates a critical/responsible approach to representation, which is not to imply that we can avoid epistemic violence; instead, it leads to a greater degree of accountability on the part of the intellectual. Further, she suggests that marking the positionality of the investigating subject can amount to a "meaningless piety" (271); however, it is less dangerous than "the first-world intellectual masquerading as the absent

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1 In "Subaltern Talk" Spivak expresses a concern that the term subaltern is being appropriated by theorists as a "buzzword for any group that wants something that it does not have" (290). In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she defines the subaltern as a "group, whose identity is in its difference" (285); in a later interview she defines it as a metaphoric space "that is cut off from the lines of mobility in a colonized country. You have the foreign elite and the indigenous elite. Below that you will have the vectors of upward, downward, sideward, backward mobility. But then there is a space which is for all practical purposes outside those lines" which is where the undefined subaltern are located ("Subaltern Talk" 288-289). I do not define the radical, lesbian feminist writers whose work I examine in this project as "subaltern" because of their access to feminist publishing houses, which enabled discursive self-representation. Nonetheless, I find Spivak's discussion of the dangers of intellectual representation useful in my efforts to understand the implications of my positionality.
nonrepresenter who lets the oppressed speak for themselves" (292). Importantly, Spivak does not advocate that intellectuals refrain from representing the subaltern or refrain from "reporting on, or better still, participating in, anti-sexist work among women of color or women in class oppression in the First World or the Third World" (295). Silence or paralysis is not the answer to the dangers of epistemic violence that follows from intellectual representations of marginalized "others."

Linda Alcoff's discussion of the problem of "speaking for others" is instructive in understanding my role as an intellectual representing "Others." Alcoff argues that the answer to the problems of representation cannot be that "one can only know one's narrow individual experience and one's 'own truth' and can never make claims beyond this" because it signifies a retreat that "significantly undercuts the possibility of political effectivity" (107). Perhaps more importantly, she points out that recognizing the dangers of representation and then purporting "to speak only for myself":

assumes that an individual can retreat into her discrete location and make claims entirely and singularly within that location that do not range over others and, therefore that an individual can disentangle herself from the implicating networks between her discursive practices and others' locations, situates, and practices...But there is no neutral place to stand free and clear in which my words do not prescriptively affect or mediate the experience of others. (108)

Alcoff goes on to argue that the statement "I speak only for myself" ultimately abnegates accountability for the way in which one's practices have "effects on others; [but] it cannot literally erase those effects" (108).
In this project I understand that I do not simply "speak for myself," nor do I simply "allow" the voices of radical, lesbian feminists to "speak for themselves." I am entangled in a complicated and contradictory network of discursive practices—somewhere between academia and a radical, lesbian feminist counter-public. In many respects, one of my aims in this project is to use my position as a radical, lesbian feminist academic to create a dialogue between these two discursive communities. Following Spivak's and Alcoff's discussions of accountability, I engage in "speaking for others," in representing the writings of radical, lesbian feminists within an academic framework because I refuse to retreat from potential political engagements. At the same time, I understand that my act is fraught with complications and dangers—there will be (mis)interpretations, (mis)recognitions, and (mis)representations. I do not purport to offer "the final word" on the texts I analyze herein nor "the final word" on the significance of a politics of location. And yet I recognize that no matter how much I expose my partial perspective and non-innocent positionality, as Spivak indicates, I will fail. Inevitably, I will become the "transparent intellectual." This is not cause for retreat or paralysis. It is a call for accountability and responsibility.

In an effort to interrogate my positionality as investigating subject, I ask: *What motivates me to theorize a politics of location?*

Most obviously, part of my motive is to fulfill a degree requirement, to write a dissertation. But this doesn't really say much. Let me step back a few years. In a recent survey course on histories and theories of rhetoric my professor iterated time and again that our purpose as graduate students is to "create new knowledge," that our chosen paths in

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2 Contrary to the belief of some critics, I do believe that intellectual work can constitute a form a political engagement, however limited by the institutional boundaries of academia.
academia dictate that we must "contribute new and original work to the discipline." It was implied that if we could not "rise to this challenge," perhaps we had taken a wrong turn, perhaps we should consider a different path. In the context of reading the likes of Nietzsche, Burke, Foucault, Derrida, and Irigary, the task of creating "new knowledge" seemed both impossible and undesirable. Impossible because the notion of "originality" was put to rest quite a while ago. And undesirable because the notion of new and original knowledge implies a degree of individuality and "authorship" that is antithetical to my values. And yet, I was (and am) a "disciplined" student—I put myself to the task of "finding" my "original contribution."

However suspect the concept of "contributing new knowledge" is for me, I cannot deny that my efforts to theorize a politics of location are motivated by my positionality in academia as a graduate student, a graduate student who refuses to face that she might have "taken the wrong turn." This dissertation is motivated by my desire to show that I can situate my interests within the field of rhetoric and that I can offer, if not a "new" idea, then at least a different angle from which to view current debates about the relationship between subjectivity, agency, and discourse.

I ask myself, But how did I get here? Where is "here"? And why does any of this matter?

Here is academia. Here is feminist theory. But getting here has taken nearly two decades of a circuitous route to the halls of the academy. That route has everything to do with this project. Like many women, I came to feminism desperate. Desperate for survival. From a young age I understood that power infused every corner of the world, and this power always begins in the home-space—from my parents' use of racism to inflate their sense of
self-worth to my father's degradation of my mother's position in poverty to my mother's complicity in allowing my body and my sister's body to be violated physically and sexually by my brother and step-father. The world I inherited was not a world I wanted to live in. "We were never meant to survive," writes Audre Lorde (Sister 42). I understand this. I lived this. I came to feminism as a refuge from a world that did not make sense to me. Feminism gave me words to name and define my material experiences. Feminism gave me hope that I/we could resist the abuse of power and the domination of others, hope that I/we could make ourselves and our world different from what I/we had been taught. Feminism gave me both the tools for survival and the hope for a life that can be more than simple survival.

When I was sixteen I discovered Crazy Ladies, a local feminist bookstore. I started reading the work of bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherrie Moraga. These texts spoke to me; spoke to my desire for survival and my desire to imagine the potential for spaces and relations not built upon domination. They shaped my growing feminist consciousness and my own sense of subjectivity. They helped me understand that the subject of feminism can never be the disembodied "woman"; they helped me perceive my own subjectivity as dynamic, multiple, fluid, contradictory, and complicated. In these early years of my development as a feminist I learned the importance of "a politics of location," although I didn't name it as such at the time. Years later, I began reading poststructural theories that discussed the fragmented, multiple, contradictory "subject" and dynamic, inter-

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3 I use I/we here to indicate feminism as both an individual and collective endeavor. Or, as Adrienne Rich has stated, "there is not liberation that only knows how to say 'I'; there is no collective movement that speaks for each of us all the way through" ("Notes" 224)

4 Crazy Ladies attempted to survive for many years in the face of large conglomerates such as Borders Books and Barnes & Noble, but went out of business in 2002. I can't help but think what a significantly different world mine would have been without Crazy Ladies—both in terms of the feminist community that developed around the bookstore and the resources it provided me as a young feminist.
relational nature of power, I thought to myself, "Yes, I know this. I live this. Feminists have written about these very same things for years." The theory was exciting; it made my mind feel alive and engaged; and yet, there was a certain deadening aspect in the theory—the hope, the vision, the imagination was muted in the name of deconstructing "utopian ideals" and "essentialized identities."

And so, my arrival "here" (in academia, in feminist theory, writing a dissertation on the rhetorical strategies of radical, lesbian feminists) is motivated by my own history. I sought feminism as a refuge, a "space-off" (to borrow Teresa de Lauretis' term) from a world in which I did not want to participate. This space-off is not a utopia, it is "the elsewhere of discourse here and now, the blind-spots...spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparati" (Technologies 25). In feminism I discovered a "space-off" in the writings of radical feminists who gave me the tools to begin reconstructing my own subjectivity and my sense of the "subject" of a feminism that aims to address a multitude of injustices in the world. I still believe in feminism as a space-off, a space that deconstructs as it reconstructs. I am driven (and this project is driven) by a desire to reclaim the strategies, the texts, that were so significant in the development of my feminist political sensibility.

At the center of a politics of location (as I theorize it) is a desire on the part of radical, lesbian feminists to engage profoundly and responsibly with one another in an effort to enact social change at both the individual and collective levels. In my complicity with the epistemological orientation and discursive conventions of academia, a space that has "intercepted and domesticated" the methodology of the oppressed (Sandoval 7), I know that the profundity at the heart of a politics of location is diluted. In particular the discourse
Conventions of academia force a kind of compartmentalization that leaves me curiously absent, or at best hidden, in the pages of this dissertation. I want to say: I am here. I am in this project. My complicated consciousness and sense of accountability has remained with me throughout the research and writing of this project. And yet, I remember one of my very first writing lessons: show don't tell.

Recalling Spivak's words, I question if this introduction is a "meaningless piety" or a self-absorbed moment of navel gazing. I am in the "belly of the monster," as Donna Haraway would say. My good friend Susan tells me, "We need infinite numbers of new stories, not the select few, which we have, in the past, based our sense of self and our sense of the world upon." Donna Haraway insists that "Stories are not 'fictions' in the sense of being 'made up.' Rather, narratives are devices to produce certain kinds of meaning" (Modest Witness 230). Thus, I want to suggest that this project is another story, a non-innocent contribution to the conversation. I maintain that there is much to be learned from the discursive practices of a radical, lesbian feminist counter-public. In the pages that follow is my story and their stories, the line between me/they, mine/their is blurry at best. This is a story driven by an urgency to create a space for the colonized, the domesticated, the overlooked, and the forgotten, driven by the dream that we/I can make a difference, even within the halls of the academy.
CHAPTER ONE

Third-Space Feminism and the Politics of Postmodern (Illegitimate) Subjectivity: Interrupting the Normative Subject of Feminism

If...the formerly centered and legitimated bourgeois citizen-subject of the first world (once anchored in a secure haven of self) is set adrift under the imperatives of late-capitalist cultural conditions, if such citizen-subjects have become anchorless, disoriented, incapable of mapping their relative positions inside multinational capitalism, lost in the reverberating endings of colonial expansionism, and if...the psychic pathologies brought about in first world subjectivity under the domination of neocolonial drives in which the subject must face the very 'limits of figuration,' then the first world subject enters the kind of psychic terrain formerly inhabited by the historically decentered citizen-subject: the colonized, the outsider, the queer, the subaltern, the marginalized. So too, not only are the 'psychopathologies,' but also the survival skills, theories, methods, and the utopian visions of the marginalized made, not just useful but imperative to all citizen-subjects, who must recognize this other truth of postmodernism—another architectural model for oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world.

—Chela Sandoval 27

Poststructural theories have had a tremendous influence in contemporary studies of rhetoric. Rooted in the "linguistic/social turn" of the twentieth century, these theories (most notably those of Hélène Cixous, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Fredric Jameson, Julia Kristeva, and Jean-François Lyotard) have placed discourse practices at the center of discussions about the production and circulation of knowledge, a shift which has given rhetoric a broad framework within which to claim a disciplinary identity.

Poststructural theories call into question Enlightenment humanitarian ideals about the sovereign rational subject and the progressive development of knowledge and society. These theories have provided spaces for feminists to interrogate universal conceptions of the subject and positivist understandings of epistemology and the construction of knowledge.
However, postmodern theories have been problematized by feminist and critical theorists because the deconstruction of "the subject" has seemingly given us no place from which to articulate a theory of agency, subjectivity, and social change. In the words of Nancy Hartsock: "Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?" ("Foucault on Power" 163). She argues that "postmodernism represents a dangerous approach for any marginalized group to adopt" (160) because it does not give guidance about how to proceed in the wake of the critique of Enlightenment ideals, that is, there is little room for imagining a different future if we are "always already" written as subjects. Likewise, Susan Bordo critiques a strictly theoretical appropriation of poststructuralism:

But it is easy, I believe, to call for the wholesale deconstruction of concepts such as subjectivity, authority, and identity only so long as we remain on the plane of high theory, where they function as abstractions. Once we begin to examine the role played by such concepts as they are institutionally and socially embodied in contexts such as law and medicine, in which the philosophical blueprint is transformed into real social architecture, a different agenda may suggest itself. (96)

Bordo argues that the abstract celebration of multiplicity, heterogeneity, and difference is inadequate; instead, we must ground feminism in analyses of socio-historical and cultural practices which have constructed normalized bodies and subjectivities. Hence, many feminists take a cautious approach in embracing postmodern theories. Teresa Ebert (1991) argues against ludic postmodernism, or the endless deferment of meaning, because in
"deconstructing grand narratives (such as emancipation), identities (like gender, race, and class), the referent, and experience as unfounded and divided by difference, ludic postmodernists end up dismantling the notion of politics itself as a transformative social practice outside of language" (887). Ebert forwards the concept of resistant postmodernism, which grounds itself in an epistemology of difference, rooted in social struggles rather than an endless deferment of meaning. Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore argue that a feminist postmodern theory entails a "rejection of certainty promised by modernist discourses, a rejection of a self-certain and singular subject, and a rejection of knowledges that promise answers which lead to closure. A poststructuralist feminist epistemology accepts that knowledge is always provisional, open-ended and relational" (7). Rather than doing away with notions of subjectivity, authority, and identity, these feminists suggest that poststructuralism provides some of the necessary tools for deconstructing normalized conceptions of the subject which can open new spaces for the reconstruction and reconceptualization of subjectivity itself.

Despite the ways in which feminists have cautiously embraced postmodern theories, the demise of Enlightenment ideals of being, knowing, and doing continue to call into question the potential for agency, subjectivity, and social change, a questioning that can lead to a sense of paralysis. It is within the context of poststructural theories that my dissertation project is situated. As the opening epigraph from Chela Sandoval indicates, there is more than one "truth" to postmodernism. Rather than simply looking at the "death" of the first-world subject as it was understood through modernist ideals of the unified, fully cognizant, centered self, Sandoval argues that it is imperative to look to the methodology of the oppressed, who have "always already" been written as decentered, fragmented, multiple
subjects. She argues that the "oppositional consciousness developed by subordinated, marginalized, or colonized Western citizen-subjects who have been forced to experience the so-called aesthetics of 'postmodern' globalization as a precondition for survival...[is the] constituency that is most familiar with what citizenship in this realm requires and makes possible" (9). It is my argument that a politics of location, as employed in the writing of radical, lesbian feminists, is one tactic of the oppressed used to develop this oppositional consciousness and provides a discursive site from which to investigate the vexed question of how agency and subjectivity can be understood in a post-Enlightenment age. In this project I examine the rhetorical deployment of a politics of location, which I extrapolate from the texts of radical, lesbian feminists published during the 1980s and early 90s, when the universal concept of "woman" came under radical critique. I theorize a politics of location was used as a signifying practice by radical, lesbian feminists to write subjectivities into being, specifically looking at how a politics of location interrupts the code of normative power by denaturalizing the authority of the speaking subject and knowledge-maker.

In this chapter I first situate my project within contemporary conversations about feminist rhetoric(s)\footnote{I use the term rhetoric(s) in order to resist the assumption that there is a singular, monolithic set of rhetorical strategies that congeal around a similar monolithic form of feminist theory and politics. Much as there are many forms of feminism, there is also a plurality of feminist rhetoric(s). Equally significant, instead of simply utilizing the plural form (rhetorics), I place parentheses around the "s" to suggest movement between stability and change. The term, feminist rhetorics, can suggest a form of plurality that becomes devoid of political impact. Thus, the movement between stability (trying to define a tentative tradition of feminist rhetoric) and change (resisting the normalizing tendencies of "traditions" and "canons") imbues the term with the kind of politicized agenda that is at the heart of feminism(s).} in order to argue that third-space feminist theories and a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy contributes to the growing body of work in this field. I then review how difference has been engaged from various feminist locations, which is relevant to
understanding feminism as situated, historical political engagement. Next, I outline the theoretical framework of third-space feminism, a theory that locates the tension points between modernism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism as generative spaces. Third-space feminist theory, then, provides a lens through which to conceptualize how a politics of location, which I define as one potential strategy of the oppressed, operates as an agentive discursive strategy for writing subjectivities into be-ing. Finally, I historicize and describe a general theory of a politics of location, distinguishing it from identity politics and situating it within feminist standpoint theory.

"New" Rhetorics/Feminist Rhetoric(s)

Feminist rhetoric(s) is an increasingly visible and viable area of scholarship for rhetoricians. Scholars are re-visioning the landscape of what constitutes the "rhetorical tradition" to include not only women rhetoricians, but feminist articulations of how to engage language in ways that transform oppressive structures and practices. Krista Ratcliffe divides feminist rhetorical scholarship into four primary categories: recovering, rereading, extrapolating, and conceptualizing. Recovering entails finding and incorporating lost and marginalized texts into the rhetorical tradition (e.g., the work of Andrea Lunsford, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Jacqueline Jones Royster, Shirley Wislon Logan, Kate Ronald and Joy Ritchie, Cheryl Glenn). Rereading involves reading canonical texts through a feminist lens, as Susan Jarratt has done in Rereading the Sophists: Classic Rhetoric Refigured. Feminists who use the third method take texts that are considered non-rhetorical or writers who are not considered rhetorical theorists and extrapolate theories of rhetoric, which is the method.

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6 I use the hyphenation here to situate subjectivity as fluid and always in process or motion rather than a fixed epistemological state. That is, I understand that subjectivity is formulated through practices or engagement with the world; it is not a pre-discursive entity.
Ratcliffe uses in her work on Anglo-American feminist rhetoric and the method Karen Foss, Sonja Foss, and Cindy Griffin use in their book, *Feminist Rhetorical Theories*. Finally, conceptualizing requires articulation of entirely new theories of rhetoric that are both separated from and connected to the rhetorical tradition, which is evidenced in the work of Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva. This dissertation contributes to the field of feminist rhetoric(s) through an articulation of how a politics of location provides a feminist rhetorical strategy for addressing the complexity of issues that surround questions of agency and subjectivity in a post-Enlightenment era through the lens of third-space feminism.

As feminist rhetoric(s) is becoming an increasingly canonized field, it is an important part of my project to situate feminist rhetorical strategies as fluid and mutable rather than fixed. Indeed, the potential of the field lies in our ability as scholars to open up rhetoric, rather than to "close it down" through further canonization. Hence, in this dissertation, I do not forward feminist rhetoric(s) as a "new" set of strategies that simply replace or redefine traditional rhetoric. Rather, I understand feminist rhetoric(s) as transformative to the extent that they embody a struggle for language rights, for public space, and for the articulation of multiple subjectivities. Feminist rhetoric(s), then, become practices of interruption, or in Andrea Lunsford's words "dangerous moves: breaking the silence, naming in personal terms, employing dialogics, recognizing and using the power of conversation, moving centripetally toward connections and valuing—indeed insisting upon—collaboration" (6 "On Reclaiming Rhetorica"). In academic contexts, the articulation of "new" rhetorics is often motivated by the disciplinary desire to participate in structures of domination, replacing the "old" with "the next best thing," and can contribute to a process of canonization that often leads to commodification and normalization, rather than "dangerous moves" in the struggle against
hegemonic structures. Hence, I interrogate the term feminist rhetoric(s) so as to maintain a critical edge, an edge that is constituted by a struggle to interrupt oppressive structures and to open the field of rhetoric. Most certainly, the context of academia does have a disciplining force that rewards us for participating in established structures and practices of knowledge-creation and I don't believe we can reject this force in total; however, I do believe we must understand the very enterprise of our work in academic contexts as potentially dangerous if we forward "new," "alternative," or "feminist" rhetorics uncritically. A critical interrogation, then, involves two moves. First, it requires the understanding that no rhetorical move or style necessarily challenges traditional rhetoric; what constitutes the interruption of dominant discursive practices always varies across contexts and has everything to do with material relations of power (e.g., who gets to speak, who gets to be heard, who doesn't get to speak, etc.). Thus, we must situate the ideas we forward about alternative rhetorics within historical and contemporary contexts to understand their effectivity as "dangerous moves." In the case of this project, I situate a politics of location in the historical context of the feminist movement in the 1980s when women of color began to challenge normative subject of feminism (white, heterosexual, middle class, U.S.-born women). In this context, I contend that a politics of location was an effective discursive strategy for interrupting this normative subject and for enabling women to re-construct an intersubjectivity that created a stronger base for coalition politics. I also situate a politics of location in the context of contemporary rhetorical studies, which, I contend, continues to valorize a coherent, self-present subject that privileges universality, rationality, objectivity, and linear logic that leads to closure and domination over an audience. In the context of this normative subject of rhetoric, I suggest that a politics of location challenges the assumptions that undergird this subject and thus
provides a potential expansion of our understanding of rhetoric. Second, critical
interrogation involves a degree of self-reflexivity, placing our work on the plane of critique
by questioning our motives in offering "new knowledge."

An analysis of Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin's invitational rhetoric provides an
illustrative example of how decontextualizing "new" or feminist rhetoric(s) can be
dangerous. Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin (1995) forward invitational rhetoric as an
alternative to persuasive rhetoric. They suggest that the concept of persuasion is imbued
with a patriarchal bias that intends to change others, which constitutes a practice of
domination and control: "the act of changing others not only establishes the power of the
rhetor over others but also devalues the lives and perspectives of those others" (3). Foss and
Griffin propose that invitational rhetoric is built upon principles of equality, immanent value,
and self-determination; it is these principles that constitute it as a feminist rhetoric, not the
use of it by a particular population. They go on to argue that the process of invitational
rhetoric involves an act of "offering" and three external conditions: safety, value, and
freedom. While Foss and Griffin do not argue for the eradication of persuasive rhetoric, and
while they do admit that invitational rhetoric may invoke change in an audience, this "new"
rhetoric is held up as an ideal that is not fully contextualized or historicized within relations
of power, effectively ignoring the differential subject positions that rhetors may occupy.

For example, the authors suggest that processes of change are "accompanied by
feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, pain, humiliation, guilt, embarrassment, or angry
submission" (6); hence, invitational rhetoric should be built upon equality of all participants,
affirmation and respect for others, and willingness to "yield" to the audience. However, this
does not account for the material existence of dis-equal subject positions. Nor does it take
into consideration historical expectations of different subjects, such as the historical expectation that women and men of color affirm and respect white men and women even as they (white people) engage in dominating and degrading practices. A more contextualized understanding of the place of affirmation and respect in feminist rhetoric would include a discussion of different and dis-equal subject positions. That is, it might be an interruption of dominant discursive practices for a rhetor from a dominant group, who has not been necessarily expected to affirm, respect, or yield, to situate him or herself in this position.

Foss and Griffin also suggest that safety should be a condition for this feminist rhetoric so that the audience does not feel threatened. While I don't believe a feminist rhetoric should preclude the possibility of creating conditions of safety, Foss and Griffin assume what I consider to be a false dichotomy behind their construal of safe conditions: in the absence of safety, the conditions necessarily become threatening. Perhaps more importantly, there is an assumption that safety is somehow transparent and that it can be created without taking into account the multiple subjectivities involved in any rhetorical situation. Safety is a contingent and continually shifting element that simply cannot be pinned down; and for many feminists it is not requisite for feminist communication. Indeed for third-space feminists who draw on work in coalitional politics, the concept of safety is too often built upon a homogenized understanding of the subject. That is, with an understanding that we, as individual subjects, occupy multiple and often contradictory subject positions, we can never create safety across our myriad subject positions.

Finally, the invitational rhetoric that Foss and Griffin forward seems to be akin to coalitional politics insofar as it calls for the discovery of common ground between and among various stakeholders in a conversation, and this does seem to embody a more ethical
engagement of difference. However, their rejection of change as an act of dominance doesn't account for the ways in which change usually is painful and threatening. As Bernice Johnson Reagon has suggested in her work on coalition politics, "I feel as if I'm gonna keel over any minute and die. That is most often what it feels like if you're really doing coalition work. Most of the time you feel threatened to the core and if you don't, you're not really doing no coalescing" (356). Importantly, feminist rhetoric cannot be reduced to decontextualized or fixed ideals, nor can we ignore that feminist rhetoric(s) often involve processes of change or transformation, processes that can be painful and potentially threatening.

In much the same way that Chela Sandoval argues that the oppressed must use all strategies and tactics at their disposal (discussed below), I believe that we must understand that no particular rhetorical style or strategy inherently challenges or accedes to dominant discursive practices. Indeed, it is the space of "no guarantees" that opens possibilities for a plethora of agentive moves. My goal in this project, then, is to historicize and contextualize how a politics of location acted as a feminist discursive strategy that enabled agentive opportunities for complex subject formation in the texts of radical, lesbian feminists during the 1980s and early 90s. An equally important part of my project is a projection of what a politics of location might offer feminists in the new millennium as the borders between modernism, postmodernism, and a postcolonialism become ever more blurred. In the remainder of this chapter I outline the feminist theoretical framework within which I situate a politics of location and I theorize a politics of location in relation to standpoint theory and identity politics to articulate the differences and similarities between and among these concepts.

A View from Elsewhere: Engaging the Question of 'Difference' in Feminism
Judith Butler's critique of identity politics places the question of difference squarely in the middle of conversations about the relationship between feminism and poststructural theories. Butler offers a genealogy of how the concept of gender has been constituted in feminist theory through an examination of the work of Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Monique Wittig in order to argue that feminism, when built upon the notion that "woman" constitutes a stable epistemological identity category, is exclusionary and ultimately limited in its potential for social transformation. She argues that the identity category of "women," often considered foundational to feminist politics, constrains the advancement of social change because it is based on a naturalized assumption of what it is to be a culturally intelligible woman. She suggests that "the internal paradox of this foundationalism is that it presumes, fixes, and constrains the very 'subjects' that it hopes to represent and liberate" (189).

Rejecting an epistemologically-based feminism, Butler suggests that feminists resist the desire to return to something "before" constructed identities by creating "gender trouble" through signifying practices that subvert naturalized identity categories. That is, through repetition of acts that displace gendered norms, such as drag, the culturally unintelligible and impossible can be revealed. Embracing a Foucauldian conceptualization of power that rejects the idea that power is a possession held by sovereign subjects and asserts that power is a generative force exercised through socio-historical practices, Butler contends that power can be exercised through the disruption of binaries that ensure the naturalization of an oppressive identification system based on structuralism. Agency, then, is not a question of being and knowing, but a question of how signification and resignification operate as disruptive practices. Butler argues that there is a greater potential for agency through
embracing the potential of the performative rather than reaching back to a foundation because identity is never fully determined or fixed. Furthermore, any politics built upon a foundationalist structure, ultimately, will fall into the trappings of oppressively policing what can and cannot be culturally intelligible.

While Butler's theory of the performative offers important moves away from a self-defeating politics built upon stable epistemological identities, her theory has several significant shortcomings for feminist theorists (for example, see Bordo; Hennessy; Nussbaum). First, the level of abstraction in *Gender Trouble* creates a considerable gap between a theory of the performative and actual social practices of the performative, and obscured in this gap is a material and historical grounding in social practices of the performative or readings of the performative from different social positionings. The lack of a materialist grounding can lead to a kind of discursive essentialism in which everything is reduced to "text," effectively eliding analyses of the material conditions which produce normalized relations of domination and subordination and an understanding of how people are differently positioned within spheres of power. As Lawrence Grossberg has indicated, "While every individual is positioned within the domain of subjectivity, not all positions are equal [and] not all positions are empowered to speak the experience and knowledge available within the ideological field" (*We Gotta* 118). Hence, it is important to understand the implications of resignification and interpretation of social practices from differing social positions. While Butler does offer drag as an example of how the performative is socially practiced, her analysis nonetheless exists, for the most part, in the realm of abstraction.

Susan Bordo offers the following analysis of Butler's theory:
[Performative theory] is ingenious and exciting, and it sounds right—in theory. And so long as we regard the body in drag as an abstract, unsituated linguistic structure, as pure text, we may be convinced by Butler's claim that the gender system is continually being playfully destabilized and subverted from within. But subversion of cultural assumptions (despite the claims of some deconstructionists) is not something that happens in a text or to a text. It is an event that takes place (or doesn't) in the reading of the text, and Butler does not explore this. She does not locate the text in question (the body in drag) in cultural context (are we watching the individual in a gay club or on the 'Donahue' show), does not consider the possibly different responses of various readers (male or female, young or old, gay or straight?) or the various anxieties that might complicate their readings, does not differentiate between women in male attire and men in female drag (two very different cultural forms, I would argue), and does not consult (or at least does not report on) a single human being's actual reaction either to seeing or to enacting drag. (292-293)

A critique of the abstract nature of Butler's theory is not to deny the potential for subversive possibilities in shifting from an epistemological understanding of gender to an ontological understanding; rather, it is to point out the limitations of a theory that does not return to the level of material practices that are culturally and historically situated in time and space.

Additionally, the abstract nature of Butler's theory of performance leads one to question: For whom is this theory forwarded? Certainly the elitism of academic discourse has historically excluded the range of people who can be included in the conversation.
However, given Butler's interest in some of the exclusionary practices of a feminism based on universal notions of women, it is ironic that her theory lacks the kind of material and historical grounding that might extend the boundaries of the conversation to include those who are less well-versed in the "high-theory" of poststructuralism. Finally, while Butler seems to eschew any kind of totalizing theory, if embraced uncautiously, her theory also becomes another over-arching umbrella theory, attempting to universally account for how social change does or does not occur, becoming what Bordo has deemed a "new feminist methodologism that lays claims to an authoritative critical framework, legislating 'correct' and 'incorrect' approaches to theorizing identity, history, and culture" (217).

Other theorists have begun to articulate the potential for social transformations through theories of radical contextualism and location that address some of the limitations of embracing poststructural theories whole-cloth (Goldzwig; Haraway; Hegde; Sandoval; Wander). These scholars look both within and beyond poststructuralism to articulate a space of skeptical re-constructionism, a space that takes us beyond the negative critiques of modernism in order to create constructive possibilities for thought that enable humans to live meaningfully without locating that meaning in some ultimate warrant or absolute "Truth" shared by all people. Rather than embracing poststructural theory in total, these scholars use poststructuralism as a tool for interpretation and critique of historical and cultural forces that have created systems of domination and subordination.

Radha Hegde, in her work on feminist communication theory, argues that postmodern and postcolonial theories provide fertile ground that can "extend the representational possibilities of feminist communication theory in order to make it transnationally responsive and more politically engaged" by providing a "location from elsewhere" from which to
engage with issues of difference (271). The concept of a view from elsewhere is borrowed from Theresa de Lauretis' (1987) theory of discourse. She suggests that "elsewhere" is a view from the margins in hegemonic constructions, which are perceived from the standpoint of centered positions, as "blinds spots, or the space-off" (de Lauretis Technologies 25) of hegemonic centers of representation. Ultimately, Hegde argues that we need to recover a radical feminist politics of location from elsewhere and a politics of experience that borrows from postmodern and postcolonial theories in order to enable feminist scholars to "build coalitions and alliances to gain theoretical momentum in order to represent alterity" (290).

Central to Hegde's argument for a view from elsewhere is the assumption that gender is not a stable category; rather it is a highly contested one, and if feminists are to represent women's experiences, we need a theoretical framework for understanding differences that engages them rather than elides them. Towards an understanding of how difference has been elided, Hegde addresses the trappings of both modernist and postmodernist assumptions about difference for feminist communication scholars. In her analysis of modernism, she reveals four of the major assumptions of Enlightenment that are antithetical to a view from elsewhere:

(a) the grand rationalistic view of science where truth about reality can be 'positively' established by uncovering causal explanations, (b) reality has an objective structure that can be uncovered and understood, (c) the valorization of objectivity in the research process and the separation of the researchers and researched, and (d) the view of the subject as a bounded autonomous individual. (277-278)
She goes on to argue that it is the modernist drive for closure, certainty, and control embedded in the above assumptions that create a major problem for understanding difference from a feminist standpoint. She states that a modernist response to difference as a harmonious celebration of pluralism, "elides serious political and intellectual engagement with the issues" because it rests on the assumption that difference is a "static, self-evident entity" (271). Alternatively, postmodern assumptions of endless play or relativistic accommodation "at best flattens out the differences that feminists want to reinstate in our theoretical enterprise" (278), which creates an apolitical theoretical framework that is counterproductive to a critical feminist viewpoint. Therefore, Hegde forwards postcolonial theory as a place from which to locate a theoretical vantage point that complicates poststructuralism. Through postcolonial theory we can resist what has come to be understood as a de-politicized celebration of differences: "the heterogeneity and difference that emerge from postcoloniality are conflictual and contingent and not the same as urbane multiplicity or the postmodern pastiche" (283). For Hegde, where postmodern theories enable the deconstruction of modernist narratives and assumptions, postcolonial theory extends the conversation by providing a more materially grounded deconstruction of modernist assumptions. I argue that a politics of location provides a "view from elsewhere" that resists the modernist drive for closure, certainty, and control through an articulation of subjects who speak from both centered and decentered social positionings.

Chela Sandoval provides another critique of feminist politics that elides difference, which she names as U.S. hegemonic feminism, which she borrows from Spivak. Sandoval argues that this form of feminism is typically built around white feminists who make calls for unity, serving an underlying need for homogeneity that secures whiteness as a central
organizing feature for feminist politics. Audre Lorde also notes that the call for sisterhood occludes differences: "By and large within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word sisterhood that does not in fact exist" (Sister 116). The call for unity in the name of "common oppression against women" elides both differences among women and different manifestations of oppression against women. Sandoval argues that hegemonic feminism plays itself out in four different phases: liberal, Marxist, radical/cultural, and socialist. These phases can be understood as "women are the same as men, 'women are different from men,' 'women are superior,' and the fourth catchall category, 'women are a racially divided class'" (51). The problem with hegemonic feminism is the way in which it is organized around a logic of exclusion. That is, each phase is understood as self-contained and in opposition or contradiction to the other phases. For Sandoval, this compartmentalization reifies a feminist norm in such a way that it reproduces hegemony and "rigidly circumscribes what is possible for social activists who want to work across their boundaries" (53).

Hegemonic feminism is particularly problematic when looking for theories which engage difference because feminists who exist on the margins understand that no one form of political action or ideological phase is suited for all contexts and circumstances. Sandoval calls for engagement among and between differential positionings in order to realize potentials for social change that have been effaced by compartmentalization:

It is in the activity of what Anzaldua calls weaving 'between and among' oppositional ideologies as conceived in this new topographical space, where another and the fifth mode of oppositional consciousness and activity is found.
I think of this activity of consciousness as the 'differential,' insofar as it enables movement 'between and among' ideological positionings (the equal-rights, revolutionary, supremacist, and separatist modes of oppositional consciousness) considered as variables, in order to disclose the distinctions among them. (58)

Following Sandoval's call for de-compartmentalization, I examine the deployment of a politics of location in feminist rhetoric(s) with an understanding that locations are temporally and spatially situated within fluid and shifting borders rather than rigid or fixed structures. This sheds light on the potential for transformation and oppositional consciousness through movement between and among ideological frameworks.

While Sandoval calls the enactment of different forms of resistance "tactics" rather than "strategies" (following de Certeau), her call to enact multiple forms of resistance across ideological structures is akin to the notion of strategic essentialism which has been theorized by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1990) and Emma Pérez (1998). Strategic essentialism is born of the understanding that political representation always entails some form of essentialism. Spivak argues that "since it is not possible not to be an essentialist, one can self-consciously use this irreducible moment of essentialism as part of one's strategy" (The Post-colonial 109). Strategic essentialism, then, is a move to politically represent oneself against dominant ideologies. Emma Pérez describes it as a tactic that is deployed by marginalized "others" in the process of claiming the right to self-name (in specific historic moments) and demand space so that it "thwarts cultural and political suicide" ("Irigaray's" 88). This form of essentialism provides spaces for the female imaginary which is often elided by what Pérez deems "invasionary" politics by white men and women. In addressing
the argument that demands by Chicana lesbians or women of color in general to their own spaces are "exclusionary" moves, she takes a radical materialist stance, arguing that "even though postmodern theorists have retired hierarchies, domination, unequal socioeconomic relations, unequal gender relations, and unequal racial relations, all still thrive" ("Irigaray's" 93). As an example of invasionary politics, she critiques the way in which women of color are expected to be "cultural workers," bringing about the moral conscience of white women, as represented in the book, *Conflicts in Feminism* (which casts conflict as pleasurable and discounts the pain and often compromised positioning of women of color in these conflicts). More often than not women of color are invited to dialogue with white women—usually in abusive ways, not with each other. Pérez also examines how Chicana lesbians were attacked for being "terrorists" and "exclusionary" in their attempt to hold a closed panel at the National Association for Chicano Studies in 1990. Ultimately, she argues that when Chicana lesbians attempt to speak, "any effort to make spaces and create discourses are threatened by invasionary politics" ("Irigaray's" 96-97); hence essentialistic strategies "are never the solution, but they are a process for finding and expressing one's multiple voices" ("Irigaray's" 92).

As I will illustrate in the final section of this chapter, a politics of location has been critiqued for falling into the trappings of essentialism—thereby fixing the speaking subject within rigid identity categories. However, much like the work of Pérez and Spivak, this project is grounded in the assumption that temporal and spatial claims to identity categories represent strategic moves to name one's historical and political location and to claim the *right* of naming and taking space within frameworks which might otherwise erase the existence of those who are culturally unintelligible. As a strategic move, a politics of location, then, is not
an effort to unearth pre-discursive, essential identities. Nor is the claiming of identity positions through a politics of location construed as a stopping point or a "point of arrival" to some fixed state. Rather a politics of location strategically claims identities in order to investigate and excavate the embedded meanings within particular identity categories in order to ultimately engage in a larger process or movement towards the re-construction of subjectivities. For example, in her essays in *Sister Outsider* Audre Lorde claims an identity as a black, lesbian, feminist, poet in order to investigate the interconnectedness of her identity positions and explore how these identities inform her interactions with others. She strategically essentializes her identity in a political move to claim spaces that allow her to name herself and explore how her position in the world impacts her experiences. Her purpose, however, is not to define "the " black, lesbian, feminist, poet experience in the world. Instead, she strategically invokes her social position as a departure point for understanding her relations with others with the overarching hope of re-constructing her subjectivity in a manner that does not reproduce relations of domination. The way in which the invocation of identity positions is situated within a larger project that ultimately seeks to complicate and reconstitute subjectivity reveals the strategic character of this form of essentialism.

Third-space feminism insists that no one theory or ideological positioning can be demarcated as a point of departure for social action for oppressed peoples. Sandoval argues that because hegemonic feminism is structured on the need for homogeneity and a fixed understanding of gender, the possibility for coalitional politics is precluded. In place of fixed identities, Sandoval suggests that identities formed through coalitional politics must be both fixed in a degree of strength at the same time that they are mutable:
The differential mode of social movement and consciousness depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self-consciously choosing and adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations...Differential consciousness requires grace, flexibility, and strength: enough strength to confidently commit to a well-defined structure of identity for one hour, day, week, month, year; enough flexibility to self-consciously transform that identity according to the requisites of another oppositional ideological tactic if readings of power's formation require it. (60)

Hegde, Sandoval, Pérez, and Spivak engage difference by embracing a complex of theories to understand the fluid movement between margin and center, spaces of fixedness and spaces of ambiguity. Difference is not engaged as a mere celebration of plurality but as a launching point for a differential consciousness that can lead to coalitional politics. The theoretical vantage point third-space feminists argue for enables a more complicated engagement with the question of agency. Using a hybrid fusion of modern, postmodern, and postcolonial theories enables a feminist "view from elsewhere" that embraces a dialectical movement between margins and centers in such a way that destabilizes the category of gender by perceiving it precisely as a highly contested category. That is, though the pre-given modernist agent is called into question, a radical, materialist understanding that overlapping discourses that create "subjects in process" provides the potential for constrained agency. As Lawrence Grossberg has suggested from a cultural studies theoretical vantage point, "the subject is always 'a subject-in-process' constantly determined and constantly determining" ("The Ideology of Communication" 95). Through this hybrid theoretical approach, Hegde
defines agency as "the coming together of subjectivity and the potential for action" (288). The potential for action is located within both local and global contexts which provide a necessary launching point from which to engage the politics of difference that examines the construction of women's subordination and the potential for agency within multiple hierarchies of power.

**The Subject of Differential Consciousness**

For feminists and critical theorists interested in agentive opportunities for marginalized "others," poststructural deconstruction of the subject marks a move to question the construction of the normative, universal subject rather than a move to do away with the concept altogether. Too often, calls for the death of the subject are made from those positioned within the center of hegemonic structures. Philip Wander suggests that we "ask about what is not being said, or who is and who is not involved in the saying-listening, and [we] begin talking about people with names and histories, issues of personal import, and the process of selection and discrimination" (403). Chela Sandoval takes us into a space, which she deems "the methodology of the oppressed," to "reclaim theory from the halls of the academy where it has been intercepted and domesticated" (7) and in order to show that marginalized "others" provide methods for coping in a postmodern world because these subjects have always already experienced the world as fragmented, multiple, fluid selves. Importantly, she embraces difference in a way that doesn't fall into an apolitical pluralism or an endless play of differences that leads to a "schizophrenic" subjectivity (as Frederic Jameson has suggested). Sandoval provides a framework for understanding subjectivity in ways that locate a third space between the tension of modernist and postmodernist conceptualizations of subjectivity, arguing that the third-world subject "is most familiar with
what citizenship in this [postmodern] realm requires and makes possible" (Sandoval 9).

Current debates that create clear demarcations between modernist and postmodernist theories bifurcates our perceptions of the subject:

There is another way out of this unhappy paradox that sets a modernist/historicist view of an isolated but 'real' subject now under erasure against a poststructuralist/postmodernist view that the subject never existed in the first place—a third view of the citizen-subject...In order to perceive this third view, it is necessary to extend the so-called modernist/historicist position and the poststructuralist/postmodernist position in order for them to similarly recognize that 'fragmentation' is neither an experience nor a theoretical construct peculiar to the poststructuralist or postmodern moments...The citizen-subject's postmodern despair over experiencing this condition can be released when the practitioner looks to the survival skills and decolonized oppositional practices that were developed in response to such fragmentation under previous cultural eras. (Sandoval 33)

Sandoval's methodology of the oppressed does not claim a fixed method, standpoint, or relationship to modernist, postmodernist, or postcolonial strategies and tactics. Instead this methodology can be understood as situated between several theoretical models. Theoretical "purity" is not the objective of this methodology; rather the goal is a reconstitution of subjectivity through engagement with the "selves" in a variety of socio-cultural contexts in order to decolonize the imagination of what is possible. In her work on decolonizing Chicano/a history, Pérez describes the colonial imaginary as a dichotomous way of thinking and naming (e.g., there are rulers and ruled) and in so doing, it creates silences and gaps
("Queering"). Alternatively, the decolonial imaginary is a space between the colonial and postcolonial. In *The Decolonial Imaginary* Pérez describes it as "that interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated" (7). Thus, the decolonial imaginary is a resistant and rupturing space. It refuses a dichotomy between subject and object, oppressor and oppressed, looking instead to liminal spaces and liminal identities. To claim a stance of theoretical purity or authenticity that reproduces binaries would be antithetical to the goal challenging the power relations, silences, and erasures embedded in the colonial imaginary. Differential consciousness, then, is enacted through "an anticolonial, mestiza, U.S. feminist of color, queer, and differential conceptualization of the subject...[which] cannot fully inhabit either the modernist/historicist or the poststructuralist/postmodernist position, but rather inhabit each and partially" (Sandoval 33-34). These survival skills require an ethical commitment to coalitions between subordinated constituencies that read the world through a multitude of lenses in order to transform relations of domination and subordination. Additionally, these skills are always dependent on the ability to understand the interstices between modernism and postmodernism as a space for imagining "alternative realities [with] novel means of communication, creativity, productivity, mobility, and a different sense of 'control'" (Sandoval 136).

Importantly for Sandoval, resistance is the third term often left out of binary structures of domination and subordination, and it is in this third term that she identifies agentive opportunities for oppressed subjects to perform power through five technologies: "sign reading; deconstruction and reconstruction of signs; an ethical commitment to justice; and the differential movement that keeps all aspects of being in motion and mutation" (130). Sandoval defines the five technologies which comprise the methodology of the oppressed as...
"techniques for moving energy" (82). Sandoval uses Roland Barthes' work *Mythologies* and his theory of semiotics as a framework for discussing the five technologies that allow for resistance. However, she contends that Barthes' theory has a significant shortcoming because he could not put semiotics in conversation with theories of resistance produced by the oppressed. Instead, he construed semiotics only within the purview of the "scientifically trained" mythologist (104). Sandoval argues that:

Barthes's territorial range of control ended at the location where his semiotic theory of resistance should have met in coalition with those theories of resistance that have been generated by oppressed and colonized peoples. Unable to negotiate that leap, Barthes constructed instead a view of semiotics, of "mythology," and of resistance where the individual practitioner can only act alone, isolated, and in despair. The border-crossover Barthes was not able to recognize the new kinds of warriors, the shape-shifters who comprised his allies in resistance...Barthes saw himself as discoverer of a new terrain that was, as yet, unpeopled. (113)

Despite these shortcomings, Sandoval suggests that Barthes' theory offers a significant contribution to our understanding of how the oppressed act in the world, asserting agency through resistance to structures of domination (105). Following Barthes' framework, Sandoval suggests that the form of resistance embodied in the first three technologies of the oppressed (sign reading, deconstruction, reconstruction) "comprises an 'archaeological' dig through meaning and consciousness that can return meaning production to 'its healthy state: that of the arbitrariness of the sign and the resulting mobility that keeps history, language, meaning, and spirit alive" (104). The fourth technology (differential movement) operates as
a type of hinge for the first three technologies because it permits a "flexible" or "improvisational" response to shifting power dynamics, which ultimately enables the first three technologies to occur (112). The fifth technology guides or drives the first four; Sandoval explains that it is "an ethical ideological code that is committed to social justice according to egalitarian redistributions of power across such differences coded as race, gender, sex, nation, culture, or class distinctions" (112). The first three technologies are particularly relevant to this project. I illustrate in chapters four, five, and six, through analyses of the work of Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Marilyn Frye, and Dorothy Allison, how a politics of location can be understood similarly as an archæological dig, or an excavation of embedded meanings of identity positions and a subsequent deconstruction and reconstruction of identities, which ultimately situates subjectivity as fluid and mobile.

Importantly, much like Teresa Ebert (1993) and Peter McClaren (1994) who argue for "resistance postmodern," Sandoval's articulation of resistance allows for transformative potential of marginalized subjects to intervene in processes of domination. However, as Rafael Pérez-Torres has suggested, "This is not to say that Chicanos [or other marginalized 'others'] have formed a postmodern culture avant la lettre. It is to say that Chicanos have lived and survived (which is a form of triumph over) the disparities made plain by the critical light of postmodernism" (qtd. in Sandoval 16). I argue that a politics of location is an effort to rhetorically engage in oppositional consciousness in such a way that reveals the imaginative tension points between modernist and postmodernist notions of subjectivity. Analyzing how radical, lesbian feminists use a politics of location provides us with insight
about how an oppressed group of subjects have survived (and thrived) as partial, fragmented, and contradictory subjects-in-process.

Within her configuration of differential consciousness, Sandoval also challenges the dichotomy between modernist and postmodernist conceptualizations of power. Through a modernist lens, power is understood as sovereign, held by oppressors over the oppressed, and is configured as vertical movement from "above." This, however, doesn't account for the ways in which power can be enacted in forms of resistance from "below," nor does it allow for a more complicated understanding of subjectivities across positions of privilege and non-privilege. Through a postmodernist lens, power is understood as "as a globalized, flattened but mobile, terrain...[which] comes complete with power nodules inhabitable by collective subjectivities who are perceived as capable of accessing, with equal facility, their own peculiar quotients of power" (Sandoval 74). Sandoval contends that some postmodern, (perhaps superficial) conceptualizations of power suggest we have equal ability to exercise power and "allow hierarchical and material differences in power between people to be erased from consciousness, even while these same economic and social privileges are bolstered" (75). Within leftist social movements, this notion of being "equivalent contenders on the grid for the services of power" (75) leads to a kind of compartmentalization and antagonism across lines of different identity categories (nation, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that are antithetical to the kind of coalitional politics that Sandoval contends are necessary for social change. Hence, she argues for a multi-dimensional conceptualization of power, one that focuses both on semiotic positioning and movement by understanding that subjects have been constructed through material structures of domination and subordination at the same time that the oppressed have the ability to reconstruct social positions through any "media at
their disposal—whether it is narrative as weapon, riot as speech, looting as revolution" (77).

Much as Pérez and Spivak call for strategic essentialism as one tactic in an ongoing struggle for survival and social change, Sandoval argues that our understanding of power can be neither modernist or postmodernist; rather, we must look at the contrast between them as a generative space for understanding how power can be tactically enacted by subordinated groups. Hence, through efforts to describe how one's politics are grounded in socio-cultural and historical locations, which often include positions of privilege and non-privilege, center and margin, power is revisioned as resistance to or interventions in systems of domination, using the "available means" to reconstitute one's subjectivities in coalition with others.

Following Emma Pérez's work on decolonizing the imagination (1999), Sandoval suggests that we must move from a "rhetoric of 'supremacy'" to a rhetoric of transformation (130). The primary strategy for this move is the centering of love, as it can enable coalitional politics. She argues that:

a diverse array of thinkers are agitating for similarly conceived and unprecedented forms of identity, politics, aesthetic production, and coalitional consciousness through their shared practice of a hermeneutics of love in the postmodern world, and it demonstrates that the apartheid of theoretical domains dividing academic endeavors by race, sex, class, gender, and identity is annulled when this fundamental linkage is discerned. (4)

The move to discuss love as a hermeneutic in theoretical and academic contexts might seem antithetical to the kind of rigorous intellectual engagement established within the Western tradition of rhetoric that relies so heavily on cognitivist notions of rationality. However, I believe this call for love provides just the kind of hermeneutic necessary for refusing the split
between mind/body/spirit. It is also a necessary component for understanding one of the central reasons why the lesbian feminists that I examine in this project used a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy. Sandoval suggests that "Love as social movement is enacted by revolutionary, mobile, and global coalitions of citizen-activists who are allied through the apparatus of emancipation" (184). As I will show in chapter two, a politics of location was enacted through the desire to live in connection with other feminists through differences; it was not an effort to further compartmentalize women according to social positioning. Love for these lesbian women, then, became a central motivating force in building coalitions that could affect social change both from within feminist communities and within dominant cultural communities. Attempting to resist the ways hegemonic feminism created a normalized feminist subject, the hermeneutic of love operated as that which could enable these writers to be allied in ways perhaps not as immediately salient in other types of coalitional politics where differences were erased in order to claim common ground. That is, the desire to live in loving connection with others became the common ground upon which to work for changes in the social order that rejected isolation, exploitation, and hatred.

For third-space feminists, the tensions among different constructions of subjectivity in modernism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism are a struggle over the terms by which subjectivity is articulated and no one theoretical framework is embraced as an end all answer to questions about agency, subjectivity, and social change. Rather, it is the struggle, the tension points in the intersections of these theories, that provide generative spaces for imagining a more just and egalitarian society. Unfortunately, as Sandoval points out, "differential U.S. third world feminist criticism (which is a set of theoretical and methodological strategies) is often mis-recognized and under-analyzed by readers when it is
translated as a demographic constituency only (women of color), and not as a theoretical and methodological approach in its own right" (171). This is not to call for an erasure of women of color as creators and developers of the differential consciousness that Sandoval articulates as a methodological approach; rather, it is to suggest that any field which calls for radical social change needs to be infused with third-space feminist theory and methods. Indeed, it is my argument that the methodology of the oppressed extends current conversations in the field of feminist rhetoric(s) into theoretical spaces that can help complicate our understanding of the speaking subject within feminist rhetorical frameworks. In the final section of this chapter I place a politics of location within the historical context from which it initially emerged and I offer a brief definition of how I use the term (I offer a fuller theoretical discussion in chapter two). I then situate a politics of location in relation to feminist standpoint theory and identity politics in order to establish how a politics of location is a set of discursive practices for reconstituting subjectivity.

**Historicizing a Politics of Location, Standpoint Theory, and Identity Politics**

In her early work Adrienne Rich had the "dream of a common language" (1978), which was marked by a move to situate all women, similarly, in opposition to male patriarchal norms. This form of feminism, which Sandoval names hegemonic feminism, effectively erases differences and power inequities among and between women and among and between men and women of different races, classes, and cultures. In her later work, beginning in the early 1980s, Rich begins to question whether the quest for a single cause of domination and oppression, such as patriarchy, can be useful to a global feminism. She interrogates the implications of her own position as a white, Western woman by suggesting: "Why not admit it, get it said, so we can get on to the work to be done, back down to earth
again? The faceless, sexless, raceless proletariat. The faceless, raceless, classless category of 'all women.' Both creations of white Western self-centeredness" ("Notes" 218-219). In her book, *Blood Bread and Poetry*, Adrienne Rich coins the phrase "a politics of location," which marks an effort to move away from hegemonic feminism that universalizes all women's experiences in the world and constructs a normative (and hence limiting and exclusionary) subject of feminism. More recently, Chandra Talpade Mohanty has extended Rich's theory into the arena of postcolonial studies. She defines a politics of location as "the historical, geographical, cultural, psychic and imaginative boundaries which provide the ground for political definition and self-definition for contemporary U.S. feminists" ("Feminist Encounters" 74).

Importantly, while Rich coined the phrase "a politics of location," the shift in feminism in the 1980s that this phrase identifies was propelled through the work of radical women of color who challenged singular constructions of identity and identification in women's liberation and anti-racist movements and called for analyses of intersecting systems of domination. I concur with Teresa de Lauretis (1987), who suggests that:

> the shift in consciousness...may be said to have begun (if a convenient date is needed) with 1981, the year of publication of *This Bridge Called My Back*, the collection of writings by radical women of color edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, which was followed in 1982 by the Feminist Press anthology edited by Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith with the title *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brace*. It was these books that first made available to all feminists the feelings, the analyses, and the political positions of feminists of color, and the
critiques of white or mainstream feminism. The shift in feminist consciousness that was initially prompted by works such as these is best characterized by the awareness and the effort to work through feminism's complicity with ideology, both ideology in general (including classism or bourgeois liberalism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and I would also add, with some qualifications, humanism) and the ideology of gender in —that is to say, heterosexism. (10)

Alternatively, a shift could be identified earlier, in 1977, with the publication of The Combahee River Collective's "A Black Feminist Statement," which challenges hegemonic feminism and calls for feminist political activism that addresses the intersectionality of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Or, a historical shift could be located at the Third Annual National Women's Studies Conference in June of 1981, which was organized around the title and theme "Women Respond to Racism." As Chela Sandoval (as then secretary to the National Third World Women's Alliance) has discussed in her report "Feminism and Racism," the conference marks a significant moment in the feminist movement because it ultimately reproduced racism (in structure, organization, and individual interactions), it divided women into two oppositional categories ("white" and "third-world"), and it provided the context for women of color to collectively (and painfully) discover common ground that could infuse feminism "with new and different meanings" (64). Wary of the false unity of sisterhood put forward by white feminism which led to erasure and oppression of differences, the women of color at the conference defined a new kind of common ground, which Sandoval describes as a "positive perception of difference" (67) rather than one that perceives difference as divisive. She explains that after struggling with differences in the women of
color morning consciousness raising group that seemed to place the women in opposition to one another, they ultimately came to understand that "through the compassionate inclusion of our differences and the self-conscious understanding that each difference is valid in its context, we are awakened to a new realm of methodological, theoretical, political, and feminist activity—with a pool of differences, born of survival and resistance, at our disposal" (67). This common ground led to the examination of how the participants' "learned sensitivity to mobile webs of power" could be transformed into oppositional consciousness (66). In her report, Sandoval forwards oppositional consciousness as that which can move feminism out of stagnation because it:

creates the opportunity for flexible, dynamic and tactical responses, it is another critical theory for political action which allows us no single conceptualization of our position in society. Rather, it focuses us instead upon the process of the circulation of power, on the skill of reading its moves, and on the recognition that a new morality and effective opposition resides in a self-conscious flexibility of identity and of political action which is capable, above all else, of tactically intervening in the moves of power in the name of egalitarian social relations. (66)

While the 1981 NWSA conference ended with divisions between third-world and white women that were further "intensified and cemented with antagonism" (70), it provided the material and historical context for women of color to collectively push against the false unity of hegemonic feminism and begin agitating for a "new kind of political movement" (67).

Whatever the specific moment, in the late 70s and early 80s calls by radical women of color in the United States for visibility and for spaces to speak the heterogeneous, complex,
and oftentimes contradictory needs, desires, and identities of women marks a turning point in feminism. It is this turning point, or rupture in the "order of things," that I believe allowed for radical feminists to begin invoking a different set of rhetorical strategies that pushed feminism into new territory. In fact, in her essay, "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism," Norma Alarcón suggests that the contributors to This Bridge were "speaking subjects of a new discursive formation" (356).

As I will discuss in chapter two, the potential for interrupting normative subjectivity occurs through a collective set of intervening discursive practices by illegitimate subjects, not through the individual will of sovereign subjects. Changes in practices can lead to changes in the order of discourse. It is my argument that a politics of location, motivated through the collective call of radical women of color and anti-racist white women, is one such set of discursive practices which historically allowed for the creation of alternative forms of intersubjectivity.

I offer this brief history to point out that although the phrase "a politics of location" was coined by Rich, the rhetorical strategies deployed through this rhetorical/political positioning were used by many feminists, particularly third-space feminists prior to the Rich's invention of it in 1984. In this project I use a politics of location to denote both social location and the places or locations to which authors who invoke this strategy look for an understanding of their identities. That is, writers who invoke a politics of location work to unearth the socio-political significance of the identity positions they claim. In interrogating and deconstructing the meaning of particular identities, these writers also locate what might be considered alternative topoi, such as emotion (including hope, desire, anger, and fear) and physical geography, as sites that can provide clues for deconstructing pre-established
identities and reconstructing subjectivities that are not based on relations of domination and subordination. Finally, the telos, end point, or final location to which a politics of location points for the reconstruction of intersubjectivity is not fixed beyond the desire to create non-oppressive ways of interacting and being in the world. Any "final location" is deferred through the understanding that subjectivities are defined through interactional relations with others and thus are always in the process of be-coming through continued engagement.

In brief, I define a politics of location as a set of discursive strategies used for political definition and self-definition created at a historical juncture when radical feminists of color were calling for a disruption of hegemonic feminism. These strategies function as a self-reflexive rhetorical and political effort to move beyond universalized notions of subjectivity and positivist notions of knowledge construction and into a historical and material contextualization of subjectivities and knowledges as always in processes of be-coming. More specifically, in the chapters that follow I extrapolate the discursive strategies (which I collectively name a politics of location) from narratives and political essays by Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Marilyn Frye, and Dorothy Allison, narratives which focus on self-representation and the representation of relations between and among social positions. For example, Minnie Bruce Pratt's essay "Identity: Skin Blood Heart" is a narrative that uses a politics of location to self-represent her Southern, Christian, white, middle class, female identity and the way in which that social location or identity has been constructed in relation to others. As another example, Audre Lorde's essay "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger" uses a politics of location to represent Lorde's social position in relation to other black women. A politics of location maps identities as a strategy
for representing relations between social positions in the effort to excavate embedded meanings of particular social positions.

I contend that there are several reasons why a politics of location marks a significant rhetorical and political move (which I discuss at length in the next chapter); a politics of location:

- challenges the universal subject of feminism and the normative subject of phallogocentric rhetoric, both of which are reductive and exclusionary, and hold the potential to oppressively essentialize speaking subjects;
- speaks multiple, contradictory, non-innocent subjectivities into be-ing, thus providing opportunities for discursive agency; and
- resists absolute relativism and is driven by the "hermeneutics of love," which maintains a place for imagination, hope, and a vision of a more egalitarian world.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, I situate a politics of location within Chela Sandoval's methodology of the oppressed. It is one of the discursive sites to which we can look for clues about how the oppressed survive in a postmodern world as fragmented, contradictory, multiple subjects without falling into despair or a schizophrenic state. A politics of location provides us with strategies of representation in which subjects have a degree of constrained agency that allows them to discursively intervene in relations of domination.

**Standpoint Theory and A Politics of Location**

A politics of location runs parallel to feminist standpoint theory, and thus shares many of the same theoretical assumptions about situated knowledges and situated subjects. In "The Feminist Standpoint," Nancy Hartsock defines standpoint theory as that which takes a historical and materialist approach to the construction of knowledge, always understanding
that epistemology "grows in complex and contradictory ways from material life" (160).

Donna Haraway defines nonessentialist feminist standpoints as "cognitive-emotional-political achievements, crafted out of located social-historical-bodily experience—itself always constituted through fraught, noninnocent, discursive, material, collective practices—that could make less deluded knowledge for all of us more likely" (Modest Witness 304n32). Similarly, Hartsock argues that standpoint theory "is achieved rather than obvious, a mediated rather than immediate understanding" ("The Feminist Standpoint" 162). Understanding how the material and historical conditions inform epistemology and the creation of knowledge is a process that requires a critical consciousness and a continued engagement with and interrogation of assumptions. Thus a particular epistemological standpoint is not realized simply by one's position in society relative to others, nor is an epistemological standpoint a final "point of arrival." A feminist epistemology requires continual resistance to oppressive forces. Importantly, standpoint theory recognizes "the power realities operative in a community, and points to the ways the ruling group's vision may be both perverse and made real by that group's power to define the terms for the community as a whole" ("The Feminist Standpoint" 162). Hence, power is understood as an exercise in naming frameworks and activities that create communities, a power that also can be exercised oppositionally through collectively defining alternative frameworks and activities.

Many similarities exist between a politics of location and standpoint theory—most obviously that truths are mediated by a subject's material and historical location in the world. I do not suggest that a politics of location exists within an entirely new framework separate from standpoint theory. Instead, I conceive of standpoint theory and a politics of location in
a relationship similar to that of two overlapping circles. That is, the two share a set of assumptions, but also distinctive characteristics of each. Feminist standpoint theory is distinguished by its greater emphasis on epistemology—on issues of how knowledge is constructed. A politics of location is distinguished by its focus on discursive representations of identity positions—on how subjectivity is discursively deconstructed and then reconstructed. As indicated above, I conceive of a politics of location as a discursive practice used to excavate the meaning of identity positions so that new forms of subjectivity can be forged within coalitional movements for social change. Another significant way to differentiate these two concepts is that standpoint theory generally has been used as a broad theory that informs methodological inquiries in feminist scholarship, but a politics of location has been used as a rhetorical and political move to construct alternative subjectivities in a lesbian feminist counterpublic. Of course, a definitive distinction between standpoint theory and a politics of location is difficult to maintain because they do share many of the same assumptions; likewise, the delineation between epistemology and subjectivity is imprecise within a poststructural theoretical framework because the two easily slide into one another. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this project I differentiate a politics of location from standpoint theory because their sites of inquiry are different—my research on a politics of location involves an investigation of discursive practices of self-representation in essays and narratives by radical, lesbian feminists whereas standpoint theory investigates broader theoretical questions of epistemology and methodology, which are often more contained within academic conversations. In many respects, a politics of location is a discursive performance of feminist standpoint theory within a particular community of feminists.
Identity Politics and A Politics of Location

A politics of location is often conflated with identity politics because it arose during the height of a socio-historical moment when identity politics was embraced by many political movements, in particular the Civil Rights movement, the feminist movement, the gay liberation movement, and Black nationalism. My project operates from the assumption that a politics of location is distinct from identity politics, which is a particular political mobilization of identities that currently has been thoroughly critiqued through poststructural theories of subjectivity. In particular, Judith Butler's theory of gender and performativity has called into question the limits of identity politics built upon fixed or naturalized conceptualizations of what it means to be a culturally intelligible woman. In place of identity politics, which operates from an epistemological foundation, Butler argues that the point of departure for feminists should be practices of signification that disrupt assumptions about what has previously been "culturally unintelligible and impossible" (189). Other theorists, who embrace identity politics as a form of strategic essentialism, have also pointed out the homogenizing effects of a political movement that is simply based on the "deadly sameness" of abstraction" (Rich "Notes" 221). Emma Pérez has argued that "The mistake within any arena, whether academic or political, is that a common enemy bonds 'us' and makes 'us' all the same, while 'they,' the common enemy, are also all the same" ("Irigaray's" 95).

Furthermore, identity politics has become institutionalized and appropriated by right wing conservatives without a similar feminist vision for radical social change. For example, Henry Giroux has astutely pointed out how an identity politics of whiteness has been mobilized through the discourse of individualism, traditional values, and family values as an
effort to counteract multicultural and multiracial democratic diversity in the veiled name of white supremacy (225).

I contend that the radical potential of a politics of location was not given due attention because it often is subsumed within identity politics. Furthermore, as indicated earlier in this chapter, I believe that a politics of location is one methodology of the oppressed; as such, it provides a practical discursive strategy for coping in a postmodern world as fragmented, multiple, subjects in a manner that does not sacrifice a hopeful vision that relations of domination and subordination can be interrupted. Hence, one of the primary purposes of this project is to reclaim a politics of location as a radical, political discursive move that speaks to current conversations about poststructural subjectivities, agency, and social change.

Importantly, a politics of location is not merely a reflexive moment of self-disclosure in a text; that is, it is more than a horizontal listing of adjectives that indicate the identity positions of a rhetor, such as race, class, and sexuality. It is an unearthing of the subject positions into which writers have been interpellated and a critical interrogation of how those subject positions inform relationships with other subjects. Susan Bordo's examination of the body as a cultural text and site of struggle is instructive in clarifying the distinction I draw here between a symbolic form of identity location (listing one's subject positions) and a practical form of identity location (uneartling embedded meanings of social positions). In her analysis Bordo draws on Foucault's distinction between the "intelligible body" (the symbolic form) and the "useful body" (the practical rules), which she clarifies is a shift in register, not a shift to a biological understanding of the body (181). The "intelligible body" is the symbolic abstraction or the generalized cultural representation of a normative body, which mirrors or works in conjunction with the practical body. The practical body is formed
through "a set of practical rules and regulations through which the living body is 'trained, shaped, obeys, responds'" (181 emphasis in original). Bordo argues that feminist theorists must study both cultural representations of the body and the practical lives of those bodies, the practical rules through which those bodies are realized. Similarly, a politics of location establishes the rhetor's cultural identity through what might be considered "culturally intelligible" symbols (for example, Minnie Bruce Pratt names herself as a white, middle class, Southern woman). She then moves on to examine the practical rules and regulations in which she has engaged (and now resists) that have shaped that particular identity (for example, she examines the rules of morality which have formed her consciousness and actions as a white, Southern, middle class woman).

As a radical rhetorical political move that critically interrogates identity positions, a politics of location is marked by dialectical movement between the already constructed and the potential to rewrite subjectivities through self-representation and a search for new narratives of women's experiences. In Rich's words, it is born of the "need to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create" ("Notes" 212). Representation through a politics of location often invokes strategic essentialism, which, as mentioned above, is born of the understanding that political representation always entails some form of essentialism. According to Pérez, it is a tactic that is deployed by marginalized "others" in the process of claiming the right to name (in specific historic moments) to "[thwart] cultural and political suicide" and provide spaces for the female imaginary ("Irigaray's" 88). Naming one's positionality and representing one's experiences in the world is born of the desire to speak subjects into be-ing in a manner that recognizes how particular subjects have already been
scripted without falling into the despair of totalizing notions of either essentialism/determinism or relativism/social constructionism. Whereas identity politics often is founded upon an essentialism that serves to fix identities by calling forth the epistemological "essence of women," a politics of location invokes strategic essentialism as a momentary political tactic or launching point from which to name and represent oneself against dominant ideological identity formations.

Thus, a politics of location situates social locations as points of departure from which to understand how subjectivities have been constituted by dominant ideologies with the ultimate aim of reconstituting those subjectivities. In effect, a politics of location operates as a process through which writers engage in political re-presentation of the speaking subject, a representation that does not preclude internal diversity or intersubjectivity (within the speaking subject or the community). A politics of location is founded upon the assumption of "difference from within"; the aim is not to transcend difference, but to reclaim it, within individual subjectivities as well as within collective political and social movements. In sum, a politics of location is part of the rhetoric and politics of representation.

As I will argue in chapter three, a politics of location keeps identities mobile and fluid through two primary moves: an analytic deconstruction of inherited subject positions and an epistemic reconstruction which produces new forms of subjectivity based upon interdependence. As an analytic strategy, a politics of location uses a form of strategic essentialism to locate and map out relationships with other subjects. This mapping of relations involves an archaeological dig in which inherited subject-positions built upon relations of domination and subordination are excavated and deconstructed. Mapping and excavating then reveal possibilities for reconstructing intersubjectivity based upon egalitarian
relations. Thus the point of a politics of location is not to fix identities, rather, it is to offer agentive opportunities for subjects to co-construct a fluid and mobile intersubjectivity.
CHAPTER TWO

Illegitimate Subjects of Rhetoric:

Theorizing a Politics of Location as Interruption of the Normative Subject of Rhetoric

until recently, the figure of the rhetor has been assumed to be masculine, unified, stable, autonomous, and capable of acting rationally on the world through language. Those who did not fit this pattern—women, people of color, poorly educated workers, those judged to be overly emotional or unstable—those people stood outside of the rhetorical situation, for they were considered neither capable of nor in need to remembering and inventing arguments. From a feminist vantage point, however, it is impossible to take the subjectivity of the rhetor for granted, impossible not to locate that subjectivity within the larger context of personal, social, economic cultural, and ideological forces, impossible not to notice not only the context itself, but also who is absent from this context as well as what exclusionary forces (regarding knowledge and argument, for example) are at work there.

—Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn and Andrea Lunsford 412

Efforts to make women legitimate by situating them in patronymic narratives does nothing to enfranchise them—because it does nothing to the phallogocentric economy which disenfranchised them.

—Michelle Ballif 95

Feminist rhetorical scholarship has addressed the limitations of a canon that is overwhelming authored by white, elite males (Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Erasmus, Ramus, Bacon, Campbell, Blair, Whately, and Richards). Even though, as Cheryl Glenn has noted, "Fading away is rhetoric as we have known it—exclusively upper-class, male, agonistic, and public, yet seemingly universal" (2), the traditional canon continues to hold center stage in contemporary rhetorical studies. Not only are most texts in the canon produced by white, elite males, but their theories of rhetoric also have produced a "normative subject" of rhetoric, legitimizing some speaking subjects and delegitimizing "others." Much as the normative subject of Enlightenment erased "othered" subjects from history, Western
rhetoric has defined itself around a similar normative subject which has produced exclusionary standards about who can speak, who will be heard, what can be spoken, what forms of knowledge are legitimate, and what communication strategies are most effective. Legitimate speaking subjects historically have been people who are highly literate, have access to formal education, and have the right to participate in the public sphere. Hence, the normative subject of rhetoric is not merely grounded in masculinist values, but also values inflected by class, race, and social status. The normative subject of rhetoric is problematic for two primary reasons. First, the construction of normative rhetorical strategies, exigencies, and contexts effectively excludes, or de-legitimizes those considered inappropriate subjects. Second, the values of this "legitimate" or normative subject are not necessarily congruent with those of marginalized "others."

I turn to Foucault's theory of discourse to elucidate how discursive practices construct legitimate speaking subjects, to show that the normative subject of rhetoric has come into being through a set of stabilizing practices which determine who can speak and who will be heard. Discerning how normative subjects are formed through rules and regulations is a necessary precursor to understanding that intervention occurs through a collective set of practices that enact a different form of subjectivity. For Foucault, discourse is an event or practice, rather than a reflection of knowledge or simple expression of authors/subject. Subjects are constructed through discursive rules of formation (Archeology). A discursive formation is a set of relationships between ideas or concepts that create an effect of order, unity, or regularity on what are otherwise disparate items (38). Foucault's theory is premised on the notion that truth (and thus knowledge) does not exist prior to discourse. Ideas/knowledge are constructed through a set of rules or procedures that he calls rules of
formation, which can be divided into four basic categories: 1) Rules about what can be talked about, or in Foucault's terms rules that bring into being objects; 2) Rules about who is permitted to speak/write about objects, or rules that bring into being subject positions; 3) Rules that govern how concepts can be formed; and 4) Rules that govern strategies or theoretical frameworks. Foucault's discussion of the second set of rules, which he names enunciative modalities, is particularly salient to my project because it points to the necessity of understanding how the subject position of a discursive formation is determined before one can proceed to investigate the forms of reasoning that link the diversity of statements which comprise a discursive formation. Foucault contends that if we do not analyze the enunciative function of discourse we are likely "to see discourse as a phenomenon of expression—the verbal translation of a previously established synthesis" (55). In other words, unless we explore how discursive practices construct subjectivity, we cannot see the subject of rhetoric as the discursive enactment of a normalizing gaze.

Enunciative modalities are rules through which subject positions are formed. These positions are determined by an interplay in a particular discursive formation between the "various statuses, the various sites, the various positions [the subject] can occupy or be given when making a discourse" (54). That is, the subject position of any discursive formation is created through the relations between who is granted the right to speak, the institutional sites from which the subject speaks, and the position of the subject relevant to the objects of the discursive formation (50-55). Enunciative modalities vary among different discursive formations and are always open to modification; however, Foucault suggests that "if there is a unity, if the modalities of enunciation that it uses, or to which it gives place, are not simply juxtaposed by a series of historical contingencies, it is because it makes constant use of this
group of relations" (54). Thus an examination of the enunciative modalities in the field of rhetoric can reveal a set of stabilizing practices that reveal a "normative" subject position for the rhetor. Additionally, in his lecture "The Discourse on Language," Foucault suggests that this form of regulation "amounts to a rarefaction among speaking subjects: none may enter into discourse on a specific subject unless he [or she] has satisfied certain conditions or if he [or she] is not, from the outset, qualified to do so" (224-225). The effect of a set of enunciative modalities within a discursive formation is the exclusion of subjects rendered illegitimate through non-conformity to the rules of enunciation.

Foucault's project in revealing the function of discursive practices is not to negate the potential of changing discourse; rather his purpose is:

to show that to speak is to do something—something other than to express what one thinks; to translate what one knows, and something other than to play with the structures of language (langue); to show that to add a statement to a pre-existing series of statements is to perform a complicated and costly gesture, which involves conditions (and not only a situation, a context, and motives), and rules (not the logical and linguistic rules of construction); to show that a change in the order to discourse does not presuppose 'new ideas', a little invention and creativity, a different mentality, but transformations in practice, perhaps in neighbouring practices, and in their common articulation.

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Foucault's discussion of enunciative modalities points to the ultimate instability of any discursive formation's subject position. That is, because the exclusion of illegitimate subjects is produced through a continued reiteration of certain practices and relations between objects,
subject, concepts, and strategies it is possible to interrupt the normalizing forces of a field of relations. Changes in practices can lead to changes in the order of discourse. The potential for interrupting the normative subject of rhetoric occurs not through the will or force of a sovereign subject but through a collective set of intervening practices of illegitimate subjects.

Again, in describing how knowledge is produced through discourse (in the case of this project, knowledge within the field of rhetoric) Foucault argues that it is first important to describe the subject position of a discursive formation; that is, we must first ask, who is accorded the right to speak? As the opening epigraphs by Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, Andrea Lunsford, and Michelle Ballif indicate, feminists have begun to problematize the subjectivity of the rhetor by asking which subjects and which rhetorical strategies have been de-legitimated by the rhetorical tradition. These questions move away from an additive model of change within contemporary rhetorical studies (add women to the canon and stir) and towards a radical revisioning of rhetoric through a feminist historiographical framework. Feminist historiography is premised on the assumption that simply adding women to the already existing tradition does little to actually construct a history of and for women. An inclusionary model positions traditional rhetorical theories as the standard by which to judge women's writing and speaking. Patricia Bizzell argues that this creates a double-bind for feminist historians, "Either women [and other marginalized subjects] and their texts have to be deformed to fit these standards under the unfriendly gaze of the critic seeking deficiencies, so goes the attack, or else women [and other marginalized subjects] who have unfortunately capitulated to these standards will be privileged over others who were trying to do more revolutionary work" (54). Michelle Ballif, who addresses the problem of legitimizing
women rhetoricians from a poststructural theoretical perspective, provides a particularly vivid metaphor:

Everyone knows that the exchange rate of a dog of papered lineage—of legitimate birth—is exponentially greater than that of a mongrel. To provide woman with a history is to increase her value by making her legitimate, by giving her a proper name, by locating her within a proper family, by situating her in a proper narrative. This act of confirmation is nothing less than the ideological exercise of what Gayatri Spivak calls the 'tyranny of the proper—in the sense of that which produces both property and the proper name of the patronymic' ("Feminism" 91). To make woman proper by providing her with a history is the patronymic, phallogocentric enterprise par excellence. (92)

Following the tenets of feminist historiography, my goal in this project is not to situate a politics of location within the "proper narrative" of the rhetorical tradition. Instead, in this chapter I will theorize how a politics of location operates as a strategy that interrupts the normative subject of the rhetorical tradition, effectively creating discursive spaces for "illegitimate" subjects to invoke different forms of making meaning through language. I begin by outlining the normative subject of traditional rhetoric, specifically as it has been discussed in the work of Lisa Ede, Andrea Lunsford, and Cheryl Glenn who use the five canons of rhetoric to expose the limitations of traditional rhetoric, and the work of Nancy Fraser who offers a critique of the bourgeois subject that is implicated in Habermas' notion of the public sphere, counter-publics, and the ideal speech situation. Finally, I theorize how a politics of location strategically interrupts this normative subject.
Defining the Normative Subject of Rhetoric

In their work that examines the intersection of feminist theory and rhetorical theory, Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford provide a critique of the normative assumptions that drive traditional rhetoric. They argue that "When Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine considered the nature and province of rhetoric, they did not imagine that women—or those gendered feminine by their race, class, psychology, or other characteristics—might wish or be able to employ what Aristotle terms 'the available means of persuasion' to communicate their ideas" (438). With the understanding that maps are cultural artifacts that reveal socio-cultural values, they use the five canons of traditional rhetoric (memory, invention, arrangement, style, and delivery) as a map and heuristic to illustrate how feminist theories of language and subjectivity can stretch our understanding of these canons.

Traditional conceptualizations of invention and memory influence what can be remembered, what can be known, and who can know. Ede et. al. show that feminist theories of knowledge challenge us to question how the public/private dichotomy has excluded forms of knowledge considered "personal" or based in lived experience. Quoting Audre Lorde, they suggest that rhetoric has not included intuitive or paralogical knowledge as resources for invention:

As women, we have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge. We have been warned against it all our lives in the male world, which values this depth of feeling enough to keep women around in order to exercise it in the service of men, but which fears this same
depth too much to examine the possibilities of it within themselves. (qtd. in Ede, et. al. 413)

In addition to exclusively valuing rationality as a means of knowing and remembering, the structure of traditional rhetoric is based on rational logic. In particular, Aristotle's logical, linear arrangement of claims (state your case and prove it) and the notion that an argument must have a beginning, middle, and end remains with us today and is often considered the most effective means of persuasion. However, Ede et. al. question this drive towards closure. What if the speaking subject does not aim to win over an audience or close down a conversation? What if the speaking subject "value[s] indeterminacy, nonclosure, and multiplicity of meaning" (Ede et. al. 418)? Equally important, conventions of style, decorum, and delivery have constructed a normative subject. Pointing out the way in which Margaret Fuller's conversational, collaborative style was devalued and dismissed by her peers, Ede et. al. suggest that speaking subjects who wish to be heard, but do not adhere to a traditional protocols of style are caught in a double-bind:

For though some writers (including a number of feminists) experience style primarily as technique, many others find that style raises powerful and difficult personal, political, and ethical issues. Acutely aware of the patriarchal nature of the western phallogocentric tradition, many feminist writers feel themselves to be in a double bind. In order to claim authority and agency, to function as subjects in the discursive arena and thus further feminism's emancipatory goals, some feminists choose (as we choose in this essay) to adhere to the stylistic conventions of traditional Western discourse—conventions that sharply dichotomize the public and the private,
that devalue personal experience in favor of 'objective' facts, 'rational' logic, and established authorities. (423)

Ultimately, the work of Ede, Glenn, and Lunsford reveals how the values inscribed through classical conventions of invention, memory, arrangement, and delivery have led to normative assumptions that privilege rationality, objectivity, linear logic that produces closure, and domination over an audience. These values restrict what kinds of subjects are considered "legitimate," determining who gets to write, whose claims to knowledge is considered valid, and whose voices will remain silenced.

Jürgen Habermas's theory of communication can be conceived as the culmination of Enlightenment's rational subject set in motion through Greco-Roman rhetorical theories. Habermas sought to retrieve reason as a means of creating a deliberative democracy which could lead to emancipation through autonomy, freedom, and justice. His theory of the ideal speech situation and its relation to the public sphere has offered a significant contribution to contemporary critical theories of how citizen-subjects can equitably deliberate about issues of the common good. Nancy Fraser offers a particularly lucid interrogation of Habermas' concept of public sphere and the limitations of the normative, bourgeois subject around which he developed his theory. Simply stated, she argues that "We can no longer assume that the bourgeois conception of the public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal; it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule" (116). Her analysis is particularly salient to feminist rhetorical theory because too often the division of public and private spheres has been considered one of the central organizing structures that privileges masculinist discourses and world-views. However, Fraser complicates this reading of the private/public dichotomy by showing how this division
is inflected by race, culture, and economics, as well as gender. Fraser's analysis is not meant to undermine the concept of the public sphere; rather, she is interested in revealing the assumptions upon which Habermas' theory is based. She identifies three primary assumptions in Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere that are relevant to a discussion of the legitimate subject of rhetoric:

- The assumption that it is possible for interlocutors in a public sphere to bracket status differentials and to deliberate as if they were social equals; the assumption, therefore, that societal equality is not a necessary condition for political democracy
- The assumption that the proliferation of a multiplicity of competing publics is necessarily a step away from, rather than toward, greater democracy, and that a single, comprehensive public sphere is always preferable to a nexus of multiple publics
- The assumption that discourse in public spheres should be restricted to deliberation about the common good, and that the appearance of private interests and private issues is always undesirable. (117-118)

The assumptions Fraser interrogates render visible a normative subject position, one that is based upon a bourgeois, elite, masculinist participant in democratic spaces of public deliberation. That is, the erasure of social differences, the narrowing of public spaces to eliminate competing publics and the restriction of topics to a universal common good all operate to construct to a universalized subject position determining who can participate in the public sphere.
In his notion of the ideal speech situation, Habermas envisioned the public sphere as a space in which interlocutors could engage as equal peers in communication despite differences in social status. However, Fraser points out that subjects were to engage in communication merely "as if" they were equals, which leads to a "bracketing" of social inequalities. In much the same way that hegemonic feminism reproduces oppressions by bracketing out differences between women, Habermas' approach does not eliminate inequities nor produce the conditions for equal participation. Instead it renders them less visible and "works to the advantage of dominant groups in society and to the disadvantage of subordinates" because "unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles" (120). The bracketing of differences leads to the assumption that the public sphere is "a space of zero degree culture, so utterly bereft of any specific ethos as to accommodate with perfect neutrality and equal ease interventions expressive of any and every cultural ethos" (120). Fraser suggests that in order for participatory parity to begin to be realized, we must recognize social inequities so that they can be addressed in ways that reveal the different cultural values and the differential access particular subjects have to engaging in public deliberation.

The second assumption that Fraser addresses is Habermas' notion that a single, overarching public sphere is ideal for democratic states and that multiple publics undermine a true democracy. She contends that this ideal is interconnected with normative assumptions of who participates in the public sphere: the bourgeois, elite subject, arriving in spaces of public deliberation as a value-neutral participant. Instead, Fraser argues that "participatory parity is better achieved by a multiplicity of publics than a single public...for both stratified societies and egalitarian, multicultural societies" (127) because the concept of a democratic
public sphere implies a multiplicity of perspectives. Invoking Gayatri Spivak's notion of the subaltern, Fraser forwards the concept of subaltern counterpublics, which have always existed alongside dominant publics:

members of subordinated social groups—women, workers, peoples of color, and gays and lesbians—have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics...[that] are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs. (123)

In stratified societies, subaltern counterpublics function as spaces for subordinated groups to gather and formulate resistance to dominant publics, providing an apparatus to "offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies" (124). In egalitarian, multicultural societies, which presuppose a diversity of values through intercultural communication, counterpublics are necessary for their continuation because an overarching, comprehensive public would be antithetical to the structure of such societies. Hence, in both types of society multiple publics provide spaces for interrupting normative assumptions that privilege universal rhetorical strategies and styles and provide opportunities for greater participation of diverse subjects in public deliberation.

Third, Fraser critiques Habermas' assumption that there must be proper boundaries that delimit the scope of topics that can be discussed within the public sphere. His boundaries are founded upon an assumption that places notions of the "common good" in the public sphere and notions of particular or "special interest groups" in the private sphere. Fraser argues that no interests or topics should be bracketed out prior to public interrogation;
indeed, we cannot know precisely what the common good might be prior to deliberation. The division between private and public is not simply a dichotomy embedded in masculinist assumptions; rather, notions of the private and public are "cultural classifications and rhetorical labels…frequently deployed to delegitimate some interests, views, and topics to valorize others" (131). Hence, she suggests we interrogate the very division of public and private interests so that we might understand how these terms limit the scope of admissible topics in public conversations.

The normative subject position of rhetoric, then, is typically filled by a unified, fully present subject, who relies on rational, linear thought processes for the production and dissemination of knowledge. The preeminent style of this subject has been one that leads to domination of the audience and closure, rather than an opening of a dialogue. The legitimate subject speaks from nowhere (through the invocation of objectivity) and everywhere (speaking on matters of "Truth" for the common good); that which is considered "different" in matters of public deliberation has been bracketed out and deemed personal or pertaining to "special interest groups." Finally, the assumptions that undergird this subject construct "legitimate" rhetorical strategies that have led to the exclusion of alternative modes of discourse. In the remainder of this chapter I theorize how a politics of location provides a set of interventionist practices that interrupts the normalizing forces undergirding the traditional subject of rhetoric. More specifically, following Krista Ratcliffe's delineation of work in the field of feminist rhetorics as explained in chapter one, I extrapolate a theory of a politics of location as a collective set of intervening practices from texts written by a group of radical, lesbian feminists in the 1980s and early 90s (Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Marilyn Frye, and Dorothy Allison). In the next section, I first discuss the material
context that allowed for the creation of alternative discursive practices, I then explain the connection I draw between a lesbian feminist counterpublic and a politics of location, finally, I develop a theory of a politics of location as set of discursive practices for interrupting normative subjectivity and re-writing a fluid, mobile intersubjectivity.

**Illegitimate Speaking Subjects: Interrupting the Normalized Subject of Rhetoric**

The opportunity for radical, lesbian feminists to redefine their subjectivities and desires through a politics of location was greatly aided by the proliferation of feminist publishing houses, conferences, journals, lecture series, and festivals in the late twentieth century—in effect, a feminist counterpublic. As Fraser indicates, counterpublics are a necessary component of democracy:

> insofar as these counterpublics emerge in response to exclusions within dominant publics, they help expand discursive space. In principle, assumptions that were previously exempt from contestation will now have to be publicly argued out. In general, the proliferation of subaltern counterpublics means a widening of discursive contestation, and that is a good thing in stratified societies. (124)

Importantly, this counterpublic provided a material means to employ alternative rhetorical strategies as well as the means to disseminate alternative world-views that were not constrained by the "normative" standards of dominant academic or popular publishing companies. Fraser argues that in this particular counterpublic "feminist women have invented new terms for describing social reality, including 'sexism,' 'the double shift,' 'sexual harassment,' and 'marital, date, and acquaintance rape.' Armed with such language, we have recast our needs and identities, thereby reducing, although not eliminating, the extent of our
disadvantage in official public spheres" (123). Through publishing houses such as Aunt Lute Press, The Feminist Press, Kitchen Table Press, radical, lesbian feminists were able to participate in the kind of counterpublic that enabled them to represent their subjectivities through counter-discursive strategies, one of which was a politics of location.

Before I proceed to theorize how a politics of location interrupts the normative subject of rhetoric, I first want to explain the connection I draw between a politics of location and a radical, lesbian feminist community. I understand a politics of location as one set of discursive strategies used by some women who identify as radical, lesbian feminists. Thus, the use of a politics of location as a discursive performance of social identities has a contingent correlation to women who identify as radical, lesbian feminists, a correlation which is a product of a socio-political communal commitments rather than a product of a pre-discursive or essential "lesbian existence" or the label radical, lesbian feminist. Teresa de Lauretis' (1997) identification of two concurrent drives in feminist theories is useful in understanding the socio-political commitment that I contend is central to the kind of radical, lesbian feminist community that invokes a politics of location. In her analysis of the contentious debates about essentialism in various forms of feminist theory, de Lauretis suggests that what might distinguish lesbian feminism from other forms of feminism are two drives which exist in mutual contradiction: an erotic/narcissistic drive and an ethical drive. The object of the erotic drive is "difference, rebellion, daring, excess, subversion, disloyalty, agency, empowerment, pleasure and danger...[which] rejects all images of powerlessness, victimization, subjection, acquiescence, passivity, conformism, and femininity" (335-36). The object of the ethical drive is "community, accountability, entrustment, sisterhood, bonding, belonging to a common world" (336). She argues that these contradictory drives
pull in two directions—towards "critical negativity of its theory, and the affirmative positivity of its politics" (336). Likewise, it is the dual drive and the tension produced between the two that I believe is at the heart of a community of radical, lesbian feminists who invoke a politics of location as a discursive performance for reconstructing subjectivity. Thus, a politics of location is driven both by a socio-political commitment to difference, agency, and empowerment as well as by commitment to belonging, community, and the desire to live in loving connection with other women.

A Politics of Location and the Question of Difference and Community

As indicated in the beginning of this chapter, one of the counter-discursive strategies that a politics of location invokes is reflexivity about the entrenched assumptions of a feminism that built itself upon a universal notion of "woman's experiences." Rich argues, "If we have learned anything in these years of late twentieth-century feminism, it's that that 'always' blots out what we really need to know: When, where, under what conditions has the statement been true?" ("Notes" 214). In challenging the universal subject of hegemonic feminism, a politics of location also interrupts the normative subject of rhetoric by calling into question the ability of a rhetor to make grand assertions about "Truth," knowledge, and the common good. The acute attention to the locatedness of a rhetor that Rich argues for leads to a series of questions that reveal the contingent nature of meaning-making: For whom am I writing/speaking? Toward what end am I writing/speaking this? Given the particularities of my location, what are the limitations of the knowledge I am participating in creating? From when am I writing and to whom am I writing this text? Thus, a politics of location constructs a different kind of subject of rhetoric: a subject who centers difference...
rather than universality, maintaining a degree of accountability for the claims to knowledge
she makes, which are understood as partial, interested, and non-innocent.

The move to investigate and theorize partial knowledges through a politics of location
has been critiqued for the potential to devolve into apolitical pluralism or endless relativism.
Christina Crosby (1992) argues that differences and calls to positionality are deployed in
feminist standpoint theories (particularly in the work of Nancy Hartsock and Sandra Harding)
in such a way that binds difference to a kind of "empiricist historicism" which assumes that
differences in social location and identity are "self-evident, concrete, there, present in history
and therefore the proper ground of theory" (137 italics in original). Whereas Crosby is
interested in the way difference leads to a celebratory pluralism that is politically ineffective
in engaging difference in such a way that moves us into space that can transform the circular
logic of ontologically-based politics, Sylvia Walby argues that the differences employed in a
politics of location "exaggerate and reify boundaries between....social groupings" (191) and
"endorse existing inequalities" (200). Walby suggests that a "politics of location depends
upon notions of chasms between different communities and identities...[and] is based on a
position which reduces knowledge to location and power" (202). As such, she argues that the
focus on difference and a politics of location is inadequate for a global feminism. In place of
a politics of location Walby argues that feminists should embrace argumentation based upon
the scientific method, Habermas's notion of the common good, rational deliberation, and
"procedures for effective trusted communication" (199). While Walby contends that feminist
theory must attend to differences, these differences (and the claims to partial knowledge they
imply) must be transcended because they create chasms between women rather than common
ground. Walby suggests that there must be some universal standards by which to measure social progress that move beyond friendship and shared values because:

Working with those who are 'different' is hard if the political form employed is based on empathy rather than debate, friendship rather than alliances, community rather than association, consensual agreement rather than majority voting. Political differences in this context can become highly emotive, fragmenting friendships, communities and the political project itself. (198)

I agree that differences can be construed as walls which divide political subjects based on essentialist identities or social locations and can lead to isolation and negative fragmentation of political movements. However, this is a limited understanding of how differences and the call to partial and interested knowledges operates within political discourses that invoke a politics of location. For example, in her examination of the revisionist myth-making of Gloria Anzaldúa, Paula Gunn Allen, and Audre Lorde, AnaLouise Keating argues that these writers create threshold identities, "which mark transitional, in-between spaces where new beginnings and unexpected combinations can occur" (2). She contends that "it is the refusal to acknowledge and accept differences—rather than the reverse—that erects what Lorde describes as 'the wall that separates / our sameness' (Chosen Poems, 109), and prevents open dialogue between differently situated readers" (59). In accord with Keating, I believe the problem is not differences themselves, it is the assumption that differences create walls that divide rather than potential thresholds, (or third spaces between dangerous dichotomies). Differences can be employed to mobilize political subjects into unknown territory. Rather than calling for the elision of differences, the end to fragmentation, and the establishment common ground, universal standards, or "trusted communication" prior to political
engagement, it is possible to perceive that common ground can be discovered in third-spaces through engagement with differences.

Walby also suggests that without a universal, pre-established set of argumentative procedures there can be no hope to move outside the constraints of our individual differences, and that we are hopelessly bound to "story-telling," which amounts to "intellectual defeatism" (190). While I believe that common ground, to a large extent, is not produced prior to engagement, I understand that there must be something that drives politics beyond the personal or individual. I contend that the "common ground" that motivates a politics of location is not a single entity, but a combination of de Lauretis's "erotic drive" and "ethical drive." These drives, and the conflicts between them, maintain a generative tension (rather than an either/or dichotomy) that uses differences as productive rather than reductive. This is the common drive that motivates a politics of location to move beyond the individual. Indeed, Rich's articulation of a politics of location does not aim to reduce each speaking subject to her differences, instead she insists that "there is no liberation that only knows how to say 'I'; there is no collective movement that speaks for each of us all the way through" ("Notes" 224). The tension is the common ground. The assumption of partial, non-innocent knowledge creators at the heart of a politics of location entails more than a narcissistic examination of the self because it aims to find meaningful connections between the particular and the general through focusing on the tension points between the "I" and the "we." In her examination of how essays by June Jordan and Minnie Bruce Pratt offer examples about how to work across differences, Mary Eagleton argues that "Locatedness...offers a workable strategy for bridging 'I' and 'we' and the multiple differences those figures embrace" (132). For example, Audre Lorde consistently names and explores her experiences as a black
lesbian, feminist, mother and proceeds to make connections between her life and the lives of others. Lorde also calls her reader to do the same:

And where the words of women are crying to be heard, we must each of us recognize our responsibility to seek those words out, to read them and share them and examine them in their pertinence to our lives. That we not hide behind the mockeries of separations that have been imposed upon us and which so often we accept as our own. (43)

While a politics of location insists on maintaining accountability for the partiality of our positions and claims to knowledge, it is also built upon a responsibility for seeking connections with others in a larger movement towards collective change.

As indicated above, Walby suggests that a politics built upon location, partiality, and "story-telling" precludes the kind of rigorous knowledge creation that occurs through reasoned debate and communication "done in good faith, between people equally situated with regard to relevant resources" (193). (In many ways, this is a call to a normative subject of rhetoric, which brackets out differences in the name of creating trust, common ground, and communication through good faith.) I disagree with Walby's logic (that equality and commonality precede rigorous engagement and the production of knowledge) and as I illustrate below, a politics of location reveals a reversal of the conditions which create community and knowledge. First, there is a rigorousness to a politics of location because subjects who invoke this discursive strategy begin with the recognition that subjects are not "equally situated" which, coupled with the contingent and partial nature of knowledge-making, reveals that struggle over language, naming, and representation are central to politics of location. This is similar to Haraway's theory of cyborg feminism in which she suggests
that writing is the preeminent technology of cyborgs because it is infused with a "struggle for language and [a] struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism" (Simians 176). Similarly, a politics of location assumes that perfect communication through simple transmission of knowledge (or narration of experience) is not possible because reality is not presumed to be transparent or evident prior to communication. Instead, meaning is arrived at through a rhetor's struggle with language and with contradictory subject positions—both how she has been represented across social locations and how she might choose to re-present herself. As well, meaning is arrived at through rhetors' struggle with one another within feminist counterpublic exchanges.

For example, in chapter five I show how Minnie Bruce Pratt invokes a politics of location in her essay "Identity: Skin Blood Heart" in which she confronts and deconstructs racism and anti-Semitism. Pratt's narrative is marked by internal struggle to become aware of how her inherited assumptions about safe space, home, and community are built upon a material history of "places secured by omission, exclusions, or violence" (26) as well as an external struggle with other women to realize a different kind of community. Pratt's narrative is not a simple or linear movement from oppression to freedom, from unconscious living to mindful engagement. Instead it is a narrative in which the creation of a more just world is premised upon daily struggle: "I have learned that...the process of change is long, and since the unjust world is duplicated again every day, in large and small, so I must try to recreate, every day, a new self striving for a new just world" (46). Pratt proceeds to explore how she recreates her self in shifting social contexts, how she continues to engage with the struggle to seek social change, and how she seeks new ways of being that allow her to live in loving
connection with other women. Chandra Mohanty and Biddy Martin have suggested that Pratt's narrative helps open a dialogue about how feminists might conceive of home differently. They challenge the assumption that there are "homes" within feminism which neatly align with sexual, racial, or ethnic identities and they examine Pratt's essay as an example of a white feminist theorizing her experiences on "the edge," exposing the "illusory coherence" of her social positions. They suggest that Pratt's narrative reveals how "Community...is the product of work, of struggle; it is inherently unstable, contextual; it has to be constantly reevaluated in relation to critical political priorities; and it is the product of interpretation, interpretation based on an attention to history, to the concrete, to what Foucault has called subjugated knowledges" (307-08).

I contend that within the framework of a politics of location, community (and trust and faith) become products of a rigorous struggle over representation, not \textit{a priori} conditions for effective communication. The centering of struggle is a significant element of a radical, lesbian feminist counterpublic that maintains hope for interrupting practices of domination because one of the preeminent means of reproducing oppression is through the elision of conflict or difference. To repeat Nancy Fraser's claim, counter-publics provide spaces for "subordinated social groups [to] invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (123). Struggle and conflict are articulated within a politics of location as central interests and needs of a lesbian feminist counterpublic in the formulation of "agitational activities" (Fraser 124), which can lead to new conceptualizations of community. Thus an emphasis on conflict challenges dominant discursive practices built upon the assumption that differences (either in the form
of social status or competing publics) should be bracketed out of spaces of public deliberation.

A Politics of Location and the Question of "Story-Telling" and Experience

In her call to move beyond the fragmentation, partiality, and dis-unity of a politics of location, Walby argues that a politics of location has led to the conclusion that "all we can aspire to is 'story-telling'" (190) and further, that "Myth, fiction, ethics, and aesthetics are a very weak basis for feminist knowledge claims" (193). However, I believe this is a reductive understanding of how experience is invoked by writers who use this strategy. The use of experiential narratives and story-telling through politics of location constitutes a significant interruption of the normative subject of rhetoric by validating that which has been marginalized into the realm of the "private sphere" or "special interests." Furthermore, reclaiming the validity of exploring and interrogating experience can lead to the production of new knowledges and subjectivities. For instance, Mohanty contends that writing and reading narratives have always been a significant element of third-space feminism because they involved rewriting and remembering history, which:

is significant not merely as corrective to the gaps, erasures, and misunderstandings of hegemonic masculinist history, but because the very practice of remembering and rewriting leads to the formation of politicized consciousness and self-identity. Writing often becomes the context through which new political identities are forged. It becomes a space for struggle and contestation about reality itself. If the everyday world is not transparent and its relations of rule, its organizations and institutional frameworks, work to obscure and make invisible inherent hierarchies of power (Smith 1987), it
becomes imperative that we rethink, remember, and utilize our lived relations as basis of knowledge. ("Cartographies" 34)

Mohanty qualifies that third-world women's narratives are not "evidence of decentering hegemonic histories and subjectivities"(34) in themselves. Instead, it is the combination of how these experiences are written, read, and theorized that leads to the disruption of hegemony. Of course, calls to experience and new narratives of women's lives have been problematized by poststructuralist feminists because they often reify essentialist notions of subjectivity. For example, Joan Scott suggests that experience too often is used as a form of foundational evidence to make knowledge-claims in such a way that positions individuals (and knowledge) as extant prior to experience, rather than positioning subjects (and knowledge) as constituted through experience. While making visible the experiences of subordinated social groups serves an important function in documenting lives which have been occluded, Scott argues it does not allow for an interrogation of:

the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, [questions] about how one's vision is structured—about language (or discourse) and history—are left aside. The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world.

(25)

Scott recommends that we resist "naturalizing 'experience' through a belief in the unmediated relationship between words and things," (36) and instead, focus on experience as a process through which identity and knowledge come into being.
I contend that this is precisely how narratives of experience are used in the work of writers who invoke a politics of location. Experience is not invoked simply as a corrective to the historical omission of particular women's lives, rather the focal point of the experiences invoked through a politics of location is a desire to understand, deconstruct, and reconstruct lived relations between subjects. To use Haraway's language, experience and the politics of representation are positioned as non-innocent through a politics of location:

Women do not find 'experience' ready to hand any more than they/we find 'nature' or the 'body' preformed, always innocent and waiting outside the violations of language and culture. Just as nature is one of culture's most startling and non-innocent products, so is experience one of the least innocent, least self-evident aspects of historical, embodied movement. (Simians 109)

A politics of location does not naturalize experience to suggest that it provides access to a pre-discursive reality, nor is experience forwarded as the "truth" of women's lives. The invocation of experience is part of a larger process of collective struggle for the reconstruction of new possibilities for alternative subjectivities.

As an example of how the narration of experience is driven by a critical understanding that experience and subjectivity are culturally mediated through collective struggle I return to Pratt's essay. As indicated above, Pratt narrates how she has come into a greater consciousness about racism and anti-Semitism and the degree to which her conceptions of home and community have been constructed through her experiences. One of the primary events that she narrates is the moment her husband (in collusion with her mother) took her children after she came out as a lesbian. Pratt describes this experience as ultimately breaking the shell of privilege in which she had lived, moving her into political
work for social justice. However, she suggests that her initial response to the experience of losing her children reified her subject position as a white Southern woman who had come to expect a certain degree of protection and safety in the world. She writes, "I also carried away the conviction that I had been thrust out into a place of terrible loss by laws laid down by men...I felt that no one had sustained such a loss before. And I did not yet understand that to come to a place of greater liberation, I had to risk old safeties. Instead, I felt that I had no place, that, as I moved through my days, I was falling through space" (27). After this event, Pratt involved herself with NOW and searched for a new place she could call home. However, she explains how her political efforts and notions of safety were still deeply infused with racism and anti-Semitism. A second experience, years later, moves Pratt into greater consciousness of the limitations of her sense of self and knowledge. A group of Klansman and Nazis killed five anti-Klan demonstrators within 50 miles of her home. She narrates how she finds herself politically aligned with the demonstrators and yet, when a wife of one the Klansman stated in a newspaper report that she was surprised and shocked, Pratt realizes that she, too, was shocked that such events could happen in 1979. Thus, she begins a life-long process of questioning the limitations of her experience and the ignorance of "what had been or was being done in [her] name" (34). It is this process of critically interrogating her family history, her childhood experiences, and her experiences with NOW that moves her to a question how her subject position as a white, Southern woman has shaped her sense of self, safety, justice, and community:

I groped toward an understanding of injustice done to others, injustice done outside my narrow circle of being, and to folks not like me, I began to grasp,
through my own experiences, something of what that injustice might be, began to feel the extent of pain, anger, desire for change.

But I did not feel that my new understanding simply moved me into a place where I joined others to struggle with them against common injustices. Because I was implicated in the doing of some of these injustices, and I held myself, and my people, responsible, what my expanded understanding meant was that I felt in a struggle with myself, against myself. This breaking through did not feel like liberation but like destruction. (35-36)

Pratt's narration of these crucial experiences in her life do not provide her access to a pre-linguistic reality nor do they position her identity prior to experience. Instead, experience is invoked as a means of "exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world" (Scott 25). Rhetors who use a politics of location maintain a reflective, non-innocent stance towards experience, questioning how their locations might impose limitations on the meanings they ascribe to experiences and social identities, with the hope of, in Pratt's words, moving beyond the "narrow circle of self" in a continual process of re-writing themselves.

I contend that the re-writing of subjectivity that can occur through narratives such as Pratt's do not provide a "weak basis for feminist knowledge claims" (Walby 190). Walby equates the localization of knowledge with absolute relativism, which Haraway suggests: is a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally. The 'equality' of positioning is a denial of responsibility and critical enquiry. Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stakes in location, embodiment, and partial
perspective; both make it impossible to see well. Relativism and totalization are both 'god-tricks' promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully. (Simians 191)

I believe that the emphasis on contextualized narratives of women's lives through the invocation of a politics of location leads to a stronger base for feminism because, as Susan Bordo suggests, representing "reality" in particular ways is "never innocent. We always 'see' from points of view that are invested with our social, political, and personal interests, inescapably -centric in one way or another, even in the desire to do justice to heterogeneity" (223). Pratt's narrative tells the story of coming to realize how her conceptions of home and community reveal the contingent, partial, and interested nature of our knowledges, not the indeterminacy of knowledge.

Additionally, the non-innocent story-telling moves the rhetor into a space of accountability in which she takes responsibility for the ways in which time, space, and material history inform a speaking subject's statements of truth. That is, locating the space/time/history from which one speaks marks an effort to take responsibility for the ways that those locations inform meaning-making processes and the knowledges that are born of those processes. As Rich has described it, a politics of location is born of a desire to reveal particularities:

When I write 'the body,' I see nothing in particular. To write 'my body,' plunges me into lived experience, particularity: I see scars, disfigurements, discolorations, damages, losses, as well as what pleases me. Bones well nourished from the placenta, the teeth of a middle-class person seen by the dentist twice a year from childhood. White skin, marked and scarred by three
pregnancies, an elected sterilization, progressive arthritis, four joint operations, calcium deposits, no rapes, no abortions, long hours at a typewriter—my own, not in a typing pool—and so forth. To say 'the body' lifts me away from what has given me a primary perspective. To say 'my body' reduces the temptation to grandiose assertions. ("Notes" 215)

As indicated above, a politics of location reverses a Habermasian logic for creating the conditions of equitable public engagement. That is, greater equity among a diversity of women is the motive and goal of a politics of location; however, in order to reach greater equity, differences in values, histories, subject positions, and meaning-making processes must be foregrounded so that structures of stratification can be interrupted and heterogeneity can be embraced. Partiality and interestedness are the locus for constructing new knowledges and examining normative assumptions and representations of women's lived experiences, which cannot occur if we presume universality prior to engagement with the particular. Thus, writers who engage in a politics of location begin with the assumption that there is no universal women's experience to be narrated, nor is there one universal lesbian experience or subjectivity to be represented. For example, Audre Lorde, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Cherrie Moraga, and Dorothy Allison have all constructed, to use Moraga's terminology, "portraits of a queer motherhood." However, these writers do not presume a "totalizing" experience of lesbian motherhood. Their narratives point out both intersections and differences in experiences as lesbian women raising children with the common hope of creating and sharing the knowledges constructed from similar and different social positions across sexuality, race, class, and ethnicity. Audre Lorde frames her essay about raising a son in this way:
I have no golden message about the raising of sons for other lesbian mothers, no secret to transpose your questions into certain light. I have my own ways of rewording those same questions, hoping we will all come to speak those questions and pieces of our lives we need to share. We are women making contact within ourselves and with each other across the restrictions of a printed page, bent upon the use of our own/one another's knowledges. (Sister 72)

A politics of location focuses on how women are differently positioned in the world, and hence, experience the world differently. Thus, politics of location is not driven by pre-established universal assumptions of women's experiences nor by jouissance, or the endless play of difference, rather, it is motivated by conceptualization of non-innocent subjects who construct knowledge in the process of searching for connections with others in a process of change. Rich writes, "The movement for change is a changing movement, changing itself, demasculinizing itself, de-Westernizing itself, becoming a critical mass that is saying in so many different voices, languages, gestures, actions: It must change; we ourselves can change it" ("Notes" 225 italics in original). In the process of transformation, a politics of location enables rhetorical agency through signification and resignification. Agency is not something that is held; rather it is discovered through the practice of a politics of location, through processes of change and re-creation. Speaking subjectivities into be-ing, then, is a radical rhetorical and political move that refuses to fix or stabilize identities or knowledges in a finalized and totalizing manner; it situates subjectivities and knowledge, and hence agency, as always in processes of coming into be-ing, thus interrupting the centered, fully-cognizant, unified subject of rhetoric.
A Politics of Location, Differential Consciousness, and the Hermeneutics of Love

I believe that narrating experiences and representing women's lives through a politics of location, then, provides a launching point for differential consciousness, for the author as well as the audience. Sandoval argues that "differential consciousness and social movement [are] 'mobile,' 'flexible,' 'diasporic,' 'schizophrenic,' 'nomad[ic],'' but it must be realized that these mobilities align around a field of force (aside from motion itself) that drives, inspires, and focuses them" (82). In a like manner, even though differences are centered through a politics of location, radical, lesbian feminists who invoke this rhetorical strategy are driven by the search for affinity with others through coalition politics. That is, a politics of location was formulated and then practiced within the context of a radical, lesbian feminist community, a community built upon a desire and hope to live (and love) in greater connection with other human beings in non-oppressive ways. Much of this hope is built upon the assumption that in using a politics of location to tell different narratives a more complex and complicated portrait of women's experiences could be woven. The motivation to discover alliances through writing new narratives was not motivated by individualism or the desire to produce an over-arching narrative of women's experiences that would close down on some truth:

Feminist discourse and anti-colonial discourse are engaged in this very subtle and delicate effort to build connections and affinities, and not to produce one's own or another's experience as a resource for a closed narrative. These are difficult issues, and 'we' fail frequently. It is easy to find feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial discourses reproducing others and selves as resources for closed narratives, not knowing how to build affinities, knowing instead how to
build oppositions. But 'our' writing is also full of hope that we will learn how to structure affinities instead of identities. (Haraway, *Simians* 113)

As Lorde indicates, making connections through "the use of our own/one another's knowledges" motivates women who use a politics of location to create narratives of difference. This, I contend, is driven by Sandoval's hermeneutics of love. Sandoval draws on the later work of Foucault to suggest that social movement and differential consciousness occur through desire, which is:

- capable of driving the body and the will beyond their limits. Desire permeates being of all kinds...being-in-resistance as well as being-in-domination.
- Indeed, it is desire...that drives, focuses, and permeates all human activity.
- What is required, then is to reinforce an experiences and technology of *desire-in-resistance* that can permit oppositional actors to move—as Audre Lorde puts it—'erotically' through power. (165)

Prophetic love is that which exists between the self/other; it is a concept that resists the fixedness and hierarchy of an either/or dichotomy. Drawing on Barthes's critique of a Western ethic that drives the narrative of "falling in love," Sandoval explains prophetic love:

- Barthes's example: you love someone, and "either you have hope, and then you act, or else you have none, in which case you renounce. This is the discourse of the so-called 'healthy-subject'" who lives in the dominant: "either/or." But there is a third option, another approach to loving. This other course of action ensues when the loving subject instead tries to "slip between the two members" of the either/or alternative by saying... "I stubbornly choose not to choose; I choose drifting: I continue" (62, emphasis hers). This
"drifting" is the movement of meanings that will not be governed; it is the intractable itself as it permeates through, in, and outside of power. (142)

In the above example from Lorde, the hyphenation between "our own/one another's knowledge" exemplifies the way in which desire is unmoored from a fixed dichotomy and put in motion. Sandoval argues that within prophetic love "subjectivity becomes freed from ideology as it ties and binds reality. Prophetic love undoes the 'one' that gathers the narrative, the couple, the race, into a singularity. Instead, prophetic love gathers up the mezcla, the mixture that lives through differential movement between possibilities of being" (170). Returning to Pratt's narrative as an example how prophetic love motivates a politics of location, it is desire for connection with others that drives Pratt to move outside of herself into a space of shifting subjectivity. Her motive for confronting the injustices of racism and Anti-Semitism and deconstructing how her sense of self is built upon these systems of domination is driven by a desire "to get a little closer to the longed-for but unrealized world" (13) and by the desire "to speak from my heart, out of need, as a woman who loves other women passionately, and wants us to be able to be together as friends in this unjust world" (15). She goes on to suggest that the separation from others (a separation both self- and culturally/historically-imposed) causes her intense pain, a pain that can both debilitate and mobilize: "Sometimes this pain feels only like despair: yet I have felt it also to be another kind of pain, where the need to be with other women can be the breaking through the shell around me, painful, but a coming through into a new place" (19). Love operates in Pratt's essay, in Sandoval's words, as a "punctum,' that which breaks through social narratives to permit a bleeding, meanings unanchored and moving away from their traditional moorings—in what, Barthes writes, brings about a 'gentle hemorrhage' of being (12)" (141). Throughout
her essay, Pratt's vision of community is elusive and drifting as she unpacks the complex relationship between her inherited subject-position and her conception of home, but her desire to live in loving connection with others in ways that do not reproduce separation and domination allows her to "gather up the mezcla" and pushes her into differential consciousness.

As Sandoval indicates in her theory of oppositional consciousness, hope and imagination are central to poststructural rhetorical and political efforts to discover agentive opportunities and speak subjectivities in be-ing because they mark a move away from the potential for nihilism and paralysis that have resulted from some interpretations of the subject as "always already" interpellated. Ultimately, politics of location suggests a degree of agency in the ability to envision that which has not been. As a rhetorical and political move that engages in processes of be-coming, a politics of location is rooted in hope and vision for creating a better world, one built on a concept of more egalitarian relationships rather than one built upon equality. The concept of equality has too often meant access to structures and positions of privilege that are built upon structures of domination. Equally important, the notion of equality often assumes that subjects share similar histories and speaking locations. Hence, an egalitarian approach must be distinguished from an approach based on equality because egalitarianism does not have the homogenizing and erasing effects of equality, it does not assume that all "subjects" arrive at social spaces that have (purportedly) been made "accessible" with the similar histories, cultures, or values. A politics of location calls into question the concept of equality because it does not assume that the locations from which subjects speak are equal. In locating the speaking subject in time/space/history, it mobilizes us to ask such questions as: Equal within what structures? Equal to whom? Moving past
mere equality and into spaces which call for egalitarian relationships, a politics of location works to envision what society and human relationships might look like without domination by understanding the limitations of the partial, interested, and non-innocent nature of the struggle over representation. There is no transcendental position from which to speak; thus the possibilities for transformation must be realized through a radical contextualization of speaking subjects and the understanding that "location forces and enables specific modes of reading and knowing the dominant" (Mohanty, "Feminist Encounters" 89). With these assumptions in place, the potential for social change and political agency envisioned through a politics a location depends upon continued engagement within mobile webs of power.
CHAPTER THREE:

Analytical Framework: Cognitive Mapping, Semiotics and Refusal of the Self

In this chapter I briefly return to Chela Sandoval's work to discuss the relationship between differential cognitive mapping and semiotics to a politics of location. These two skills of the oppressed provide the analytic framework for what I believe writers were doing as they invoked a politics of location to re-write their subjectivities. I then use Foucault's conceptualization of a "refusal of the self" to examine how differently positioned subjects interrogate identity categories. Foucault's concept operates as a framework for the two general categories I use in this project in chapters four and five: outsiders/within and insiders/without.

As indicated in chapter one, Sandoval's theory exists in the tension points between modernist and postmodernist theories. Thus, she opposes any move towards "theoretical purity"—which suggests that we must choose between these theories and their conceptualizations of the subject and social action. She argues that marginalized subjects (these include mestiza, U.S. feminists of color, queer, or anticolonial subjects) have constructed ways of surviving and enacting social change through a differential consciousness. This differential consciousness ushers in the "methodology of the oppressed," which creates a space in the intersections of modernism and postmodernism. Sandoval argues that this is a space for imagining "alternative realities [with] novel means of communication, creativity, productivity, mobility, and a different sense of 'control'" (136).

In her discussion of differential consciousness, Sandoval extends the work of two of the prominent poststructuralist scholars: Roland Barthes and Fredrick Jameson, to argue that
the preeminent skills of the oppressed rely on semiotics (Barthes) and cognitive mapping, a situational representation on the part of an individual to the larger social totality (Jameson). As indicated in chapter one, Sandoval argues that Barthes' theory of semiotics is limited because he could not put semiotics in conversation with theories of resistance produced by the oppressed. This leads to a kind of paralysis in which "the individual practitioner can only act alone, isolated, and in despair" (113). Similarly, Jameson's interrogation of the "schizophrenic" effects of postmodernism and late capitalism on the first-world citizen-subject has occluded a discussion of the survival skills of "the historically decentered citizen-subject: the colonized, the outsider, the queer, the subaltern, the marginalized" (27).

Sandoval argues that while Jameson forwards cognitive mapping as an attempt to "design an original and hopeful activity" (19) for citizen-subjects to realize their relationship to the fragmenting and shifting terrain of a postmodern world, his work falls into paralyzing despair because it requires "outmoded forms of consciousness and ideology in order to function" (30). More specifically, she argues that his version of cognitive mapping was limited because it "can only be accomplished in Althusser's terms, where the citizen-subject attempts to represent in some realistic, believable, cohesive, meaningful way its 'imaginary relationship' to its 'real conditions of existence,' an operation that is, however, hopelessly interrupted by postmodernism's engulfing cultural processes" (italics in original 30-31).

Sandoval challenges the dichotomy created by Jameson that "sets a modernist/historicist view of an isolated but 'real' subject now under erasure against a poststructuralist/postmodernist view that the subject never existed in the first place" by suggesting that "'fragmentation' is neither an experience nor a theoretical experience peculiar to the poststructuralist or postmodern moment" (33). She contends that the splitting of the subject
is a condition that the colonized "were invited to survive under modernist and previous eras, if survival were a choice" (33). This premise leads Sandoval to argue that the mutations in culture, which Jameson believed gave the previously centered subject "no place" from which to stand, provide the very condition that makes new forms of consciousness and identity available to both oppressors and oppressed (37). Positioning consciousness, identity, and ideology as masquerade rather than as fixed "realities," Sandoval reverses Althusser's logic, suggesting a "differential cognitive mapping" in which:

it is the citizen-subject who interpellates, who calls up ideology, as opposed to Althusser's formulation, in which it is "ideology that interpellates the subject."

To deploy a differential oppositional consciousness, one can depend on no (traditional) mode of belief in one's own subject position or ideology; nevertheless, such positions and beliefs are called up and used in order to constitute whatever forms of subjectivity are necessary to act in an also (now obviously) constituted social world. (31)

Differential cognitive mapping provides the hope that Sandoval finds, ultimately, absent in Jameson's formulation because it is based on a negotiation, confrontation, and movement between ideological lines rather than a "break through the net of ideological lines" (19).

Sandoval then places Jameson's and Barthes's work in conversation with one another to argue that differential cognitive mapping (also called cultural mapping) coupled with semiotics are two of the necessary skills in developing an oppositional consciousness:

Cultural mapping depends on its practitioner's continuing and transformative relationship to the social totality. Readings of this shifting totality will determine the interventions—the tactics, ideologies, and discourses that the
practitioner chooses in order to pursue a greater good, beginning with the
citizen-subject's own survival. Reading signs to determine power relations is
its principal technique, the readings obtained are the indications that guide all
movement. This differential form of oppositional consciousness is a field
with no specific content until such readings are produced. Within this zone,
the subject maps and remaps its positions along mobile and alternative
trajectories. (30)

Within her theory of semiotics and differential cognitive mapping, there is an understanding
that subject positions are not "real," in the positivist understanding of the word, yet they are
potentially meaningful in the process of calling up identity markers and critically
interrogating them to create differential consciousness. This is not a consciousness that
stands at a critical distance outside of the social totality, but a consciousness that travels and
is marked by a "mobile, flexible, diasporic force that migrates between contending
ideological systems" (30). Sandoval shows that through the overlap of semiotics and cultural
mapping (see Figure 1), five technologies of the oppressed are revealed that allow for
agentive opportunities to intercede in cultures of domination: "sign reading; deconstruction
and reconstruction of signs; an ethical commitment to justice; and differential movement that
keeps all aspects of being in motion and mutation" (130). She suggests that semiotic
elements (reading, deconstructing, and reconstructing signs) "comprises an 'archaeological'
dig through meaning and consciousness that can return meaning production to 'its healthy'
state: that of the arbitrariness of the sign and the resulting mobility that keeps history,
language, meaning, and spirit alive" (104). When taken together, five technologies are
"techniques for moving energy" (82); thus the methodology of the oppressed is a means of
addressing the paralysis of some poststructural theories that call into question the potential for resistance and social change within the shifting terrain of a postmodern world.

Figure 1: Sandoval's five technologies of the oppressed revealed through the intersection of semiotics and cultural mapping.

As indicated above, reading signs to identify power relations and mapping social positioning provide the analytic framework to understand what writers were doing through a politics of location. Following the metaphor of an archeological dig, a politics of location involves an investigation and excavation of the meanings embedded within social identities,
which then enables discursive agency to re-construct a differential form of subjectivity, a subjectivity not based on stratified power relations. For example, in "Eye to Eye," Audre Lorde engages in mapping and sign reading to identify the ways in which black women have formed their identities in relation to one another and in relation to the larger culture. Although in much of her work Lorde reclaims anger as a positive emotion, in this essay Lorde reads the sign of anger between black women in a different light. She asks, "why does that anger unleash itself most tellingly against another Black woman at the least excuse? Why do I judge her in a more critical light than any other, becoming enraged when she does not measure up?" (145). Reading the signs of what it means to be a black woman in relation to a larger social totality, Lorde writes, "We are Black women born into a society of entrenched loathing and contempt for whatever is Black and female" (151). She then deconstructs these relations by tracing the historical and cultural forces that inform black women's identities and sense of self. For example, she locates the ways in which she, as a black woman, has had to survive in the face of much social hatred and hostility directed at her as black woman:

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Every Black woman in america has survived several lifetimes of hatred, where even in the candy store cases of our childhood, little brown niggerbaby candies testified against us. We survived the wind-driven spittle on our child's hope and pink flesh-colored bandaids, attempt rapes on rooftops and the prodding fingers of the super's boy, seeing our girlfriends blown to bits in Sunday School, and we absorbed that loathing as a natural state. (156)
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Next, Lorde moves to deconstruct how the contempt for what is black and female bleeds into black women's reactions to one another: "we do not love ourselves, therefore we cannot love
each other. Because we see in each other's face our own face, the face we never stopped wanting. Because we survived and survival breeds desire for more self. A face we never stopping wanting at the same time as we try to obliterate it" (155). In her deconstruction, she reveals how the anger and mistrust between black women is mis-directed, that is, anger is internalized rather than projected outward towards a society that loathes what is black and female.

In reading and deconstructing the signs of anger and mistrust between black women, Lorde clears a space for the reconstruction of her intersubjectivity with black women: "If we can learn to give ourselves the recognition and acceptance that we have come to expect only from our mommas, Black women will be able to see each other much more clearly and deal with each other much more directly" (159). In her reconstruction, Lorde maintains a place for the unknown of what might become of black women's subjectivities, "We must recognize and nurture the creative parts of each other without always understanding what will be created" (173). However, she does goes on to detail what it might look like for black women to resist the internalized loathing taught in a racist/sexist culture by reclaiming an ancient history of black women bonding and offering mutual support and envisioning what that kind of trust might look like through differential movement. This differential movement re-deploys anger to "demolish the past" (152) and employs love to envision a different future:

We can learn to mother ourselves... We will begin to see each other as we dare to begin to see ourselves; we will begin to see ourselves as we begin to see each other; without aggrandizement or dismissal or recriminations, but with patience and understanding for when we do not quite make it, and recognition and appreciation for when we do. (173)
Lorde invokes a politics of location to excavate the meaning of relations between black women in a hopeful effort to reconstruct intersubjectivity.

I believe mapping and sign reading are useful analytical frames for understanding what writers are doing when engaging in a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy for re-writing subjectivity. In particular, mapping provides an important metaphor for understanding a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy that is different from identity politics because maps are non-essential constructs, the border and boundaries of which are highly contested artifices that can be shifted, erased, or realigned—and these "realignments" have everything to do with power, either as an exercise of oppression or resistance. Thus, maps are "non-real" entities, yet entities which have significant meanings as representations. For example, in her essay, "The Use of Anger: Women Responding to Racism" Lorde's larger project is to reclaim the positive force of black women's anger. Thus she reads the sign of anger and maps its relationship differently than she does in "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger" (as discussed above). Thus mapping through a politics of location reveals how the meaning ascribed to her identity and emotions as a black woman is relational and situational. Mapping one's various identity positions also avoids "tootsie roll metaphysics" or "pop-bead metaphysics," which Elizabeth Spelman suggests is a dangerous pitfall of some forms of identity politics:

This is a version of personal identity we might call tootsie roll metaphysics: each part of my identity is separable from every other part, and the significance of each part is unaffected by the other parts. On this view of personal identity (which might also be called pop-bead metaphysics), my
being a woman means the same whether I am white or black, rich or poor, French or Jamaican, Jewish or Muslim. (136)

Pop-bead metaphysics implies that each of our identity positions is detachable from the others like beads on a necklace, and thus can be added and removed at will. Mapping identities, on the other hand, foregrounds the interlocking relationships between and among identity positions—no part can be understood in separation from the whole. Mapping is not a linear string or a set of simple binary oppressor/oppressed relations, but a complex matrix of "relationality," to borrow Chandra Talpade Mohanty's word ("Cartographies" 13).

Sign reading as an archaeological dig also helps frame a politics of location as something more than a mere statement of identity positions. As indicated in the previous chapter, stating one's position is a rhetorical strategy often used to introduce a piece of writing (for example, "I am a white working class lesbian"). However, this is not what I deem a politics of location because the identity markers are usually proclaimed as if they are self-evident and "real." Further, this strategy is problematic because the author typically proceeds with her argument or narrative, leaving unquestioned how those social locations inform and limit the claims she articulates in the remainder of the article or essay. A politics of location is a more complex discursive strategy than a mere listing of identity positions, because while identity positions are called up as a tactic, there is no assumption that the meanings of the identities are self-evident, nor is it assumed that those who claim similar identities are politically aligned. For example, in "Eye to Eye," Lorde begins with the premise that "connections between Black women are not automatic by virtue of our similarities and the possibilities of genuine communication between us are not easily achieve" (153)—which moves away from identity politics which assumes identification
through a shared social location. Yet, she calls up this identity position to deconstruct the cultural and historical forces which have shaped black women's sense of self and then reconstruct a more life-affirming intersubjectivity between black women.

Sign reading and mapping, then, reveal that a politics of location is an *uneartthing* of the subject positions into which women have been interpellated and a critical interrogation of how those subject positions inform relationships with other subjects. Writers who used a politics of location call up identity markers to analyze the "practical rules and regulations" (to use Susan Bordo's language) which construct women's subjectivities and cultural mapping in order to understand the inter-relationships between and among social identities. The goal of a politics of location is the assertion of discursive agency through resignification which can lead to intersubjectivity based on an ethical commitment to justice and more egalitarian relations.

**Refusal of the Self**

As indicated above, a politics of location is not an effort to affirm a "true" self at the core of one's being; it is an effort to locate subject positions and excavate the meaning embedded in particular socio-cultural positions, which can potentially create spaces for different ways of being, ways of engaging with others that are not grounded in relations of domination and subordination. In reading signs and mapping identities through a politics of location, the radical, lesbian feminists whose work I analyze in this project engage in a form of what Michel Foucault calls a "refusal of the self" in his later work on ethics and care of the self. In this work, Foucault focuses on "the models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with
oneself as object" (*The Use of Pleasure* 29). Care of the self does not mean simply being interested in oneself, nor does it mean having a certain tendency to self-attachment or self-fascination" (243). Care of the self involves understanding that we constitute ourselves through real practices; thus Foucault does not advocate a "discovery of the self," he suggests studying practices which bring into being our subjectivities. In such analysis, then, is the potential to refuse what we are and begin to promote new forms of subjectivity. Sandoval suggests that resistance (the third term often left out of the binary between subordination or domination) can be located in a "refusal of the self," a refusal of unreflexive identification with hegemonic representations of various subject positions in order to create agentive opportunities for the reconstruction of subjectivities (160). Mapping and semiotics are tactics that enable a dis-identification with hegemonic representations of the self.

However, in keeping with the assumption that all subjects are not equally positioned, I don't believe dis-identification operates similarly across different contexts because women's lives are at stake in incredibly different and disproportionate ways. I use the concept "refusal of the self" to call attention to the fact that sign reading and mapping through a politics of location operates differently based on one's position relative to normative subjectivity, a position that shifts with different spatio-temporal contexts. Those who identify with a subordinated position initially move in a positive direction, to positively reclaim a subjugated identity; those who identify with a dominant position initially move in a negative direction, to deconstruct unreflected-upon privileges and prejudices embedded in dominant identity positions. Of course, this differential approach to understanding how a refusal of the self is related to a politics of location becomes terribly complicated with the understanding that most subjects occupy positions of both oppressed and oppressor. As a method, it would
seem to require precisely the kind of pop-bead metaphysics that I have argued is antithetical to the ways in which Sandoval conceptualizes identities through the technologies of sign reading and differential cognitive mapping. However, I conceive of a refusal of the self not as a method, per se; rather, it is a conceptual tool with which to think about how sign reading and mapping one's identities operates differently depending on one's subject position. That is, this concept begins with the assumption that although equity may be one of the goals of engaging in a feminist rhetorical strategy, not all subjects arrive on "equal" or similar ground. To reiterate Nancy Hartsock's words, "Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?" ("Foucault on Power" 163). Thus, to suggest that those subjects who historically have been denied the right to define themselves for themselves engage in a "refusal of the self" in the same manner as those subjects who have not been denied this right would be at best, misleading, and at worst a reification of an oppressive framework that collapses all subjects into a universalized position.

Ann Ferguson theorizes a similar process in her work on bridge identities. She argues that those with "target identities" (oppressed groups) must engage in a different process of reconstituting their identities than those who wish to be allies with the "target" group (oppressive groups) to construct identities that ultimately can bridge this divide:

Step 1 for target identities (those in subordinate or oppressive relations with another social group) involves...the simple affirmation of potential value in oneself as a member of a social group...In contrast, the first step for those in dominant positions who wish to be allies against the oppression of target
groups is to make a critique of the hitherto negative aspects of one's social identity; that is, a devaluation of one's assumed moral superiority. (105)

Feminists who use a politics of location as a discursive strategy for reconstituting their subjectivities follow a similar pattern of differential movement (either positive re-valuation or negative de-valuation) dependent on their social location relative to normative subjectivity. Importantly, because a politics of location requires an intense excavation of meanings embedded in particular identity categories, it entails more than a simple refusal of a social identity. It first requires a full exploration of the meaning of identity categories and then a refusal of ways of being, acting, and thinking that are built upon relations of domination and subordination. For example, using a politics of location to map the meaning of their middle class, Southern, white feminine identity positions, Minnie Bruce Pratt and Marilyn Frye do not simply refuse to be "white," as this would elide the important work of first excavating what white, Southern, middle class femininity looks like. Instead, the first step involves an interrogation of what whiteness is, what it looks like, how it contributes to the texture of their daily lives; the second step requires a refusal of ways of being that feed relations of domination or subordination so that new ways of being can be discovered.

Again, I use Foucault's refusal of the self to call attention to the different processes in which dominant and non-dominant subjects initially engage when invoking a politics of location. The ultimate goal of sign reading and mapping through a politics of location, however, remains similar for both kinds of subjects: the reconstruction of subjectivity that enables coalition politics across differences. In the next chapter I use language from

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7 I will argue in chapter five that those who occupy dominant positions can never totally disavow themselves of their privileged social status.
standpoint theories of epistemology to identify two general subject positions: outsiders/within and insiders/without. I invoke these terms to exemplify that a politics of location operates as a refusal of self differently dependent on one's relative position to normative subjectivity and as a way of organizing my analyses in chapters four and five of the texts that illustrate how a politics of location operates as a discursive strategy for excavating and re-writing subjectivity.

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8 I elaborate on the term insider/without in chapter five. In short I use the term to categorize those subjects who exist in normative or dominant social positions (which is, in the case of this project, relative to an already marginalized lesbian social location). Insider/without represents lesbians in dominant racial social locations who are "insiders" but are "without" the spontaneous consciousness of unreflected-upon privilege.
Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference—those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older—know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish.

—Audre Lorde 112

I frame this chapter with an epigraph from Audre Lorde's collection of essays *Sister Outsider* to elucidate that women who exist on the margins of "legitimate" female subjectivity occupy a unique position from which to create survival skills for redefining what it is to be "acceptable." Borrowing from Patricia Hill Collins's theory of black feminist epistemology, I group those who exist in non-privileged, non-normative socio-political positions (relative to an already marginalized lesbian social location) within the term outsiders/within. Hill Collins uses the unique position of black domestic workers as a launching point from which to describe the outsider/within perspective:

Domestic work allowed African-American women to see white elites, both actual and aspiring, from perspectives largely obscured from Black men and from these groups themselves. In their white "families," Black women not only performed domestic duties but frequently formed strong ties with the children they nurtured, and with the employers themselves. On one level this insider relationship was satisfying to all concerned. Accounts of Black domestic workers stress the sense of self-affirmation the women experienced
at seeing white power demystified. But on another level these Black women knew that they could never belong to their white "families," that they were economically exploited workers and thus would remain outsiders. (11)

Where dominant culture has suppressed knowledge produced from this vantage point, Hill Collins reclaims the outsider/within position as that which offers a wider perspective than either an insider or outsider perspective. Extending the metaphor of outsiders/within to assumptions of normative membership in intellectual communities, Hill Collins states:

The assumptions on which full group membership are based—whiteness for feminist thought, maleness for Black social and political thought, and the combination for mainstream scholarship—all negate a Black female reality. Prevented from becoming full insiders in any of these areas of inquiry, Black women remain outsiders within, individuals whose marginality provides a distinctive angle of vision on the theories put forth by such intellectual communities. (12)

Paradoxically, because these subjects are at once over-determined in a racist and sexist culture and rendered invisible "as a fully human individual[s]" (94), Hill Collins suggests that they have a perspective that offers a "peculiar angle of vision...[that is] a tremendous source of strength" (94) as well as "frustration and creativity" (233). The outsider/within position is a kind of double-edged sword—a position in which the pain of inhabiting an undefined space between competing cultural contexts is that which feeds the creativity to seek new ways of being that enable the flourishing of humanity. Or, as Lorraine Hansberry has stated,

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9 Hill Collins notes that other factors, such as age, ethnicity, and urbanization, also influence the complex of experiences that inform Black women's epistemological standpoint that she theorizes (24).
"Eventually it comes to you... the thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely" (qtd. in Hill Collins 233).

Significantly, the position of outsider/within is born of a "culture of resistance" (Hill Collins 12) and is not a de facto perspective of those who are positioned on the margins of society. Similarly, Chandra Talpade Mohanty explains in her work on third-world women's life histories and oppositional consciousness, "I do challenge the notion 'I am, therefore I resist!' That is, I challenge the idea that simply being a woman, or being poor or black or Latino, is sufficient ground to assume a politicized oppositional identity" ("Cartographies" 33). The outsider/within position is both a product of one's relative position to normative subjectivity and the struggle against oppressive relations of domination and subordination.

In the remainder of this chapter I show how two outsiders/within (Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa) invoke a politics of location while engaging Sandoval's technologies of sign reading and differential cognitive mapping. These technologies allow outsiders/within to dis-identify from hegemonic representations of themselves as "others," which requires naming and excavating the meanings ascribed to social positions in order to ultimately reconstruct subjectivities. In Michelle Cliff's words, these women engage in a process of "claiming an identity they taught me to despise."

**Audre Lorde's Politics of Location as Sister/Outsider**

Audre Lorde's 1984 collection of essays *Sister Outsider* provides an excellent example of how a politics of location is invoked by an outsider/within through a detailed mapping of the various trajectories along which she identifies herself and an excavation of the meaning embedded in those social locations through sign reading. Lorde writes, "poetry is the revelatory distillation of experience" (37); her collection of essays is a similar
distillation of experiences, perceptions, and analyses of her locations in the world as an outsider/within. In the analysis that follows I first argue that Lorde uses two elements of a politics of location for reconstructing her subjectivity. She reclaims emotion and experience, thus locating alternative *topoi* as sources of knowledge production. And, she locates herself across a variety of socio-cultural groups to localize and specify her "truth" claims as well as evoke a similar degree of accountability in her audience. I then show how Lorde uses a politics of location to excavate the meanings embedded in a variety of identity categories, an excavation driven by the desire to expose oppressive modes of being and the hope of realizing non-oppressive ways of engaging across difference.

**Locating Emotion**

Throughout Lorde's essays, "locating emotion" is a central force in excavating the meaning of social positions and the subsequent creation of different ways of being in the world that are not built upon domination and subordination. Therefore, one significant way that Lorde uses a politics of location for articulating her subjectivity and asserting discursive agency is through reclaiming emotion, or non-rational ways of knowing, as a launching point for understanding. She writes, "For each of us as women, there is a dark place within, where hidden and growing our true spirit rises, 'beautiful/and tough as chestnut/stanchions against

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10 Lester Olson has provided a rhetorical analysis of Lorde's essays, "Age, Race, Class, Sex: Women Redefining Difference" in which he argues that Lorde's struggle with language offers sophisticated techniques for using language to redefine difference. Olson has also analyzed Lorde's rhetoric in "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," arguing that her discussion of the relationships between speech and silence offer communication scholars excellent discussion of both the possibilities and limitations of rhetoric. However, where Olson focuses primarily on these two rhetorical artifacts in order to distinguish Lorde's contribution to rhetorical theory, I examine Lorde's collection *Sister Outsider* as a whole in order to illustrate how she invokes a politics of location similar to other radical lesbian feminists during the 1980s and 90s.
(y)our nightmare of weakness/ and of impotence" (36). Lorde makes two significant
discursive moves here. First, she dis-identifies with a hegemonic construal of emotion as
negative and dark by positively positing darkness and emotion as strong and beautiful.
Second, she seeks to excavate internalized oppression through the dual meaning of "(y)our,"
effectively collapsing an us/them dichotomy and demanding accountability from all who
associate emotion and darkness with weakness.

Lorde insists that sources of change and possibility are not in the brain, not in
rationality or logic, but in the inner darkness of emotion, "our feelings and the honest
exploration of them become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and
daring of ideas" (37). Lorde does not simply reconceptualize emotion as sacred and creative,
she maintains that in order to use emotion in the larger project of social change we must
engage in the hard work of "honest exploration." Finally, she states:

there are no new ideas. There are only new ways of making them be felt—of
examining what those ideas feel like being lived on Sunday morning at 7 a.m.,
after brunch, during wild love, making war, giving birth, mourning our
dead—while we suffer the old longings, battle the old warnings and fears of
being silent and impotent and alone, while we taste new possibilities and
strengths. (39)

While there may be "new combinations, extrapolations and recognitions from within
ourselves" (38) of old ideas, the driving force creating new ways of being, for Lorde, is the
courage to realize those ideas in how we experience/feel our quotidian lives. Lorde's
reconfiguration of emotion as both a source of knowledge and the key to future possibilities
is akin to Chela Sandoval's hermeneutics of love; it is a form of psychic and social activism through renewal, social reconstruction, and emancipation (Sandoval 10).

Some feminists have critiqued Lorde for relying on a traditional dichotomy that separates male rationality from female emotion, reducing women's knowledge to intuition, which cannot be validated as "hard" knowledge. Lorde rejects this generalization of her argument that feelings and perceptions are the creative source of social change. In an interview with Adrienne Rich, Lorde argues that the refusal to claim emotion as a source of social change constitutes a form of internalized oppression in which the oppressed have been coerced to "discipline" themselves, thus contributing to their own submission:

we have been taught to suspect what is deepest in ourselves, against our feelings. When we talk in terms of our lives and our survival as women, we can use our knowledge of the erotic creatively. The way you get people to testify against themselves is not to have police tactics and oppressive techniques. What you do is to build it in so people learn to distrust everything in themselves that has not been sanctioned, or reject what is most creative about themselves to begin with, so you don't even need to stamp it out. (102)

Lorde also explains reclaiming and revaluing emotion and perception is a result of a life-time battle with people who consistently question her perceptions: "That's the only thing I've had to fight with, my whole life, preserving my perceptions of how things are, and later, learning how to accept and correct at the same time. Doing this in the face of tremendous opposition and cruel judgment" (105). Lorde locates the devaluation of emotion through her own life experiences and connects it to a more global level as an internalization of oppression. As indicated in chapter two, revaluing emotion, perception and experience is one element of a
politics of location; it is not, however, an ending point. Lorde contends we must start with revaluing that which we have been taught to distrust; then we must be open to "correct" or add layers of dimension to our perceptions as we work collectively to create meaning through our interchanges with others. Thus, this invocation of knowing through perceptions and feelings is driven by an "honest exploration" of and "disciplined attention" to meaning of feelings (37). Lorde contends the real work is in the struggle to understand the meaning of perceptions and emotions and the subsequent transformation of them into language and action that can be shared.

Fear is one of the primary emotions Lorde locates as a launching point for excavating the meaning of her social positions throughout her collection of essays. For example "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" invokes a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy both by reclaiming emotion as a launching point for creating knowledge and by moving between the collective "we" and the individual "I." In this essay Lorde locates the genesis of her understanding about fear in the physical realm, in her potential mortality after grappling with the knowledge that she required breast surgery that might result in the discovery of a malignant tumor. In review of her life she realizes her greatest regrets all involve choices to remain silent. As she excavates in search of meaning, Lorde locates the emotion behind this silence, which she defines as "fear of contempt, of censure, or some judgment, or recognition, of challenge, of annihilation...of...the visibility without which we cannot truly live" (42). However, in facing death, the ultimate silence, she comes to the realization that fearlessness is a luxury, not a necessity for speaking: "we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition" (44). And as Lorde indicates through her essays in Sister Outsider, language and definition are the means
by which we make ourselves visible and alive. This reclaiming (and representation) of fear as a location for creating knowledge provides a double-layered form of discursive agency over that which threatened to push Lorde into silence and inaction. First, claiming emotion, claiming the intangible, as a valid means of knowing and understanding the world is a move that enables agency. The excavation of the meaning and function of that fear also provides an agentive opportunity because it moves her through fear and into action, enabling her to represent the confrontation of fear as a source of change. In addition to enacting discursive agency through an exploration of the function of the fear, Lorde makes the important move of contextualizing her claims by creating links between the body, personal experiences, and the collective experiences of oppressed peoples who exist in silence. She begins her excavation of fear in the material realm of her body, then moves to discuss her experiences with fear; finally, she moves to a more general level to discuss the racist function of fear in feminist coalitions. Lorde consistently locates emotions in each of the essays in Sister Outsider as she maps her identity across and between different social groups. Emotion becomes a discursive launching point for honest exploration of oppressive relations of domination and subordination that inhibit the exercise of agency and the creation of intersubjectivity.

**Locating Identity Positions**

Lorde consistently identifies herself as a black, lesbian, feminist, mother, and poet—indeed she argues that self-definition is essential for the "humanization" of all oppressed peoples, particularly black men and women whose subject positions are especially over-determined in the culture of the United States. She writes, "If we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others—for their use and to our detriment" (47). The listing
of the identities in Lorde's essays operates as a starting point from which to explore those identities. Gloria Hull insists that "Lorde's seemingly essentialist definitions of herself as black/lesbian/mother/woman are not simple, fixed terms. Rather, they represent her ceaseless negotiations of a positionality from which she can speak" (159). Central to Lorde's self-definition and exploration is a desire for a fuller understanding of her social identities as well as a desire that such an understanding will open dialogue with others through which she can enact compassionate connection across differences. Importantly, when Lorde lists her identity positions she does not assume that a shared identification with a particular social group ensures either emotional connection or a common political consciousness. For example, speaking of relations between black women, Lorde writes, "connections between Black women are not automatic by virtue of our similarities, and the possibilities of genuine communication between us are not easily achieved" (153). In each of her essays in *Sister Outsider*, Lorde begins with a similar assumption about a priori connections between members of a social group. This assumption enables her listing of identities to function as a rhetorical launching point from which to map her memberships within and across a variety of social groups. Such mapping ultimately enables Lorde to exercise discursive agency through excavating the meaning of identity categories, thus articulating her subjectivity in the face of misrepresentations by the dominant culture and in the face of divisions within subcultures.

Claiming identities serves several other important rhetorical and political functions in Lorde's writing. First, Lorde's consistent insistence on naming the positions from which she speaks works to radically contextualize her truth claims, thus situating the construction of knowledge within her subjective location rather than making abstract and grand assertions to "Truth." At the same time, she moves between the situated "I" and the collective "we"
throughout her essays. Committed to the potential of intersubjective, cooperative knowledge-creation through discursive interaction, she writes, "We are women making contact within ourselves and with each other across the restrictions of printed page, bent upon the use of our own/one another's knowledges" (72). In calling her audience to speak their truths, to step through the fears that drive the belief that silence provides protection, she writes:

What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am woman, because I am Black, because I am lesbian, because I am myself—a Black woman warrior poet doing my work—come to ask you, are you doing yours? (41-42)

Lorde locates herself in relation to her audience, takes accountability for the interestedness of her work, and pushes her audience members to be accountable for their participation in the collective construction of a better world, which Lorde believes always begins with self-definition and rejection of externally imposed "tyrannies."

Additionally, locating her identity positions is a part of Lorde's larger political effort to posit representation and self-definition as tools of empowerment. Both through example and calls to her audience to define themselves, she invites all subjects to articulate their individual subjectivities and collective identities in non-oppressive ways. For example in discussing the interconnections between sexism and racism in the black community, Lorde demands that black women and black men take responsibility for empowered representations of themselves, rather than speaking for the "other" or believing that empowerment comes"
through defining one group (black women, for example) in the service of another (black men). She explains that, "Black feminists speak as women because we are women and do not need others to speak for us. It is for Black men to speak up and tell us why and how their manhood is so threatened that Black women should be the prime targets of their justifiable rage" (60). She calls for black men to speak as black men, to "examine and articulate their own desires and positions and stand by the conclusions thereof" (62), to open a dialogue among black men in which they can remain accountable for their own self-representations, thus leading to more productive dialogue between black women and black men. In this case, claiming subject positions from which to speak is a move to dis-identify with relations of domination and subordination, a forward-looking move imbued with the vision of creating more equitable relations across different social positions through dialogue. Similarly, Lorde demands accountability in matters of representation from white women in her discussions of racism in white feminist communities. She demands that white women face their own racism when they misrepresent (or completely ignore) black women's work, lives, and contributions to society, or alternatively, when white women represent their own and other white women's lives as representative of all women's lives (43, 69). At stake for Lorde in consistently locating her own social position and inviting others to follow suit are issues of representation and accountability. Lorde uses a politics of location to construct her own subjectivity as she simultaneously calls for others to do the same. She asks that individuals take accountability for self-definition, self-representation, and representations of others; she asks that we all locate the positions from which we speak with an understanding of the dual capability to be oppressed and to be oppressive, so that, ultimately, dialogue can be opened across stratified groups.
Perhaps most importantly, Lorde's commitment to claiming identity positions operates rhetorically to situate herself, following her book title, as a "sister outsider." Lorde's position as always already different, always an outsider to some political group, becomes the driving force behind her archaeological dig. Speaking of her involvement in the social movements of the 60s, she explains:

Either I denied or chose between various aspects of my identity, or my work and my Blackness would be unacceptable. As a Black lesbian mother in an interracial marriage, there was usually some part of me guaranteed to offend everybody's comfortable prejudices of who I should be. That is how I learned that if I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive. (137)

Resisting externally imposed definitions occurs across multiple sites—not all of which can be neatly packaged into the realm of "the dominant culture," but all of which function similarly to colonize her sense of intersubjectivity and fragmenting her into disparate, unrelated parts. Writing about the interrelationship between age, race, class, and gender, Lorde states:

As a Black lesbian feminist comfortable with the many different ingredients of my identity, and a woman committed to racial and sexual freedom from oppression, I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular
sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. (120-121)

In utilizing a politics of location for articulating her intersubjectivity, Lorde resists pop-bead metaphysical identity politics, which suggests that any one of her identities can be neatly separated from the others and thus understood. In fact, it is through the integration of her identities that Lorde discovers a less restricted "flow" of power and the opportunity to proactively re-create a sense of self devoid of the schizophrenic state that Jameson believes is a necessary condition of the fragmented postmodern subject. Lorde's position as always already different is the impetus for rejecting difference as divisive and rearticulating it as a source of creativity and social change.

The integrated subjectivity Lorde seeks through a politics of location is not essentialist; nor does she assume she can "return" to a "pure self," unfettered by socio-cultural determinants. She writes, "For we must move against not only those forces which dehumanize us from the outside, but also against those oppressive values which we have been forced to take into our ourselves" (135). Lorde understands that the work of self-definition and integration of identities is complex and fraught with struggle—struggle against exterior representations that are limiting and degrading and against interior forces that do the same. There are no easy solutions or paths to the kind of integrity she seeks. Rather, the struggle with naming and representation, a life-long engagement with language and with other people, leads the way in the creative and continuous process of be-coming:

For those of us who write, it is necessary to scrutinize not only the truth of what we speak, but the truth of that language by which we speak it...primarily for us all, it is necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we
believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth. (43)

Lorde's self-definition through a politics of location is about mobility, movement, and growth, not fixity. Only through continued engagement with language—resisting oppressive representations and claiming affirmative representations—can she remain alive and lively as a subject. Lorde indicates the process of living with an integrated subjectivity requires a cyclical process of naming, dialoguing, reflecting, and a return to naming. Lorde's invocation of a politics of location as a discursive strategy, then, is part of a life-long commitment to the continued development of an integrated subjectivity.

**Mapping Social Memberships**

Reclaiming emotion as a knowledge-source and locating identity positions work in tandem with Lorde's exploration of the interrelationship between racism, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia. In her exploration Lorde maps the meaning embedded in relations between and among various oppressed peoples, relations which ultimately hinder coalition politics. Exploring the function of difference is central to Lorde's work in mapping and excavating the meaning of her identities, particularly its function in coalitions across and between social positions. Using her social positioning as a black lesbian feminist confronting racism, sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism and her commitment to the integrity of her intersubjectivity as a launching point, Lorde seeks to reconfigure difference. That is, her own social location informs the assumption that coalitions depend on respect for heterogeneity and should seek unity through a common vision, not a homogeneous group identity. She argues, "It is not our differences which separate women, but our reluctance to
recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from the ignoring and misnaming of those differences" (122). Seeking the root of why difference functions as a divisive force, Lorde situates the misnaming of difference within a culture of hegemony and locates fear as the key to understanding its non-creative, non-generative function. She argues:

Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion. (115)

No one escapes the implications of a xenophobic culture, no one speaks from a position of non-innocence; therefore, we all must confront the internalization of the fear of difference. Towards this end, Lorde proceeds in each of her essays to show how difference, when driven by fear, functions within identity-based groups as a divisive force.

For example, in mapping relations between feminists of color and white feminists, Lorde locates how many white feminists are threatened by differences, believing that a unified social movement only occurs through homogeneity, a belief which erases the existence of women of color and leaves white women's racism and privilege unexamined (116-118). She also maps out the privileges and pitfalls of white women's relationships to white men, showing how they are "seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretense of
sharing power" by replicating racist, sexist, homophobic, and heterosexist modes of self-definition (118). Such mapping exposes how fear hinders coalitions between women of color and white women.

Lorde also maps her membership with the black community to explore the interconnections between racism, sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism—each of which thrives on a fear of difference that reproduces structures of oppression (48). In particular she examines the fear of lesbians and the connection between lesbian-baiting and fear of self-defined black women. This fear is dependent on a sexist, homophobic, and heterosexist structure that encourages suspicion and competition between black women, rather than kinship and love, and defines black women only in relation to black men (49). Moving more deeply into her archaeological dig, Lorde excavates why self-defined black women too often are perceived as a threat to black men:

The distortion of relationship which says "I disagree with you, so I must destroy you" leaves us as Black people with basically uncreative victories, defeated in any common struggle. This jugular vein psychology is based on the fallacy that your assertion or affirmation of self is an attack upon my self—or that my defining myself will somehow prevent or retard your self-definition. The supposition that one sex needs the other's acquiescence in order to exist prevents both from moving together as self-defined persons toward a common goal. (51)

She argues that the denial of black women's subjectivity is a dehumanizing force that is "no less lethal than dehumanization of racism," which also feeds on a denial of self-definition for people of color (50). Lorde uses a politics of location to explore how black men's and
women's identities take on meaning in relation to one another, urging a recognition of how a fear of difference has operated as a dehumanizing force for all.

Locating various groups' perceptions of what is potentially threatening allows Lorde to map memberships across and within different identity-based groups. In so doing, she excavates how the identities of these groups are based in a fear of difference, a fear which functions to feed sexism, heterosexism, racism, and homophobia and a false hierarchy of oppressions. By locating interconnections between racism, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia, Lorde reveals how all participants in relations of domination are diminished through an abnegation of the creative (rather than divisive) function of difference and the right to self-definition. Again, Lorde uses a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy for unearthing, naming and representing some of the embedded meanings of identity-based groups. It is a strategy that leads her to name how hegemonic culture fears difference and to deconstruct the divisive function of this fear.

Lorde's map of inter-relational identities and her excavation of the function and meaning of difference does not stop with deconstruction. She also positively reconstructs difference as the ultimate source of regeneration, creativity, and social change. Such a reconstruction works to mobilize different political identities in a common goal of confronting the dehumanizing function of a fear of difference (135). Her reconstruction of difference becomes the locus of social change:

Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the
power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters. (111)

While a significant portion of her exploration of difference focuses on how it has been used negatively, as divisive force that reproduces oppressive structures, an equally significant portion of her exploration is devoted to the revaluing of difference as a creative force in creating new ways of being. In particular, Lorde argues that the imaginative function of difference can help us constitute a different map of social identities, a map that begins to move beyond the interlocking structures of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia.

Lorde also maps her identity as a black woman in relation to white women and other women of color in order to excavate some of the embedded meanings of these identity positions (particularly in the context of personal and institutionalized racism). Similar to her use of fear as a launching point for understanding the intersections of racism, sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism, Lorde uses the emotion of anger as a starting point for locating the meaning of relations between black women and white women. In her work, Lorde positively reclaims her anger as a black woman in a racist, sexist, and homophobic society because it enables a certain liveliness to "demolish the past" (152). In so doing she dis-identifies with hegemonic forces which suggest she should suppress her anger in response to exploitation and oppression. Importantly, she juxtaposes anger against hatred in order to show that hatred is built upon a desire for ill will and can only destroy (both the subject and object of hatred), "Hatred is the fury of those who do not share our goals, and its object is death and destruction" (129). Ultimately in using anger as a launching point for understanding, she points out that while anger has a positive use, it "is an incomplete form of knowledge...[because it] cannot create the future" (150). The essay, "The Uses of Anger:
Women Responding to Racism," provides the fullest exploration of these relationships. In
the context of repeated requests by white women that she put aside her anger, Lorde
positively reclaims this emotion; she writes, "My response to racism is anger. I have lived
with that anger, ignoring it, feeding upon it, learning to use it before it laid my visions to
waste, for most of my life. Once I did it in silence, afraid of the weight. My fear of anger
taught me nothing. Your fear of that anger will teach you nothing, also" (124). As she
reclaims anger she also calls white women, in particular, to face the anger of women of color
in the "hard work of excavating honesty" (128). She then moves to explore the uses and
limitations of anger in her relationships with white women and women of color, suggesting
that it must be used for clarity and mutual empowerment if we understand it as an appropriate
response to oppression (127). That is, recognition of anger is an absolute necessity in
exploring relations between women of color and white women. Significantly, while Lorde
reclaims her own anger in response to being a target of racism, she also recognizes her own
ability to collude in racism. For example, she states:

The woman of Color who is not Black and who charges me with rendering her
invisible by assuming that her struggles with racism are identical with my own
has something to tell me that I had better learn from, lest we both waste
ourselves fighting the truths between us...And yes, it is very difficult to stand
still and to listen to another woman's voice delineate an agony I do not share,
or one to which I myself have contributed. (127-28)

Taking a self-reflexive stance, Lorde uses a politics of location to place herself on the same
critical plane of examination, showing that all women are implicated in systems of
oppression, and that the path to different ways of being require struggle and pain. In fact, at
the end of this particular essay Lorde broadens the scope of her argument, contending that anger is an appropriate response to any form of oppression and that no woman, no identity position as "oppressed" frees us from potentially behaving in oppressive ways. Lorde asks, "What woman here is so enamoured of her own oppression that she cannot see her heelprint upon another woman's face? What woman's terms of oppression have become precious and necessary to her as a ticket into the fold of the righteous, away from the cold winds of self-scrutiny?" (132). These are important rhetorical moves because they enable Lorde to map her subjectivity in relation to white women and other women of color in the context of learned oppression (racism in particular) and the desire for mutual empowerment. Mapping her identity in relation to both white women and women of color through an examination of the function of anger as a response to oppression constructs a complex subjectivity that cannot be neatly fitted into any particular category, a subjectivity that is not fixed or static, but always the process of be-coming through continued reclaiming/naming, dialogue, and self-reflection.

Mapping her membership with other black women, Lorde also locates the emotion of anger as a launching point from which to excavate "the source of that mistrust and distance maintained between Black women" (147). In her essay, "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger," she places her reactions to other black women on the plane of critique when she queries why her anger "unleash[es] itself most tellingly against another Black woman at the least excuse" (145). Her hope is to seek an understanding of the complex, complicated, and contradictory interrelationships between black women. Again, in locating herself on the plane of critique, Lorde maintains accountability for potentially participating in a way of being that is not commensurate with her values. Ultimately, what she discovers in mapping
her relations with other black women is a form of internalized oppression that is outwardly directed toward other black women; such oppression places black women somewhere between desire for self-love and desire for the obliteration of that which dominant culture suggests is most unwanted—black women (155). Lorde writes, "I am writing about an anger so huge and implacable, so corrosive, it must destroy what it most needs for its own solution, dissolution, resolution" (157). Through locating and reclaiming deeply embedded anger and mapping her relationship to other black women, Lorde opens a dialogue between black women, noting that, "It would be ridiculous to believe that this process is not lengthy and difficult. It is suicidal to believe it is not possible" (175). The use of a politics of location to excavate the meaning of her identity as a black woman in relation to other black women is no less than a struggle for life and the hope of a more life-affirming existence.

At the heart of Lorde's struggle to map and excavate the meanings attached to the identities she claims is hope for ways of being that enhance her own humanity and enable her to feed the humanity of others. She locates this source of hope and change in erotic emotion (she defines the erotic within physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual realms). In both a political and a personal effort, Lorde reclaims the erotic as a way of knowing, as that which reveals a capacity to feel joy and to share joy with another in such a way that creates bridges across differences (56); again, locating the source of change in non-rationale ways of knowing is a significant element of a politics of location. Additionally, Lorde identifies that which has been misnamed/misused by dominant culture (women's erotic energy), deconstructs how women have been taught to mistrust the erotic, and reclaims it at a source of social change that can move us out of old modes of being and into new ways of being (59).
Lorde's revisioned erotic is a place in which women can interact with a sense of joy and pleasure that enables them to realize their fullest potential in concert with other women.

Lorde asserts discursive agency through a politics of location by naming her positionality, deconstructing relations of domination, and by reclaiming that which has been denied her or defined as negative (including reclaiming the power of affirmative self-definition, reclaiming emotions such as fear and anger) as valid launching points for creating knowledge, and reclaiming the creative potential of difference. In these discursive moves, she constructs a fluid, mobile, and integrated subjectivity, a subjectivity dependent upon collective and individual desire to imagine new ways of being in quotidian experiences that allows for the flourishing of humanity.

**Gloria Anzaldúa's Politics of Location in the Borderlands**

Gloria Anzaldúa's collection of essays and poetry, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, provides another example of how an outsider/within uses a politics of locations to map her social positions, excavate the meanings of those locations, and reconstruct a life-affirming subjectivity. Anzaldúa positions herself at the intersection of a number of different borderlands—the material borderlands of Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexico, as well as psychological, sexual, and spiritual borderlands. She writes, "I am a border woman...I have been straddling that *tejas*-Mexican border, and others, all my life. It's not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions" (Preface). *Borderlands/La Frontera* is an effort to write her borderlands existence into being:

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11 In an interview with Anzaldúa in *JAC*, Andrea Lunsford names Anzaldúa's writing as "mestiza rhetoric," which "can enable transformations that, while often brutally painful, can allow for non-binary identity, for new states of mestiza consciousness, and for multiple writing strategies" (2).
This book, then, speaks of my existence. My preoccupations with the inner life of the Self, and with the struggle of that Self amidst adversity and violation; with the confluence of primordial images; with the unique positionings consciousness takes us at these confluent streams; and with my almost instinctive urge to communicate, to speak, to write about life on the borders, life in the shadows. (Preface)

Like the other authors' whose work I analyze in this project, Anzaldúa is called into the struggle with language and representation. Invoking a politics of location to write her complicated subjectivity in the ambiguity of the borderlands becomes both a tool for survival and a tool to create spaces in which to thrive. She writes, the "struggle to render [words] concrete in the world and on paper, to render them flesh keeps me alive" (Preface).

Anzaldúa's collection of essays is marked by three general movements: an "inventory" that asks "Just what did she inherit from her ancestors?" (82); a deconstruction, or a "rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions" (82); and finally a reconstruction, or reinterpretation of history and a shaping of new myths that leads to "new perspectives toward the darkskinned, women and queers" (82), to a mestiza consciousness marked by "a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave" (80). In these moves Anzaldúa rejects dichotomous oppositions and transforms into the shape-changer, "Thought shifts, reality shifts, gender shifts: one person metamorphoses into another in a world where people fly through the air, heal from mortal wounds. I am playing with my Self, I am playing with the world's soul, I am the dialogue between my self and el espíritu del mundo. I change myself, I change the world" (70). Utilizing one of the central tenets of a politics of location (that subjectivities are fluid and always in the process of be-
coming), Anzaldúa writes a mobile, changing subjectivity. Movement between interior and exterior, between the individual and the collective, is central to her vision of change, a change which Anzaldúa hopes will create an ambiguous space between these two worlds so that they can no longer be neatly separated and dichotomized. In the analysis that follows I first show how Anzaldúa locates home as a central trope in excavating the meaning of her identities and in envisioning a different future homeland in una cultura mestiza. I then show how she uses a politics of location to map her identity in the material, socio-historical U.S./Mexico borderlands, in the cultural and spiritual borderlands, and in the linguistic borderlands between Spanish and English. Finally, I show how Anzaldúa locates hope for individual and collective change in la mestiza consciousness.

**Locating Home**

Home is both a material and symbolic trope Anzaldúa invokes repeatedly to position her social identities. Anzaldúa locates the beginnings of her archaeological dig into the meanings of her identities in her choice to leave home. This choice set her apart from her family as she "was the first in six generations to leave the Valley, the only one in [her] family ever to leave home" (16). Leaving home, she seeks to discover herself, seeks to peel away the layers of externally-imposed identifications, "I had to leave home so I could find myself, find my own intrinsic nature buried under the personality that had been imposed on me" (16). The physical leaving of home provides a necessary distance for Anzaldúa to begin deconstructing why her culture does not approve of her. This then clears space to reconstruct her sense of self and a place for other Chicanas to do the same. However, Anzaldúa never loses a connection to her origins, to the sense that her identity is grounded in family and culture. Instead, she describes carrying her home, her culture wherever she goes, much like a
turtle and its shell (21). This is a significant rhetorical move because Anzaldúa does not
ame culture as wholly negative or wholly positive. In leaving home and locating herself in
the borderlands of culture and home, Anzaldúa defines a new home in ambiguity, in the
third-space between totally embracing and totally rejecting her culture and family. This new
space provides the opportunity for agency and the reconstruction of her subjectivity. In this
space she celebrates the strength, courage, and pride of her family and culture, while resisting
the oppressive practices of family and culture.

Locating home (in familial relations, in physical geography/region, in culture, and in
language) operates as a launching point to take inventory of who she has been taught to be as
a female, Mexican, queer, and who she wishes to become as the new *mestiza*—Chicana,
feminist, queer. In the now much cited passage Anzaldúa discusses how her "home" is
always in the borderlands:

> As a *mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are
> mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I
> have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is
> a queer of me in all races). I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge
> the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and
> Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet
> another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a
> new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and
to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*. (80-81)

Home is not a fixed location; home is a space of ambiguity and shifting borders. As such,
home in the borderlands informs Anzaldúa's reconstruction of fluid subjectivity.
Importantly, the ambiguity and contradiction of the borderlands is not a safe or comfortable place, as home might be traditionally understood; however, home-space in the borderlands is a place of generation and creativity, a third-space that is "greater than the sum of its severed parts" (80).

Loss of safety in home-space is connected to Anzaldúa's theory of *la facultad*, which "is the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. It is an instant 'sensing,' a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning" (38). This sign-reading capacity is developed in those who are pushed to the margins because of difference and is most developed in "Those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world...Those who are pounced upon the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign" (38). In fact, Anzaldúa locates the beginnings of *la facultad* in her early childhood years prior to leaving home in which she found herself always on the margins of her culture and family as she tried "to live life on [her] terms no matter how unsuitable to others they were" (16).

Similar to the way Lorde articulates the importance of reclaiming emotion as a site of knowing, Anzaldúa reclaim *la facultad* and the psyche as sources of knowledge and resistance. Much as the initial leaving of (traditional) home involves rupture, there is loss and pain in experiencing the world through *la facultad*, loss of "innocence...unknowing ways...safe and easy ignorance" (39). However, in stripping away layers of ignorance which create a false sense of safety, the subject with *la facultad* gains a deeper experience of and

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12 Chela Sandoval argues that *la facultad* is akin to Barthes's sign-reading and deconstruction (82).
connection to what Anzaldúa calls "Self," or the soul (Self includes both the individual soul and the collective soul of the world). The increased awareness of the interconnection between the soul of individuals and the soul of the world created through la facultad enables a shift in perception, which allows for the generation of new spaces to re-create home. Anzaldúa writes, "And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture—una cultura mestiza—with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture" (22). In la facultad (or the psychic borderlands) is the agentive potential to glean that which is life-affirming from family, culture, and home and to reject that which is oppressive in the service of a new homeland that is fluid, playful, mutable: una cultura mestiza. Much like Lorde uses emotion to rewrite her subjectivity, Anzaldúa uses "home" as a central element in the deconstruction and reconstruction of self and community.

Mapping Memberships: Material, Cultural, Spiritual, Linguistic Borderlands

In addition to utilizing home as a location for excavating her borderlands identities and imagining a future home-space, Anzaldúa invokes a politics of location through an exploration of the material U.S./Mexico border. She excavates the macro socio-political/economic implications of living on the U.S./Mexico geographical border and the micro implications of growing up in a family living on the border as sharecroppers. The greatest implication of this border on Chicano/a identities is a continual process of being "jerked out by the roots, truncated, disemboweled, dispossessed, and separated from our identity and our history" (8) through a long history of colonization (Anzaldúa points out that five different countries—Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the U.S. Confederacy, and the U.S, again—have colonized the land and people). The violence of this geographical
border marked by "rolled barbed wire" along the length of the U.S./Mexico border is inscribed on Anzaldúa's body:

1,950 mile-long open wound
dividing a pueblo, a culture,
running down the length of my body,
staking fence rods in my flesh,
splits me splits me
me raja me raja

This is my home
this thin edge of
barbwire. (2-3)

The socio-material borderland has constructed a distinctive Chicano/a identity. An important element in locating her identity in the violence of this material border is reclaiming a history of rupture, a history that is erased when narrated from the colonizer's perspective. The fragmented, split subjectivity that results from this history of colonization is not simple jouissance. Anzaldúa makes a point throughout her essays to reveal the discomfort and pain of dislocation even as she celebrates it as a space of creativity and change.

Excavating and writing the history of the border from a Chicana feminist perspective is part and parcel of the work in reconstituting her individual subjectivity and the collective subjectivity of Chicanos/as. Anzaldúa narrates the larger history of colonization: the broken Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo; the unleashed racism of vigilante Anglos and Texas Rangers and the subsequent lynching of Chicanos/as; the appropriation of Chicano/a land by agribusiness corporations and the subsequent exploitation of Chicanos/as through sharecropping; the continued colonization of Mexico by U.S. corporations through the creation of maquiladoras (which force the devaluation of Mexico's economy and creates a greater dependency on the U.S); and the continued exploitation of Chicanos/as through "illegal" hiring practices that enable the evasion of U.S. labor laws in domestic work, farm
labor, the garment industry, and the hotel industry, among others (5-12). Anzaldúa couples this collective history with the specific history of land being stolen from her family by Anglo ranchers and lawyers. For example, she describes her paternal grandmother's wish to be buried next to her husband in the ancestral cemetery, and the inability of the family to grant the wish, "there was a fence around the cemetery, chained and padlocked by the ranch owners of the surrounding land. We couldn't even get in to visit the graves, much less bury her there. Today, it is padlocked. The sign reads: 'Keep out. Trespassers will be shot'" (8). She also details her family's struggle to survive (to provide shelter, food, and clothing) as a working-class people through sharecropping in which the farming corporations, unlike her family, always profited. Anzaldúa engages in sign reading and differential cognitive mapping as she reclaims history and rewrites it from the perspective of the colonized. That is, she deconstructs and reconstructs a new history of the border and its impact on Chicano/a identities.

The collective and individual history of oppression/colonization, the space of the contested border, and the continued resistance and will to survive contributes to the creation of a distinct cultural identity for Chicanos/as. In mapping the colonization of both the land and the people, in mapping the oppression and terrorization of Chicanos by Anglos, Anzaldúa excavates the deep implications of these relations on the sense of self, both individually and collectively, "As a person, I, as a people, we, Chicanos, blame ourselves, hate ourselves, terrorize ourselves. Most of this goes on unconsciously; we only know that we are hurting, we suspect that there is something 'wrong' with us, something fundamentally 'wrong'" (45). However, Anzaldúa points out that Chicanos/as are not simply or finally defeated because there is an equally long history of resistance and a will to survive through
maintaining cultural integrity. Locating her identity in the material and socio-political
borderlands, Anzaldúa takes inventory by examining what she has inherited from her
ancestors—an identity marked by both oppression and resistance. In fact, the narration of
this history is, itself, an act of resistance insofar as it renders visible an erased history.
Indeed, the location of a resistant identity for Anzaldúa is through language and
communication. Anzaldúa argues that the ability to narrate a fragmented history—to give
reality shape through language—creates Chicanos/as as a "distinct people." She locates the
mobilization of this political identity around 1965 through the leadership of Ceasar Chavez
and the united farm-workers movement, the publication of I Am Joaquín, and the formation
of la Raza Unida party (63). Narrating this new history is an effort to positively reconstruct
subjectivity by confronting the erasure and lies of a white supremacist version of
U.S./Mexico history. Thus, by using a politics of location to excavate the meaning of her
cultural identity in the specific geographical space of the U.S./Mexico border and the socio-
political history of that space, Anzaldúa asserts discursive agency by bringing into sharp
relief the distinctive identity of Chicanas/os.

In this rewriting of history and mapping of her identity, Anzaldúa explores her
complicated and contradictory relationship to her culture. She dis-identifies with the
oppressive elements of her culture at the same time that she affirms the value of her culture
in the face of the colonizer:

I'll defend my race and culture when they are attacked by non-mexicanos,
conosco el malestar de mi cultura. I abhor some of my culture's ways, how it
cripples its women, como burras, our strengths used against us, lowly burras
bearing humility with dignity. The ability to serve, claim the males, is our
highest virtue. I abhor how my culture makes macho caricatures of its men.

No, I do not buy all the myths of the tribe into which I was born. I can understand why the more tinged with Anglo blood, the more adamantly my colored and colorless sisters glorify their culture's values—to offset the extreme devaluation of it by the white culture. It's a legitimate reaction. But I will not glorify those aspects of my culture which have injured me and which have injured me in the name of protecting me. (21-22)

In fact, excavation of the meaning of the feminine and the value of women in Chicano culture is a primary focus in Anzaldúa's essays. For example, one of the ways she maps her relationship to Chicano/a culture is through a re-reading of myths and spirituality. In particular, Anzaldúa challenges the "virgen/puta (whore) dichotomy" (31) by locating the roots of this oppressive dichotomy in traditional mytho-history of pre-Columbia conquest that conceives of Malinali (la Chingada) as the one who sold out the Aztec nation because she interpreted for and had sex with the conquistador, Cortés (34). La Chingada, la puta, is blamed for the fall of the entire Aztec people. Alternatively, La Virgen de Guadalupe "is the single most potent religious, spiritual and cultural image of the Chicano/mexicano" because she represents the will to survive in the face of devastation and genocide (30). However, coupling La Virgen with Malinali constructs a limited dichotomy of roles for Chicanas—they can be either chaste virgins or whores. Anzaldúa refuses this dichotomy by excavating the history of Aztec culture, history, and spiritual deities in order to write a new history—one not based solely on Catholicism. In particular, this new mytho-history describes the fall of Aztec society through its own militaristic, predatory state, a state that sought to subvert the original
Toltec tribes that celebrated balance between the males and females, the masculine and the feminine:

The Tlaxcalans were the Aztec's bitter enemies and it was they who helped the Spanish defeat the Aztec rulers, who were by this time so unpopular with their own common people that they could not even mobilize the populace to defend the city. Thus the Aztec nation fell not because Malinali (la Chingada) interpreted and slept with Cortés, but because the ruling elite had subverted the solidarity between men and women and between the noble and commoner. (34)

Throughout her essays, Anzaldua excavates the myths and histories of all three cultures that constitute the new mestiza (Indian, Mexican, and white) for the meaning of her identity. For example, she rewrites the mythos of La Virgen by showing how her current incarnation is rooted in the indigenous deity, Coatlalopeuh. Ultimately, Anzaldua creates a new mytho-history of historical figures and deities from indigenous religions as well as Catholicism in order to positively integrate all three cultural/spiritual forces. In so doing, she reclaims the creative potential of the feminine and establishes dignity and self-respect through a new history and cultural identity: la mestiza (87). This life-affirming representation of females and the feminine produces an integrated subjectivity for Anzaldúa that begins to heal the splitting and fracturing that results from an unexamined inheritance of traditional myths about women.

Similar to Audre Lorde's use of emotion as a generative space for understanding identity, Anzaldúa looks to the interior world of the psyche as a place for understanding her identity. The psyche is a site that bears the mark of the external mytho-historical Chicano/a
struggle. In validating the psyche as a source of knowledge and creativity she rejects the white, singular "'official' reality of the rational" (36), rejects the split between rational and non-rational ways of knowing. Anzaldúa locates struggle for existence in both an external and internal worlds:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the border-towns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (87)

Importantly, Anzaldúa implicates herself in the complicated process of learning to validate the inner, psychic world as a location for creating a life-affirming consciousness by narrating a time in her life when she rejected her psychic experiences as "real": "Like many Indians and Mexicans, I did not deem my psychic experiences real. I denied their occurrences and let my inner sense atrophy. I allowed white rationality to tell me that the existence of the 'other' world was mere pagan superstition" (36). She places herself in the same critical plane of others who have internalized the rejection of ancient Indian modes of knowing and experiencing the world. Exploring her own process of integrating the parts of her identity she was taught to despise, Anzaldúa writes a non-innocent subjectivity that is always in process.

Throughout her collection of essays Anzaldúa excavates how she has been sold out, marked as "deviant" by her culture and dominant culture, condemned as a woman and a
queer (18). She insists, "Not me sold out my people but they me" (21, 22). In using a politics of location to map her identities in a complex and fluid relationship to her culture and spirituality, she reclaims pieces of the mytho-history of her culture that lead to a sense of integrity, "All the lost pieces of myself come flying from the deserts and the mountains and the valleys, magnetized toward that center. *Completa*" (51). The integrated subjectivity that Anzaldúa creates is marked by a dynamic interplay between all the parts of her self. It is a subjectivity of mobility and change, a product of gathering what has been inherited and putting that tradition into play through revisionist history.

Another way in which Anzaldúa locates her identity is through language, through a complex mapping of her relationship to the various dialects of Spanish and English. She explores at least eight different languages she speaks and the different social memberships that each brings into being (55). The heterogeneity of languages and dialects that Chicanos/as speak is both a reflection and constitution of a fluid and heterogenous people, "Change, evolución de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción have created variants of Chicano Spanish, un nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un modo de vivir" (55). She explores her personal history of being beaten and silenced in school for speaking Spanish and excavates the subsequent sense of shame that follows from this history.

Anzaldúa also turns inward, excavating and resisting how Chicanos have learned to oppress one another through an internalized form of linguistic terrorism, "We oppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, vying to be the 'real' Chicanas to speak like Chicanos. There is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience" (58). Moving in and out of varied dialects of Spanish and English in each of her essays, she positively reconstructs Chicano Spanish as a living, fluid valid language from those who deem it
"incorrect," "impure," or as a "mutilation of Spanish" (55). In the affirmation of her complex linguistic identity—in taking pride in language—lies the potential to gain self-respect, a sense of integrity in the living, fluid Chicano/a Spanish/English linguistic identity (59).

Locating Change in Mestiza Consciousness

Linking the excavation and deconstruction of her borderlands identity to a future vision, Anzaldúa locates individual and collective change in a mestiza consciousness. This change in consciousness rejects both an either/or duality and a simple balancing of opposites. Instead, mestiza consciousness is a synthesis of multiplicity that creates a mobile and generative third-space subjectivity. She explains, "The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show in the flesh and through images in her work how duality is transcended" (80). Anzaldua suggests that our future lies in this new consciousness and "though it is a source of intense pain, its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (80). In embracing all of the previously splintered parts of identity to create a new consciousness, no part of the self is rejected:

Rejection strips us of our self-worth; our vulnerability exposes us to shame...We can no longer camouflage our needs, can no longer let defenses and fences sprout around us. We can no longer withdraw. To rage and look upon you with contempt is to rage and be contemptuous of ourselves. We can no longer blame you, nor disown the white parts, the male parts, the pathological parts, the queer parts, the vulnerable parts. (88)

The difference in this new consciousness is a life-affirming stance, and affirmation of the hated parts of one's self as well as the hatred of others.
However, Anzaldúa does not forward a simple celebration of multiplicity and diversity. Accountability is a central element of this new consciousness—the oppressive history of colonization and its subsequent relations of domination must be rewritten, not forgotten. This requires active engagement in taking responsibility for one's participation in oppressive relations and a willingness to collectively and individually start recreating alternative ways of being. Anzaldúa demands accountability from all participants in relations of domination, particularly Chicanos and Anglos. Following the general tenor of her efforts to explore the complex and contradictory nature of a borderlands identity, she excavates the meaning of Chicano "false machismo." She recognizes that it is, in part, a product of a history of forced humility and self-effacement in response to white colonization. She also shows how Chicanos' loss of dignity and self-respect leads to the domination and violation of women, particularly Chicanas. Nonetheless, Anzaldúa demands accountability from Chicanos and the development of a new form of consciousness:

Though we "understand" the root cause of male hatred and fear, and the subsequent wounding of women, we do not excuse, we do not condone, and we will no longer put up with it. From the men of our race, we demand the admission/acknowledgement/disclosure/testimony that they wound us, violate us, are afraid of us and our power. We need them to say they will begin to eliminate their hurtful put-down ways. But more than words, we demand acts. We say to them: We will develop equal power with you and those who have shamed us. (83-84)
Equally important, she demands accountability from Anglo society, demands that Anglos excavate the ways in which their own identities, sense of entitlement, and privileges are built upon dualistic thinking that results in the domination and colonization of Chicanos/as:

We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, our self-respect. We need you to make public restitution: to say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty—you'd rather forget your brutish acts...To say that you are afraid of us, that to put distance between us, you wear the mask of contempt. (85-86)

Embracing a *mestiza* consciousness is part of a larger healing process and hope for different ways of being. Taking a counter-stance in relation to cultures of domination and demanding accountability from those who benefit from and reproduce these cultures is a necessary tactic, but Anzaldúa points out a counter-stance "is not a way of life" (78) because it is reactionary. Instead, the *mestiza* consciousness is that which acts rather than reacts; it is that which enables the creation of new possibilities, new relations, new cultures—none of which are based upon divisive dualities nor a mere celebration of pluralism.

*La mestiza* is a product of living in the shifting spaces of the psychic, material, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual borderlands. Dominant culture has suggested *la mestiza* is an "impure" and inferior race; Anzaldúa rewrites the hybrid as a "more malleable species with a rich gene pool" (77). *La mestiza* is a shape-changer, a hybrid in motion and movement, "She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing
rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else" (79). Within the synergy of this third-space is the potential to move beyond fixity and duality and into an ever evolving process of be-coming.

**Conclusion**

Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa provide excellent examples of how outsiders/within invoke a politics of location to positively re-affirm marginalized identities and reconstruct alternative subjectivities that are consummate with their feminist ideals. While the basic tenets of a politics of location remain the same for both, each offers a unique approach to re-writing their subjectivities. Lorde reveals the centrality of reclaiming that which others' have trained us to doubt—in particular, our emotional sensibility. She consistently insists that we map our identity relations to reveal the intersectionality of oppressions and the thread that binds them: fear of difference. Reconstructing her subjectivity through reclaiming the "house difference" (*Zami* 226) as a positive and generative location, Lorde articulates the interdependency and intersubjectivity of subject positions and the radical possibility for a different future through coalitional work:

> We have chosen each other
> and the edge of each others battles
> the war is the same
> if we lose
> someday women's blood will congeal
> upon a dead planet
> if we win
> there is no telling
> we seek beyond history
> for a new and more possible meeting. (123)

The unknown and unknowable are held out as hopeful places (not a reason for despair), which can only be achieved through the hard work of coalitional struggle. Through her use
of a politics of location, Anzaldúa displays the significance of material spaces and how these locations are written on our sense of self. She maps a complicated relationship to language, culture, and family by locating both the positive and negative imprints of these factors on her identity. Insisting that we name and excavate the negative effects of colonization, Anzaldúa reclaims hybrid identities, multiplicity, and fluidity as generative locations, a spaces of vision and hope.

Both authors contribute to the creation of a politics of location as a set of rhetorical strategies for feminists to engage in the creation of a subject of feminism that embraces difference, multiplicity, and communal vision of a world not built upon relations of domination and subordination, an intersubjectivity that interrupts the normative subject of rhetoric. They contextualize their truth claims in time and space by writing from culturally specific bodies, experiences, geographies, and spiritualities. In so doing they construct a non-innocent, accountable, and socio-culturally located speaking subject. They locate non-rational ways of knowing and perceiving as sources of individual and collective change. In mapping identity positions they construct a malleable, fluid subjectivity that is always in processes of be-coming as they move from the general to the particular in efforts to deconstruct oppressive relations and reconstruct egalitarian relationships across and between differences.
CHAPTER FIVE

Mapping Resistant Subjects: Insiders/Without

So this is one gain for me as I change: I learn a way of looking at the world that is more accurate, complex, multi-layered, multi-dimensioned, more truthful: to see the world of overlapping circles, like movement on the millpond after a fish has jumped, instead of the courthouse square with me at the middle.

—Minnie Bruce Pratt 17

As indicated in chapter three, reading signs and mapping social positions are two of the preeminent tools of writers who use a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy for constructing alternative subjectivities and a differential consciousness. It is my argument that some subjects who exist in dominant, or centered, social locations follow a parallel process of dis-identification with hegemonic representation of themselves. However, these subjects dis-identify with their centered status. In this process of dis-identification they become "off-center," thus becoming "insiders/without." As the opening passage from Minnie Bruce Pratt indicates, insiders/without gain a more complicated, multi-dimensional understanding of the world than those subjects who view the world unquestioningly from "centered" positions. I separate outsiders/within and insiders/without to emphasize that while both kinds of subjects engage in parallel processes of a Foucauldian "refusal of the self;" the direction of these processes are actually different depending on the context and the writer's relative position to normative subjectivity. In excavating the meaning of social locations, outsiders/within positively reclaim a marginalized identity or set of character traits associated with a particular identity. Insiders/without, in excavating the meaning of their centered social locations, negatively deconstruct an identity or character traits associated with a
particular identity. Both kinds of subjects then move to re-create subjectivities that are not based on relations of domination and subordination.

I use the term insider/without to signify the kind of movement involved when centered subjects critically investigate entrenched assumptions about their social locations. However, the movement I am suggesting is one of consciousness and discursive actions rather than a material shift in social position. In her work on traitorous identities, Alison Bailey argues that white people who are "race traitors" do not become "marginal" subjects, or insider/outsiders (which is the logical parallel term to outsider/insiders), because those who hold dominant subject positions can never fully abnegate their privileged status. As an example, Bailey details the story of a white, middle class heterosexual couple who bought a house in the white section of segregated Louisville, Kentucky and then deeded it to an African-American couple as an act of resistance to segregation. The white couple was deemed "traitorous" to the "white race" and ostracized by other whites in the local community. Bailey points out, however, that because the white couple carried a privileged racial identity in the larger context of the United States, they could never denounce their privileged position once and for all. For example, they could conceivably relocate to another community, who would not necessarily perceive them as "race traitors" unless they continued to engaged in transgressive acts. Thus, while race traitors might be ostracized in contexts in which they challenge white privilege, they carry their privilege with them to each new context or community.

Bailey goes on to argue that ostracism in local contexts is not equivalent to always already being positioned on the margins. Extending Sandra Harding's (1991) and Allison Jaggar's (1983) work on standpoint theory, Bailey challenges the implication that traitors
"become marginal." That is, "becoming marginal" is misleading because the shift in race traitors' ways of seeing and knowing is conflated with a shift in social location. She explains, "The description [of becoming marginal] makes it sound as if traitors have a foot in each world and are caught equally between them, and this picture does not foreground white privilege" (32). For Bailey, a rejection of privilege or interruption of racism might enable an epistemic shift; but it can never result in a material shift in social positioning. Following Sandra Harding's discussion of privilege-cognizant heterosexuals, Bailey suggests that what is rejected is not whiteness per se, but a rejection of the "spontaneous consciousness" that is taken for granted as a result of living in a white supremacist culture. She extends discussions of how individuals who occupy dominant social locations can develop a reflective consciousness by arguing that the performance of traitorous scripts cultivates a traitorous character; thereby destabilizing naturalized positions of dominance. This traitorous character is never permanent, but a particular value-system that insiders attempt to embody through actions that decenter, subvert, or destabilize the center. It is also marked by a general way of being that engages critically and consistently with the consequences of experiencing the world through a dominant racial social location. Bailey writes, "Traitors choose to try to understand the price at which privileges are gained, they are critical of the unearned privileges granted to them by white patriarchal cultures, and they take responsibility for them" (36-37). Bailey makes an important argument, cautioning us not to conflate epistemic shifts with shifts in social status. She suggests that becoming a race traitor entails more than a shift in consciousness; there must be substantive action that accompanies this shift.

While the term insider/without can be misleading; I use the category for several reasons that follow a line of reasoning similar to Bailey's articulation of traitorous identities.
First, insiders/without provides a useful parallel term to outsiders/within; both positions are born of a culture of resistance against oppressive relations of domination and subordination. That is, the term implies that a critical consciousness and epistemic shift are necessary in order to question and destabilize the normative assumptions of centered subjects. Second, the term helps accentuate the different kind of work involved in "refusing the self" for centered subjects: the deconstruction of a dominant subjectivity in order to get out of what Pratt calls the "narrow circle of self" (18), a standpoint from which those in dominant positions have been taught to view the world. And as the quotation from Pratt at the beginning of this chapter indicates, the dis-identification with a centered identity opens the possibility for a multi-dimensional perspective of the world. Importantly, dis-identification, in the case of race privilege and oppression entails more than a rejection of overt racism. For example, Adrienne Rich suggests that many white feminists need to dis-identify with white solipsism. She explains that this passive collusion with white superiority is "not the consciously held belief that one race is inherently superior to all others, but a tunnel-vision which simply does not see nonwhite experience or existence as precious or significant" ("Disloyal" 306). To dis-identify with white solipsism is to become off-center. Third and perhaps most importantly, the "without" component of the term "insiders-without" does not signify "without privilege." Insiders/without are never without attendant privileges of dominant locations; rather, they are without "spontaneous consciousness," without unreflected-upon privilege. Finally, the status of an insider/without is not a permanent position, but is, following Bailey, a character trait that must be fostered through continued engagement in transgressive actions against the dominant social order. I argue that insiders/without invoke a politics of location in order to map and excavate the meaning of
dominant identities in such a way that they become "off-center," deconstructing both active collusion with systems of oppression and passive collusion through unreflected-upon privilege. Ultimately the goal in utilizing a politics of location as a discursive strategy is similar for insiders/without and outsiders/within: to re-construct subjectivities in a manner that is resistant to systems of domination and subordination. In the remainder of this chapter I show how two insiders/without (Minnie Bruce Pratt and Marilyn Frye) invoke a politics of location to map and excavate the meanings of their inherited identities and to re-construct subjectivities that are "without" a spontaneous consciousness about their centered social positioning. I have chosen two radical, lesbian feminists who occupy racially and economically privileged positions as insiders/without because I understand race and class as two of the preeminent stratifying forces in the context of the United States as well as the context of feminist communities and coalitions. This is not, however, intended to elide other forces of stratification. I have also chosen Pratt's and Frye's essays because they work in dialogue with one another. Frye's 1992 essay "White Woman Feminist" is an extension of her 1983 essay "On Being White" and she elements of Pratt's discussion of white morality as a launching point to map and excavate the implications of a white, middle class, feminine identity.

**Minnie Bruce Pratt's Politics of Location in "Blood Skin Heart"**

Minnie Bruce Pratt's essay "Identity: Skin Blood Heart" provides an excellent example of an insider/without utilizing a politics of location to map and excavate the embedded meanings of her white, middle class, Southern, Christian, female identity. Pratt grounds her examination of her identity in three geographical locations: her childhood hometown in Alabama, a town in North Carolina in which she first became involved in
feminist politics and came out as a lesbian, and her then current home in Washington D.C., which "white suburbanites" refer to as "the jungle" (11). Similar to Anzaldúa, Pratt explores her relation to these material places, their histories, and the people who inhabit them. In so doing, she narrates the painful process of coming to consciousness about how her (relatively) privileged social location has constrained her to "the narrow circle of self" (18), disconnecting her from other women with whom she could engage in coalitional politics and loving relationships.

Importantly, this essay is not simply a narrative of coming into consciousness. It does not follow the typical structure of a coming to consciousness narrative in which the narrator moves from constraint to liberation. Instead Pratt's narrative shifts forward and backward in time, tracing her continued struggle to find ways of speaking across the barriers that have divided her from others. Pratt frames her essay around the following questions: "How do we begin to change, and then keep going, and act on this in the world? How do we want to be different from what we have been?" (19 italics in original). These questions situate change, both personal and collective, as an on-going process of be-coming through a refusal of the self. Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty also suggest that Pratt's narrative is distinctive in "its tentativeness, its consisting of fits and starts, and the absence of linear progress toward a visible end" (305). The undefined "end" is envisioned through the hermeneutics of love. Throughout her essay, Pratt reveals how resistance to domination and change are potentially painful and frightening processes, but she insists that the motive for change is love: "I began when I jumped from my edge and outside myself, into radical change, for love: simply love: for myself and for other women...this love led me directly, but by a complicated way, to work against racism and anti-Semitism" (19). As indicated in
chapter two, the hermeneutics of love operates as a "punctum" or rupture; it "undoes the 'one' that gather the narrative, the couple, the race, into a singularity [and]...Instead...gathers up the mezcla, the mixture that lives through differential movement between possibilities of being" (Sandoval 170). Pratt a politics of location as a discursive strategy to trace her history of coming to consciousness with the purpose of understanding the barriers that keep her from living out her feminist ideals: "I'm trying to get a little closer to the longed-for but unrealized world, where we each are able to live, but not by trying to make someone less than us, not by someone else's blood or pain: yes, that's what I'm trying to do with my living now" (13). The distinction between a narrative of coming to consciousness and a narrative that attempts to find answers to the question of how to enact social change through one's quotidian experiences is significant because it marks a different relationship to subjectivity and agency. In focusing her narrative on what she is attempting to "do with [her] living," Pratt situates her subjectivity as "in process." Martin and Mohanty also argue that Pratt:

succeeds in carefully taking apart the bases of her own privilege by resituating herself again and again in the social, by constantly referring to the materiality of the situation in which she finds herself. The form of the personal historical narrative forces her to re-anchor herself repeatedly in each of the positions from which she speaks, even as she works to expose the illusory coherence of those positions. (295)

The ways in which Pratt materially and historically grounds her narrative enables her to use strategic essentialism to locate the workings of her privileged identity and the way in which it has shaped her sense of self and perspective on the world. At the same time, the material and historical grounding across time and space in the narrative reveal the relational and shifting
nature of her identity. Narratives of coming to consciousness can fall into the danger of reifying a static relationship to identity. That is, these types of narratives can suggest that after "arriving" at the point of critical consciousness one's sense of subjectivity is finished or complete and one can then act freely in the world unfettered by hegemonic constructions of the self. However, in Pratt's essay, her narrative of coming to consciousness operates as a backdrop for a discussion of her desire to reconstruct her subjectivity so that she can engage with other women in ways that are consummate with her feminist ideals. In fact, she argues that subjectivity is always in process: "I have learned that...the process of change is long, and since the unjust world is duplicated again every day, in large and small, so I must try to recreate, every day, a new self striving for a new just world" (46). Pratt proceeds to explore how she recreates this self in each moment that she interacts with another, how she continues to engage with the struggle to seek social change, how she seeks new ways of being that allow her to live in loving connection with other women. It is my contention that her use of a politics of location allows for this recreation.

Also important, Pratt situates herself in dialogue with other women. The knowledge she forwards about white, Southern femininity is a contribution to a larger conversation, not the "Truth" about all white, Southern women:

I am speaking my small piece of truth, as best I can. My friend Barbara Deming has reminded me: we each have only a piece of the truth. So here it is: I'm putting it down for you to see if our fragments match anywhere, if our pieces, together, make another larger piece of the truth that can be part of the map we are making together to show us the way to get to the longed-for world. (16)
Throughout her narrative Pratt attempts to connect her individual experiences with the collective experiences of other groups of women; however she does not suggest that she speaks for any particular group of women. Rather, in using a politics of location as a discursive strategy to map her identity and relationships with others she maintains accountability for the interestedness of the meaning she construes from her social location in a larger effort to create coalitions with other women.

**Mapping Material and Psychic Spaces**

Similar to Anzaldúa's location of identity in the material U.S Southwest/Mexico borderlands, Pratt invokes a politics of location through materially locating the construction of her identity in houses, public buildings, streets and the history inscribed in the places that she either unknowingly or willfully ignored throughout her life. For example, an exploration of her relationship to the geography of her hometown in Alabama helps her understand how she learned at early age to perceive herself as a centered subject. She recalls the time her father tried to coax her to climb to the clock tower atop the courthouse where she could be the center of the town and see "everything." Pratt ultimately disappoints her father by not being able to climb the final set of stairs to the clock tower. In reflection she realizes this view from the center is her inheritance. This centered view would allow her to see the courthouse, the grocery, the jail, the bank, the church, and other buildings within the town; it would occlude from her vision the sawmill, the houses of the town's black population, and the settlement of the white people who worked at the mill. Pratt goes on to excavate how her identity was constructed by her particular relationship to the geography of her town:

I was shaped by my relation to those buildings and to the people in the buildings, by ideas of who should be working in the Board of Education, of
who should be in the bank handling money, of who should have the guns and
the keys to the jail, of who should be in the jail; and I was shaped by what I
didn't see, or didn't notice, on those streets. (17)

The material map of her hometown becomes the launching point for Pratt's use of a politics
of location to map her non-innocent social position in relation to others. The interrogation of
her "position of material advantage" (16) is motivated by the desire to de-center her vantage
point, which she believes will offer a more sophisticated vision of society and social
relations. As she changes, she explains:

I learn a way of looking at the world that is more accurate, complex, multi-
layered, multi-dimensional, more truthful: to see the world of overlapping
circles, like movement on the millpond after a fish has jumped, instead of the
courthouse square with me at the middle...I feel the need to look differently
because I've learned that what is presented to me as an accurate view of the
world is frequently a lie. (17)

Throughout her narrative, Pratt the physical surroundings (public buildings, streets, houses)
in each of the places where she has lived as a launching point to deconstruct how those
material places, and the histories that have been written onto and erased from them in her
memory, have shaped her identity and her perspective on the world. In deconstructing the
non-innocence of her relationship to those sites, she begins to reconstruct her subjectivity
through a differential consciousness.

In addition to using material locations as places from which to excavate the meaning
of her privileged location in the world, Pratt locates emotions as sites for excavating her
social location and ways of perceiving the world that constrict her to the narrow circle of self.
For example, she narrates her coming-out experience as a lesbian and the intense grief and pain she felt when her children were taken from her by her own mother and husband. The anguish she experiences as a result of being thrust out of her "circle of protection" becomes the motive for seeking justice. She writes, "I became obsessed with justice: the shell of my privilege was broken, the shell that had given me a shape in the world, held me apart from the world, protected me from the world. I was astonished at the pain; the extent of my surprise revealed to me the degree of my protection" (27 italics mine). Pratt describes initially feeling as if no other person in the world "had sustained such loss" (27), a feeling that could have reified her solipsistic perspective of the world. However, she ultimately describes the pain and her reaction to it as that which compelled her to recognize the magnitude of her privilege and degree to which it informed her identity and subsequent view of the world. Stepping "outside the circle of protection" moves Pratt into a differential consciousness, which she to educate herself about her position in the world and the history of oppression and resistance inscribed in the geography and architecture of the U.S. South. Throughout her narrative she uses emotions as a location for questioning. Thus emotions become a way of knowing, but they are not held out as truth; they are used as a launching point to excavate the meaning of her social position in relation to others.

Pratt also attempts to locate a space in between the emotions learned through her privileged identity (such as fear) and the emotions that drive her desire for a new sense of self (such as pain and love). She uses emotions strategically in her narrative to place a wedge between the ways she was taught to be and the ways she wants to be. For instance, she describes how criticisms of her statements in discussions of racism and anti-Semitism immediately induce fear in her, "I feel my racing heart, breath, tightening of my skin around
me, literally defense to protect my narrow circle" (18). She reads and deconstructs this fear as a response learned through a privileged world-view that is founded upon a larger culture of fear: "I have learned that my fear is kin to a terror that has been in my birth culture for years, for centuries: the terror of a people who have set themselves apart and above, who have wronged others, and feel they are about to be found out and punished" (17). Similar to Lorde, locating emotion in a culture of fear is a significant discursive strategy because emotions often are construed as essential, or somehow anterior to culture. However, Pratt makes an important connection between the emotion of fear in the context of conflicts about racism and anti-Semitism and her social location as a white middle class Christian-raised woman. Through an acknowledgement of how her emotions are tied to her identity, Pratt unearths the social constructedness of particular emotions, and thus has the ability to interrupt that fear and replace it with a different emotion: desire for connection with other women. The location of fear as a point of departure for excavation and a growing awareness of her protected and privileged location push Pratt to search for a new kind of "place" from which to enact social change. This new place is desire: desire to live in connection with other women, rather than in disconnection through superiority (or elevation at the top of the courthouse). Utilizing a politics of location to deconstruct negative emotions and replace them with positive emotions, Pratt begins to reconstitute her subjectivity through the hermeneutics of love. This hermeneutic operates as the launching point for her radical critique of how her identity as a white, middle class, Southern woman (and the concomitant "ways of being" that are attached to that identity) hinder coalitional politics specifically in addressing racism and anti-Semitism.
Pratt situates racism and anti-Semitism as moral issues of right and wrong, as matters of how to live (either in disconnection through superiority or connection through respect and equity). However, she understands that the culture she was raised in taught her a moral system, a way of being that potentially blocks genuine change in struggling against these oppressions. Nonetheless, she resignifies the framework of morality to position issues of domination as matters of right and wrong, thus re-appropriating a framework that has often been used to oppress anything and anyone considered "deviant." In her re-appropriation and resignification of morality, Pratt finds it necessary to first engage in sign-reading to deconstruct the moral/ethical system by which she was taught to live. She begins by exploring a moral system connected to her subject position as a white, Southern, middle class, Christian woman. Martin and Mohanty suggest that this system of morality constitutes "points of enunciation that she identifies as the legacy of her culture" (300), which taught Pratt ways of being that reduce processes of change and issues of how to live to a series of "ought-tos." Pratt's reading and deconstruction of these points of enunciation reveals the non-innocence of the subject-positions and roles constructed from this system of morality. Ultimately, her deconstruction is part of a larger effort discover ways of enacting change through a reconstituted subjectivity that does not reify these roles.

Pratt describes the various roles she was taught to personify when confronting issues of right and wrong and how she struggles against these roles in her current efforts to confront racism and anti-Semitism:

I was taught to be a judge, of moral responsibility and of punishment only in relation to my ethical system; was taught to be a martyr, to take all the
responsibility for change, and the glory, to expect others to do nothing; was taught to be a peacemaker, to mediate, negotiate between opposing sides because I knew the right way; was taught to be a preacher, to point out wrongs and tell others what to do. Nowadays, I struggle not to speak with the tones or gestures or notions of these roles when I raise, out loud, with other women, those interior questions that I have asked myself, about my understanding of anti-Semitism and racism. (14-15)

Reading the roles of superiority as signs that have taught her how resistance to injustice and social change should occur, Pratt works to deconstruct how these roles affect her relations with others in coalition work. That is, these roles are deeply embedded in her privileged position and if she is to act against anti-Semitism and racism by animating these ways of being she will potentially reify her status as a "centered" subject in what Maya Angelou has called the "unknowing majority" (qtd. in Pratt 12), or what Bailey calls "spontaneous consciousness." Caught in a contradictory relationship between a desire to challenge racism and anti-Semitism and a sense of entrapment in roles of superiority learned through a privileged position in society, Pratt shifts her focus from leading by "ought-tos" to leading with a desire to live in loving connection with others:

I am struggling now to speak, but not out of any role of ought-to; I ask that you try not to place me in that role. I am trying to speak from my heart, out of need, as a woman who loves other women passionately, and wants us to be able to be together as friends in this unjust world...trying to figure out my responsibility and my need in struggles against injustice in a way that will lead to our friendship. (15)
As indicated above, this shift in focus from envisioning social change through a structure of morality based on superiority to envisioning change through desire for greater connection with others is central to Pratt's use of a politics of location as a discursive strategy for rewriting her subjectivity because she locates the nexus of agency, of social transformation, in emotion. Desire, rather than rules, rationality, or roles of superiority motivates Pratt to become different from how she was taught to live, trapped in her white, middle class solipsism, living in disconnection from others.

In choosing to shift from living by a set of rules to living out of need/desire, Pratt discursively emotion as a place from which to locate both motives and barriers in deconstructing oppressions; thus using alternative, non-rationale modes of knowing as a means for producing greater understanding. Similar to Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa, Pratt returns again and again to emotions as a resource for creating social change. For example, she suggests that the actual process of living out her feminist ideal of equitably interacting with others is exhausting at times, pointedly stating that "It would be a lie to say this process is comforting" (12). Much as the pain of mestiza consciousness provides potentially productive avenues for new ways of being, Pratt describes this discomfort as a launching point for excavating the deeply embedded emotions that she confronts in dismantling her privileged position, such as fear of loss, fear of losing her sense of self. The pain of being in a third-space is transformed into a productive emotion. For instance, using the metaphor of a shroud, Pratt suggests that in stripping away the layered meanings of her identity she fears she will discover "a disintegrating, rotting nothing: that the values that I have at my core, from my culture, will only be those of negativity, exclusion, fear, death" (39). She links this feeling to a material history of how her identity was culturally
constructed through "negative characteristics: by the absence of: 'no dogs, Negroes, or Jews'" (39). Pratt further explores the ways she learned at a very early age to define her sense of self in relation to what she was not, rather than in relation to positive qualities. Pratt's mapping and excavation of her identity reveals the degree to which her sense of self is based upon oppression of others through a fear of difference. This enables her to draw connections between her emotions and a larger culture: "When we discover truths about our home culture, we may fear we are losing our self: our self-respect, our self-importance" (47). Linking emotions with a material history of learning to define herself through negativity is a significant rhetorical move because it enables Pratt to locate the deeply rooted implications of her centered identity and the effects of that identity on her current desire for individual and collective social change. That is, through her excavation she is able to expose one of the consequences of her cultural identity as a white, Southern, middle class woman: a fear that changing her ways of being in the world might lead to nihilism.

Pratt does not end her excavation of the connection between a "negative identity" and fear here. She goes on to explore how the sense of a "naked self" often leads to the appropriation of other cultural identities and struggles. For example, she offers the example of the Christian-raised woman who feels a sense of exclusion and pain stating that she "always felt like a Jew" (40). Or, she provides the example of a Euro-American woman renaming herself from three different Native American tribes, which functions to clothe "our naked, negative selves with something from the positive traditions of identity which have served in part to help folks survive our people" (40). Alternatively, appropriation occurs through taking something, such black gospel music, and using it to support her white solipsism. For example, after examining her emotional reaction to black gospels and
spirituals, she states, "I was using Black people to weep for me, to express my sorrow at my responsibility, and that of my people, for their oppression: and I was mourning because I felt they had something I didn't, a closeness, a hope, that I and my folks had lost because we had to tried to shut other people out of our hearts and lives" (41). Pratt recognizes this response to a fear of nihilism as a reification of her privileged status—reproducing a way of being that is linked with her cultural history as a Euro-American taking from others and re-centering her sense of self, her plight, her loss. Thus, her excavation moves her into the position of insider/without, into a differential consciousness rather than re-enacting the spontaneous consciousness that reproduces a centered status. As Pratt strips away layers and layers of her identity through mapping emotion, cultural history, and personal history she deconstructs how her emotional responses and ways of acting are deeply implicated in her centered position as an insider. This deconstruction, she argues, is a necessary action in a process of creating a new way of being; however, it should not lead to guilt or shame because these emotions feed the solipsism she struggles against.

In addition to deconstructing an identity built upon a false sense of self-importance and respect and disconnection from others through a fear of difference, Pratt engages in sign reading to reconstruct a different kind of self-respect through reclaiming positive elements of her cultural history and identity (which is similar to Anzaldúa's move to claim the life-affirming elements of her culture). For example, she recognizes that her Christian (Presbyterian) identity trained her to be skeptical in her thinking and her Southern identity taught her to value connection to history and people—both of which are integral in her struggle against anti-Semitism and racism (44). She also recognizes a historical tradition of Southern white women who worked for social justice through the abolition movement and
anti-Klan activities, a history which she chooses to claim in addition to a cultural history built upon the enslavement and exploitation of black people and Native Americans. Martin and Mohanty suggest that Pratt's reflection on her own and others' histories and her refusal "to allow guilt to trap her within the boundaries of a coherent 'white' identity" is what allows her to take responsibility for "working through the complex historical relations between and among structures of domination and oppression" (299). Pratt maintains a complicated relationship to her history and privileged location—understanding it both as an obstacle and a potential resource in creating new ways of relating to others. A politics of location provides the discursive agency to deconstruct and excavate layers of meanings in her identity positions, allowing her to dis-identify with a false sense of self importance. As well, there are agentive opportunities in acting on the knowledge she gains from the deconstruction. With this knowledge she can begin to act in ways that don't reify her privileged position as the centered, all-knowing judge of right and wrong or as the negatively defined subject who must appropriate other cultural identities to assuage a fear of nihilism. In choosing not to live through ought-tos and disconnection and instead live through need, desire, and connection with others, Pratt is able to re-construct an intersubjectivity.

Locating and Excavating "Safe" Spaces

Pratt's invocation of a politics of location allows her to excavate the deeply embedded meanings of her white, middle class, Christian, Southern identity, dis-identify with the oppressive elements of that social identity, and imagine and enact relations devoid of domination. However, even as Pratt begins to envision a different "place," or community, from which to create non-oppressive ways of interacting with other women, she reveals how her desire for what she calls a "safe place" is dangerously rooted in her history and identity as
a privileged woman. Pratt does not reject the desire for a place of safety to engage creatively with other women, but she does suggest that her notions of what safety might look like are built upon a non-innocent understanding of it. She writes, "I had not admitted that the safety of much of my childhood was because Laura Gates, Black and a servant, was responsible for me; that I had the walks with my father because the woods were 'ours' by systematic economic exploitation, instigated, at that time, by his White Citizens' Council" (25). She explains that her "experience of a safe space to be was based on places secured by omission, exclusion or violence, and on [her] submitting to the limits of that place" (26). To carry over those notions of safety into feminist coalitions would necessitate also bringing the very values that she actively attempts to deconstruct in challenging her privileged social location. Excavating the implications of her own privileged notions of the new "place" she envisions enables Pratt to maintain a sense of non-innocent subjectivity and accountability for the future she imagines.

Martin and Mohanty ask how a narrative such as Pratt's "might translate into the building of political collectivity" (308). Certainly autobiographical narratives are limited in actually creating coalitions. However, I believe Pratt's use of a politics of location as a radical political rhetoric does lay the groundwork for creating bridges across differences because she is confronting and dismantling normative subjectivity by mapping, deconstructing, and reconstructing her sense of self and community at an important historical moment in the 1980s when hegemonic feminism was being challenged.\footnote{And, although less fixed in the new millennium than it was in the late 1970s, I believe hegemonic feminism is in continued need of interruption.} Pratt's narrative is one contribution to a collective set of intervening practices that move us beyond a feminist
discourse based on universal interests, fixed subject-positions, and homogeneity and into a place that centers accountability through non-innocent subjectivity, desire and hope for transformation of all oppressive relations, and the hermeneutics of love or the "alliance and affection across lines of difference" (Sandoval 170). I also believe the narrative has effects beyond a simple transformation of Pratt's consciousness because it is historically and materially situated and provides us with a model of understanding subjectivity as relational and mobile in such a way that avoids the theoretical abstractions indeterminacy and performativity.

I also believe part of the answer to Martin and Mohanty's question lies in the way in which Pratt's demands accountability from her audience, stating that women must "ask ourselves in what ways we have recreated in our 'new' world, our 'women's world,' a replica of our segregated culture-bound homes" (49-50). Thus she calls readers to deconstruct how their identities and sense of a feminist community have been shaped in relation to geography, history, and culture, a deconstruction that can lead to the kind of self-reflexivity that is a necessary component of coalition building. Another part of the answer to Martin and Mohanty's question is the way in which Pratt's narrative is grounded in her relationship to specific historical and political contexts. That is, Pratt does not retreat to an abstract level of self-examination, but locates the reconstruction of her subjectivity in a long and continual struggle to build a sense of community, which calls readers to examine the specificity of their own positions within coalition building. Equally important, her narrative also confronts the fear and pain involved in coalition building by admitting that such self-examination can lead to a fear of losing a sense of self. But she insists that if women are to create coalitions across differences, then excavating the "negative identity" of centered subjects is the necessary
precursor to ultimately reconstructing subjectivities that coincide with feminist political ideals. Pratt suggests that we can displace emotional fears by perceiving the many gains on the other side of facing complicity in oppressive ways of interacting with other women, which ultimately amounts to hope and belief that we do have the agency to be different from what we have been, to engage in the refusal of self.¹⁴

**Marilyn Frye's Politics of Location in Whitely Feminism**

Marilyn Frye's work on whitely feminism provides another example of an insider/without utilizing a politics of location as a discursive strategy for deconstructing and then reconstructing her identity. In her 1983 essay "On Being White: Thinking Toward a Feminist Understanding of Race and Race Supremacy" Frye begins excavating the meaning of "being white" in white supremacist society. She continues this work in her 1992 essay "White Woman Feminist: 1983-1992," which offers a more fully developed excavation of this identity category.

In her first essay, Frye locates the beginnings of her excavation in her experience in a collective of other white women exploring racism in their lives (a collective formed in response to demands by women of color for white women to address the rampant racism at feminist conferences, festivals, and meetings). In response to the organization of this group, several women of color suggested that it was racist to exclude women of color from the

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¹⁴ Katherine Adams has forwarded a model of coalition discourse based on Hannah Arendt's theory of "self-interest" and, contrary to my interpretation, she argues that Pratt's narrative is not "self-interested" enough to constitute a coalition discourse. She argues that "coalition discourse calls for remaining completely selfinterested—not only articulating the self through interest, but also staying interested in the self, curious, observant, open to the full play of motivation and desire, and willing to negotiate all aspects of this self across the coalition table" (27-28). More specifically, Adams perceives Pratt's dismantling of her privilege as a white woman as a disavowal of her interest. On the other hand, she argues that Pratt *does* enact coalition discourse through her self-interest as a lesbian "because owning and articulating [her interests] drives her into that world of things that lies between, connecting and dividing" (27).
consciousness-raising group, and further, that the white women would never achieve their goal of dismantling racism in their lives by working only with white women. The group decided to open discussions to all women after the first few meetings, a decision which one woman of color in particular found to be another replication of white women's privileged status. In response to these events, Frye states, "It seemed that what our critic was saying must be right; but what she was saying didn't seem to make any sense. She seemed crazy. That stopped me" ("On Being White" 112). Frye stops because she realizes she has used a technique of dismissal used too often against women who refuse to be dutiful daughters. Reading the sign of her accusation, Frye reflects upon how resistant women have historically been dismissed as "crazy," which becomes a juncture from which to map, excavate, deconstruct, and reconstruct her identity position as a racially centered subject. Frye locates herself within a complicated and contradictory position in which she feels trapped—wanting to take the responsibility to unlearn racism and not put the onus of cultural work/education on women of color, yet re-enacting her race privilege through the freedom to decide when to open the group to women of color and consequently dismissing her critic through a reaction born of spontaneous consciousness, or unreflected-upon privilege. However, through a process of self-reflexivity and mapping of her relationship to the other women, Frye recognizes that "every choice or decision I make is made in a matrix of options," which is different from the matrix of options available to women of color in responding to racism:

As a white woman I have certain freedoms and liberties. When I use them, according to my white woman's judgment, to act on matters of racism, my enterprise reflects strangely on the matrix of options within which it is undertaken. In the case at hand, I was deciding when to relate to white women
and when to relate to women of color according to what I thought would reduce my racism, enhance my growth and improve my politics. It becomes clear why no decision I make here can fail to be an exercise of race privilege. ("On Being White" 113)

In an honest and painful acknowledgement of her complicity in oppression, Frye locates how her actions and the options available to her are implicated in her social location as a racially privileged woman. This moment of reflection becomes a starting point for her to excavate the meaning of whiteness and the ways in which white people reproduce race privilege.

**Mapping Privileged Memberships**

In her effort to excavate whiteness, Frye begins with a deconstruction of the notion that whiteness is simply a matter of skin color. Instead, she suggests that whiteness is a socio-political category maintained through certain ways of behaving in the world. In this early essay she focuses on two dimensions of whiteness: definitional power (defining membership in the group of white people) and a commitment to "ignorance and being stubborn in its defense" ("On Being White" 119). The shift from perceiving whiteness as a biological characteristic to a cultural behavior enables agency to be "disloyal to Whiteness" ("On Being White" 126). Frye suggests that the preeminent way to be disloyal to whiteness is through education, which requires a dual move: first, those in privileged positions must learn about the experiences and perspectives of peoples about whom they are ignorant; and second, they must study their own ignorance.

The second move constitutes the most developed aspect of Frye's excavation of this identity position. She suggests that ignorance for most white Americans is not passive; nor is it a simple over-sight; rather, most white American's willfully ignore the lives/perspective of
others, which allows for the reification of their centered subject positions. For example, Frye places her own willful ignorance and definitional power on the plane of critique when she explains, "a friend of mine to whom I have been quite close off and on for some fifteen or twenty years, noticed I was assuming she is white: she told me she had told me years ago that she is Mexican. Apparently I did not hear, or I forgot, or it was convenient for me to whitewash her" ("On Being White" 114-115). Frye excavates willful ignorance as a manifested behavior learned by most white Americans, a behavior that can be unlearned through educating oneself about the experiences and perspectives of others and by paying attention to one's tendency towards willful ignorance, that is, not taking the lives, voices, or perspectives of others seriously. The way in which Frye maps her relationship and calls for white women to refuse the status of the "unknowing majority" and move beyond spontaneous consciousness is similar to Pratt's narrative and is significant because it is a call for white women, in particular, to take responsibility for moving outside the narrow circle of self. However, Pratt weaves into her narrative the processes through which she educated herself about the histories of the towns and collective struggles of resistance and oppression of which she had been ignorant. Thus, Frye's mapping and invective against "willful ignorance" remains less grounded in a material context and history; nonetheless, it is a significant rhetorical and political move because it is a call for accountability and Frye's example, although limited, situates her subjectivity as non-innocent.

In addition to exploring willful ignorance as a white way of being, Frye examines the interlocking relationship of race, gender, and (hetero)sexuality to excavate how race and race privilege are at work in some white women's goal to be "equal" with white men. She suggests that white women's attachments to white men are inextricably linked to race
privilege and racism. That is, in seeking identification with white men, in seeking to be "equal" to men, white women are given some access to this group's "material and educational benefits and the specious benefits of enjoying secondhand feelings of superiority and supremacy" ("On Being White" 125). Frye maps the interlocking relationships between whiteness, gender, and sexuality to show how these social positions are built upon existing relations of domination and superiority. Reading and deconstructing how equality has been conceptualized by some feminists, she suggests that a dis-identification with the notion of "equality" is a starting point for creating different ways of being and relating to others. As indicated in chapter two, the concept of equality has too often meant access to structures and positions of privilege that are built upon structures of domination. Thus, Frye's mapping reveals how oppressions work in conjunction with one another and pushes us to envision novel ways of relating to one another across differences that are built on a concept of egalitarianism rather than equality.

While Frye uses a politics of location to unearth the complex and interlocking relationship between oppressions, there is a tendency in this early essay to reproduce binary relations, which leads to a reductionist, essentialist, and fixed construal of identity (this is evident particularly in relation to her discussions of white men and heterosexuality). For example she states, "For hundreds of years and for a variety of reasons, mostly economic, white men of European stock have been out, world-wide, conquering, colonizing and enslaving people they classify as dark" ("On Being White" 122). Such a statement elides white women's complicity in this history of oppression. Additionally, the statement that white women enjoy "secondhand feelings of superiority and supremacy" ("On Being White" 125 emphasis mine) undercuts the kind of complex relationship Frye seems to be trying to
uncover in excavating white ways of being in the world. Furthermore, it seems to be a "willful ignorance" of the social context in which she initially situates her discussion: woman to woman relations within the context of feminist conferences, festivals, and meetings.

Nonetheless, the most significant aspect of this early essay is Frye's excavation of whiteness as a socio-political category with certain ways of being (definitional power, willful ignorance, and collusion with white masculinity) that can be resisted. In locating race as non-essential identity she resists the nihilism that suggests white people are finally or simply trapped by systems of racism and race privilege. In fact, she ends the piece on a hopeful note, suggesting that a critical consciousness of whiteness as a social construct, as a way of behaving in the world, is a starting point for an injunction against reproducing whiteness:

I do not suggest for a moment that I can disaffiliate by a private act of will, or by any personal strategy. Nor, certainly, is it accomplished simply by thinking it possible. To think it thinkable shortcuts no work and shields one from no responsibility. Quite the contrary, it may be a necessary prerequisite to assuming responsibility, and it invites the honorable work of radical imagination. ("On Being White" 127)

Despite this overt claim, Frye's essay might seem to construe change as an act of individual or private will because her analysis lack the degree of material and historical grounding that is particularly evident in the work of Anzaldúa and Pratt.15 However, I believe this conclusion to her early essay is significant for several reasons. First, she suggests that the

15 In her later essay she attempts to avoid the over-reliance on political abstractions by placing her excavation of whiteness in conversation with three different texts by people of color, which I discuss below.
work of excavating the meaning of whiteness in this piece is incomplete. Second, her statement creates a place of hope for re-creating subjectivity through both imagination and a degree of accountability. And finally, she insists that choosing not to reproduce whiteness must occur in coalitions with others interested in dismantling racism and race privilege. In an attempt to avoid Enlightenment notions of agency based on individualism and rationality, Frye suggests that change does not occur through mental fiat, but through communal engagement. Despite the limitation of falling into the trap of essentialism through vilifying white men as the locus of all oppression and erasing white women's complicity in systems of oppression conjoined with white men, Frye's early essay begins the preliminary work of using a politics of location to excavate a white subject position and create spaces for rewriting subjectivity.

I believe the use of a politics of location in this essay is best understood by situating it within a larger, ongoing conversation. Frye indicates in an introductory footnote that the essay "reflects and is limited by my own location, both culturally and in the process of change. The last thing I would want is that it be read either as my last, or as a complete, account of what whiteness is and of what that means to a white feminist" (110). She situates the excavation of her white identity, as partial, interested, and incomplete, or in process. She extends her discussion of whiteness in a later essay, "White Woman Feminist: 1983-1992," which she suggests is one and the same with the first essay "emerging after several metamorphoses" ("White" 147), thereby displaying an ongoing engagement over the period of a decade with the naming and deconstruction of her white identity. The combination of both essays illustrates that the use of a politics of location is not simply a cursory recognition of one's social position. Rather, mapping whiteness is a process that must be engaged
continually in order to cultivate new forms of subjectivity in a life-long endeavor of becoming.

Locating and Mapping Whiteliness

Similar to her first essay, Frye begins her 1992 essay by exposing the dangerous double-bind she experiences as an insider/without: wanting to disassociate with her membership in the dominant race, but cognizant that rejection of a group identity does not erase the history of white privilege that informs much of her consciousness and potential actions. More pointedly, the very choice to disassociate is inevitably an exercise of privilege, which Frye contends has "the distinctive finality of a trap," seemingly closing the possibility of social change ("White" 150). Frye is unwilling to accept the closed circuit of this logic that deceptively binds her to a position of paralysis devoid of agency.

In looking for a way out of this catch-twenty-two, she creates a neologism that is analogous to the concept of masculinity: whiteliness. This term denotes a distinction between a way of being in the world and physical characteristics. Frye argues that "being white-skinned (like being male) is a matter of physical traits presumed to be physically determined; being whitely (like being masculine) I conceive as a deeply ingrained way of being in the world" ("White" 151 emphasis mine). This neologism allows her to explore whiteness in further detail than in her 1983 essay, and, as I will show below, leads the way out of her initial quandary feeling that white people are simply and finally trapped by their position as insiders because it elucidates whiteness as a performance rather than an essence. Frye suggests that while there is not a direct correlation between maleness and masculinity, or whiteness and whiteliness, there is a contingent correlation—which moves the excavation of whiteliness away from particular kinds of people that might be identified through fixed
identity categories and into a discussion of ways of behaving, ways of seeing the world, ways of being—thus suggesting that different ways of being are possible in people who have white-skin privilege. Positioning her excavation of this identity category in performance, in a way of being, as opposed to biology offers the kind of agency to reconstruct her subjectivity that the double-bind seems to preclude.

In tandem with her first essay, Frye suggests that white women do two things to resist the spontaneous consciousness of insiders: reflect on ways of being in the world that reify privilege and listen to the voices of people of color. Consciously following her proposed methods for unlearning whiteliness, Frye places her experiences as a white woman in dialogue with several other texts that discuss whiteliness. First, she uses Minnie Bruce Pratt's categories of white morality (being judge, preacher, martyr, and peacemaker) as a general framework. Second she uses excerpts from *This Bridge Called My Back, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, and *Drylongso*, all of which offer perceptions of white people and whitely ways of being from the vantage point of people of color. In juxtaposing these voices, Frye shows how the process of excavating whiteness and formulating a differential consciousness is not an individualistic act, but one born of dialogue and coalitional politics.

Frye begins her excavation by locating whitely assumptions she learned as a young Southerner, "I learned that I, and 'we,' knew right from wrong and had the responsibility to see to it right was done; that there were others who did not know what is right and wrong and should be advised, instructed, helped and directed by us" ("White" 153). Placing these assumptions in conversation with Pratt's categories and statements from people of color included in *This Bridge Called My Back, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, and
Drylongso, Frye proceeds to excavate the meaning embedded in roles of judge, preacher, martyr, and peacemaker that whitely people assume. This exploration leads Frye to identify the following whitely ways of being in the world:

- Whitely people generally consider themselves to be benevolent and good-willed, fair, honest, and ethical. ("White" 154)

- Whitely people have a staggering faith in their own rightness and goodness, and that of other whitely people. We are not crooks. ("White" 154)

- Their ethics is in a great part an ethics of forms, procedures, and due process. As Minnie Bruce Pratt said, their morality is a matter of 'ought-to,' not 'want to' or 'passionately desire to.' ("White" 155)

- By believing in rules, by being arbiters of rules, by understanding agency in terms of the applications of principles to particular situations, whitely people think they preserve their detachment from prejudice, bias, meanness and so on. ("White" 155)

- belief in one's authority in matters practical, moral and intellectual exists in tension with the insecurity and hypocrisy that are essentially connected with the pretense of infallibility. ("White" 156).

- whitely people make it clear to people of other races that the last thing the latter are supposed to do is to challenge whitely people's authority. ("White" 157)

These characteristics of whiteness build on Frye's earlier discussion of whiteness and superiority, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of this identity position. Additionally, her excavation enables Frye to circle back to her discussion of why white people often feel
trapped when they begin to challenge the spontaneous consciousness of insiders. That is, the assumptions embedded in the roles of judge, preacher, martyr, and peacemaker are the crux of the problem in the education of white people in conversations about racism and race privilege. Frye asks:

How can you be a preacher who does not know right from wrong, a judge who is an incompetent observer, a martyr who victimizes others, a peace-maker who is the problem, an authority without authority, a grownup who is a child? How can someone who is supposed to be running the world acknowledge their relative powerlessness in some matter in any politically constructive way?

Any serious moral or political challenge to a whitely person must be a direct threat to her or his very being. ("White" 157)

Locating and excavating the roles white women have been taught to perform allows for a clearer understanding of why white women often react negatively to criticism from people of color. Dis-identification with the performance of whiteliness and its attendant roles becomes the key to constructing a differential consciousness in confronting racism and race privilege.

Another important move that Frye makes in this later essay is a more complicated analysis of the interrelationship of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Perhaps most pointedly, she uses the metaphor of a lever to analyze how whitely femininity operates in relationships between white men and white women, further excavating the implications of how whiteliness is connected with white women's performance of gender and power:

The white girl learns that whiteliness is dignity and respectability; she learns that whiteliness is her aptitude for partnership with white men...Adopting and cultivating whiteliness as an individual character seems to put it in the
woman's own power to lever herself up out of a kind of nonbeing (the status of woman in a male supremacist social order) over into a kind of Being (the status of white in white supremacist social order). ("White" 160)

Mapping potential relations between privileged men and women permits Frye to unearth how privilege and oppression exist in contradictory and interlocking relationships with one-another, seemingly giving white women status as Beings in the world, while simultaneously binding white women to a performance of self which is oppressive to themselves and to women and men of color. Frye quotes Doris Davenport to exemplify this contradiction, "Somewhere deep down (denied and almost killed) in the psyche of racist white feminists there is some perception of their real position: powerless, spineless, and invisible. Rather than examine it, they run from it. Rather than seek solidarity with wimmin of color, they pull rank within themselves" (qtd. in "White" 161). Frye's use of a politics of location to map and excavate the meaning of a whitely femininity is significant here because it begins to move beyond the reductionist analyses that she tended to make in her early essay on race privilege. That is, this later essay identifies more concretely how white heterosexual women potentially animate their whiteliness. Merely stating that oppressions are interlocking offers little in understanding how these systems of domination and subordination operate in quotidian experiences. On the other hand, locating specifically feminine whitely ways of being provides a starting point to assert agency in deconstructing and then reconstructing subjectivity.

Also important in Frye's invocation of a politics of location to excavate the embedded meanings of her identity is her analysis of class and her potential bias as a "lifelong member of the middle-class" (158). She questions whether her economically privileged social
location has placed her in a position to collapse middle class ways of being with whiteliness. However, in her observations she has recognized that "poor and working class white people are perfectly confident that they are more intelligent, know more, have better judgment and are more moral than Black people or Chicanos or Puerto Ricans, or Indians, or anyone else they view as not-white" (158). While she does, ultimately, determine that these ways of being in the world are connected more to whiteness than middle class-ness, she admits that she offers a peculiarly "middle-class version of [whiteness]" because she is drawing largely on her own social location to excavate the meaning of whiteness. In utilizing a politics of location to interrogate her own location as a Southern, white, middle class woman, Frye forwards a complicated understanding of her identity and a desire to understand the interrelationship between and among her social positions.

Using a politics of location to deconstruct her subjectivity as a white middle class woman and understand the interrelationship between race, gender, and sexuality, Frye makes the pointed statement that in rejecting whiteliness:

might make it possible for us to know that it is a dreadful mistake to think that our whiteliness earns us our personhood. Such knowledge can open up the possibility of practical understanding of whiteliness as learned character...a character which is not desirable in itself and neither manifests nor merits the full Being to which we aspire. ("White" 162-63)

Importantly, Frye suggests that deconstruction of whiteliness is not enough to create change: "analyzing a concept and circulating the analysis among a few interested colleagues does not make the concept go away, does not dislodge it from the matrix of concepts in the active conceptual repertoire even of those few people, much less of people in general" ("White"
She contends that deconstruction and the identification of a contingent correlation between identity categories and learned behaviors of superiority and dominance lead the way to the "practice of freedom" ("White" 164). The practice of freedom occurs through a refusal of self, through a refusal to animate whiteliness, which can then open spaces for hope and imagination "in the moment of knowing another way of being is possible" ("White" 166). The reconstruction of subjectivity is possible only when white women locate and excavate racial identities and actively work on a daily basis to be disloyal to performances of whiteliness. While Frye's essays should be understood in conjunction with one another, her later essay offers a more sophisticated development of a politics of location. In keeping with the metaphor of an archaeological dig, she reveals through her deconstruction of whiteliness some of the deeply engrained ways in which this identity position is animated; thus moving into a differential consciousness in which there is hope for performing ways of being that are not built upon assumptions of moral superiority and dominance.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have illustrated how Minnie Bruce Pratt's and Marilyn Frye's use of a politics of location to map and excavate their histories, experiences, and identities enable them to reconstruct fluid and mobile subjectivities. Along with Lorde and Anzaldúa, these writers contribute to the creation of a set of radical political rhetorical strategies that displace the normative subject of rhetoric. These strategies move both rhetoric and feminism into a space in which deconstruction of self, difference, fragmentation, and multiplicity are embraced in the same moment that a common vision of a better world is not forfeited. Each author invokes a politics of location as a rhetorical strategy to excavate the meanings embedded in their identities and to re-write new subjectivities, at the same time, they each
offer a unique approach to the reconstruction of self and community. Place and history are central to Pratt's narrative—locating the rootedness of her identity in material sites that shaped her sense of the world and her place in it. She locates emotions as keys to exploring how experiences shape our identities and our understanding of the future. In particular, she elucidates how recreation of the self is a process of loss and fear, but also a process of gain, hope, and love as she creates a vision of how we might interact in ways that are free of domination and violence. Somewhat dis-similar from the work of Lorde, Anzaldúa, and Pratt, Frye's decade-long excavation of whitely feminism reveals what a politics of location looks like when focused more on "mental fiat." And, although Frye suggests that disassociating from a privileged position requires more than mental fiat, I include her work in my analysis because I think it represents an important contribution to a politics of location—that is, she offers an significant excavation of the texture and meaning of whiteness in feminist coalitions and she displays the importance of a life-long engagement with a politics of location. However, as indicated above I also think it falls short in significant ways. That is, though Frye suggests that change must involve more than the mind, her use of a politics of location lacks the kind of integration of the mental, psychic, and physical realms that are particularly salient in the work of Pratt and Anzaldúa.

I also believe it is useful to read Pratt's and Frye's essays together because they invoke a politics of location in very different ways. Certainly the political abstraction in Frye's work makes it seem as if change is a matter of individual "mental fiat" or personal will. Also, because her essay lacks the kind of historical and personal grounding evident in Pratt's narrative, it may seem that she is simply deconstructing a concept and circulating it amongst interested colleagues. As indicated in my analysis of Pratt's work, we can (and should)
question the degree to which an autobiographical narrative such as Pratt's leads to collective change and coalition, rather than a simple change in one woman's consciousness. However, when placed together (as well as with the work of Lorde and Anzaldúa) we can read the discursive practices of these writers within a larger set of practices which worked to collectively interrupt normative subjectivity through the excavation of inherited identities and refusal to animate ways of being based upon relations of domination and subordination.
CHAPTER SIX

Beyond Outsiders and Insiders

To resist destruction, self-hatred, or lifelong hopelessness, we have to throw off the conditioning of being despised, the fear of becoming the they that is talked about so dismissively, to refuse lying myths and easy moralities, so see ourselves as human, flawed, and extraordinary. All of us—extraordinary.

—Dorothy Allison 36

As discussed in chapter two, a politics of location does not strive to affirm a "true" self at the core of one's being; it is a set of practices aimed at locating subject positions so that the meanings embedded in particular socio-cultural positions can be mapped relationally and excavated. This process of excavation potentially creates spaces for different ways of being, ways of engaging with others that are not grounded in relations of domination and subordination. In reading signs and mapping identities through a politics of location, the radical, lesbian feminists whose work I analyze in chapters four and five engage in a form of what Michel Foucault calls a "refusal of the self," or a refusal of unreflexive identification with hegemonic representations of various subject positions in order to create agentive opportunities for the reconstruction of subjectivities. However, as I point out in chapter three, dis-identification does not operate similarly across different social contexts and identities because women's lives are at stake in incredibly different and disproportionate ways. I concur with Ruth Frankenberg and Lata Mani who suggest that notions of heterogeneity "have at times led critics down the very problematic path of what one might call 'neorelativism,' such that it is sometimes argued that 'we' are all decentered, multiple, 'minor,' or 'mestiza' in exactly comparable ways. It becomes critical, then, to maintain a sharp
analysis of the relationship between subjectivity and power" (289). Thus, I have used Foucault's "refusal of the self" to call attention to the fact that sign reading and mapping through a politics of location operate differently based on one's position relative to normative subjectivity, a position that shifts with different spatio-temporal contexts. To avoid the trappings of collapsing and erasing differential relationships to power and normative subjectivity I have organized my textual analyses in chapters four and five around the categories outsiders/within and insiders/without—categories which are particularly relevant given the historical rupturing of hegemonic feminism by women of color and white anti-racist women in the 1980s. That is, if identity is understood as always relational and situational, then the positive movement that I associate with outsiders/within and the negative movement that I associate with insiders/without is useful for distinguishing the different ways in which a politics of location operated as a political discourse at this particular historical moment in feminist politics. I maintain that these categories are useful temporary conceptual tools, but like all categories, they are limited and limiting in what they allow us to perceive. Perhaps most limiting about insiders and outsiders is the way in which these terms reify binary relations, which can easily (if not understood as a tactical move) fall into the dangers of reproducing a rigid, static, and unified representation of subjectivity. Therefore, I conclude with a textual analysis of Dorothy Allison's use of a politics of location to map and excavate her white, working class social position, an identity that challenges the tidy dichotomy of center and margin and pushes against the parameters by which I have conceptually organized this project.
Dorothy Allison's Politics of Location in Skin

In her collection of essays *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class & Literature* Dorothy Allison explores a politics of location to explore her complicated relationship to race, class, family, sex, and writing. Importantly, many of the essays in this collection were written in the early 90s, over a decade after the shift in consciousness in the feminist movement that Teresa de Lauretis identifies as an "effort to work through feminism's complicity with ideology, both ideology in general (including classism or bourgeois liberalism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and I would also add, with some qualifications, humanism) and the ideology of gender in —that is to say, heterosexism" (*Technologies* 10). I believe the way in which Allison writes her complicated and contradictory subjectivity is, in part, a result of this early shift in feminist consciousness and the product of benefiting from at least a decade of feminist publications and presentations that further challenged hegemonic feminism as well as the normative subject of rhetoric. Additionally, Allison's self-identification as a white, Southern, working class sex radical places her indistinctly between insider and outsider. Thus the movements she makes in constructing an alternative subjectivity through a politics of location challenges the simple dichotomy between either positive reaffirmation of a marginal identity or a negative rejection of a centered identity. Allison writes:

If we are forced to talk about our lives, our sexuality, and our work only in the language and categories of a society that despises us, eventually we will be unable to speak past our own griefs. We will disappear into those categories. What I have tried to do in my own life is refuse the language and categories that would reduce me to less than my whole complicated experience. (213)
To reiterate, the categories I use in this project are a framework for recognizing how a politics of location works differently for marginalized and centered identities. They are tools with which to think, not an indication of fixed or final social locations. In using insiders/without and outsiders/within I hope to avoid a kind of normative heterogeneity that erases different relations between power and subjectivity and to point out at least two distinctively different ways in which writers re-construct their subjectivities through refusal of the self. Even as I wish for my categories to elucidate complexity and differences between writers, I recognize that they also necessarily operate to obscure other elements important in re-writing subjectivity and claiming discursive agency. I agree with Allison. All categories are reductive.

Allison's work complicates my organizational scheme as she explores what she calls "the politics of they," the separation of humans into categories through fear and stigmatization (35). Similar to Audre Lorde, she insists that we are all born into a culture that fears difference; thus she advocates that "Class, race, sexuality, gender—and all the other categories by which we categorize and dismiss each other—need to be excavated from the inside" (35). The politics of them and us, margin and center, are useful tools for generalizing and organizing, but the meanings of our identities must be located within lived experiences, excavated, and then challenged if there is hope for agentive opportunities to re-create subjectivity. Throughout her essays, Allison does precisely this by exploring the function and meaning of "skin," its relationship to family and to the world outside of home, and the importance of excavating the shame, hate, and hope embedded below the surface:

Skin, the surface of the skin, the outer layer protecting the vulnerable inside, the boundary between the world and the soul. What is seen from the outside
and hides all the secrets. My skin, my mama's skin, my sisters' skin. Our outer layer hides our inner hopes. White girls, tough-skinned and stubborn, born to a family that never valued girls. I am my mama's daughter, one with my tribe, taught to believe myself of not much value, to take damage and ignore it, to take damage and be proud of it. We were taught to be proud that we were not Black, and ashamed that we were poor. Taught to reject everything people believed about us—drunken, no-count, lazy, whorish, stupid—and still some of it was just the way we were. The lies went to the bone, and digging them out has been the work of a lifetime. (225)

Allison locates and excavates the categories to which others have asked her to conform—some of which place her in a privileged/centered class and others which place her in a hated/marginalized class. Through a politics of location Allison reveals the hard truths of how her experiences and social positioning have shaped her identity, sense of self, and hope for a different world.

Locating Context

Allison begins Skin with the essay "Context" in which she describes taking a lover, "a Yankee girl from a good family" (12), home to Greenville, South Carolina to meet her family and the subsequent trepidation she feels in anticipating the collision of these two worlds. Upon reflection, however, Allison realizes that she is not afraid of how her family will receive her lover; she fears that her lover might see her "through new eyes, hateful eyes, the eyes of someone who suddenly knows how different we were" (9). Thus, Allison begins with one of the primary threads of her identity, a thread that weaves itself through her experiences and sense of self—the deeply embedded contempt she has received as "white
trash," the anger and shame written onto her person as a result of this contempt, the desire to run and hide from this identity, and the fear of being found out.

Allison's lover does not respond as she anticipated; but she does see Allison with new eyes, eyes filled with "awe, confusion, uncertainty, and shame" (9). Her lover explains, "I thought I understood what you meant when you said 'working class' but I just didn't have a context'" (10). Afterwards, Allison lays next to her sleeping lover in a motel room cooled with air conditioning thinking about context, "We had never owned an air conditioner, never stayed in a motel, never eaten in a restaurant where my mother did not work" (10).

Context—understanding the material texture and shape of our identities, understanding how our histories and choices are written on our sense of self, and how we then negotiate the implications of who we are and who we wish to become. Allison writes, "Context is so little to share, and so vital" (12). This revelation sets up the framework for her collection of essays in which she argues that context, the complicated and contradictory experiences of her family, her choices, and her sense of self must be shared if there is to be greater understanding among people who wish to remake a world that can be "more just and more truly human" (165).

Mapping and Excavating Poverty

Allison locates white poverty as the primary "context" that has influenced the development of her identity:

I have known I was a lesbian since I was a teenager, and I have spent a good twenty years making peace with the effects of incest and physical abuse. But what may be the central fact of my life is that I was born in 1949 in Greenville, South Carolina, the bastard daughter of a white woman from a
desperately poor family, a girl who had left the seventh grade the year before, worked as a waitress, and was just a month past fifteen when she had me. That fact, the inescapable impact of being born in the condition of poverty that this society finds shameful, contemptible, and somehow deserved, has had dominion over me to such an extent that I have spent my life trying to overcome or deny it. (15)

Only after spending years running away from this identity and compartmentalizing her sense of self does Allison begin to excavate the implications of growing up a bastard daughter of a poor, white, Southern woman. Locating her position as a white, working class lesbian is significant because there are so few narratives that explore the implications of class on the development of subjectivity. For example, one of the most crucial elements Allison reveals in excavating her identity in relation to her middle class friends and lovers is entitlement. She explains:

Why are you so afraid? my lovers and friends have asked me the many times I have suddenly seemed a stranger, someone who would not speak to them, would not do the things they believed I should so, simple things like applying for a job, or a grant, or some award they were sure I could acquire easily. Entitlement, I have told them, is a matter of feeling like we rather than they. You think you have a right to things, a place in the world, and it is so intrinsically a part of you that you cannot imagine people like me, people who seem to live in your world, who don't have it. (14)

Allison explains that when she first began to explore the implications of her working class white identity on her sense of self and life choices she had no one to speak with because there
was "no common language" (32) among lesbian feminists. This void creates the impetus for Allison to write new narratives which represent the complexity of her social positioning. Importantly, unlike Adrienne Rich's dream of a common language, Allison pursues a representation of her identity and experiences that shifts between the particular and the general, excavating and reading the signs from her history, generalizing and connecting the meaning she extrapolates from her experiences to other women's experiences, and returning again to her own experiences to critically question her own assumptions. Also important, Allison consistently calls others to write their narratives in a search for a shared language and a more humane world: "Each of us has our own stories and none of them are the same no matter how similar some of the details. Tell me the truth and I make you a promise. If you show me yours, I'll show you mine" (219). It is Allison's call for new narratives, her refusal of a "politics of they," and her movement between the general and the particular that constructs an accountable and non-innocent subjectivity, distinguishing her desire for a shared language from Rich's dream of a common language, which erased the specificities of many women's lived experiences through totalizing assertions about patriarchal domination and over-arching generalizations about "woman."

In her excavation, Allison first locates and reads the myth of the poor in literature and movies, which is invariably a romanticized and "clean" version of the poor. They are the "noble Southern whites portrayed in the movies, mill workers for generations until driven out by alcoholism and a family propensity for rebellion and union talk" (35). Her family, on the other hand, moved from job to job, were not "joiners," and only believed in "luck and the waywardness of fate" (25). Allison examines the seduction of the romanticized poor and her propensity to internalize the myth as the story of her own people and identity. Although she
admits a temptation to write her family as hard-working, down-trodden heroes, she knows that this would simply render invisible the complicated reality of her family and its implications on her identity. Instead, she describes her family as:

The bad poor: men who drank and couldn't keep a job; women, invariably pregnant before marriage, who quickly became worn, fat, and old from working too many hours and bearing too many children; children with runny noses, watery eyes, and the wrong attitudes. My cousins quit school, stole cars, used drugs, and took dead-end jobs pumping gas or waiting tables. We were not noble, not grateful, not even hopeful. We knew ourselves despised. My family was ashamed of being poor, of feeling hopeless. What was there to work for, to save money for, to fight for or struggle against? We had generations before us to teach us that nothing ever changed, and that those who did try to escape failed. (18)

Allison invokes a politics of location to map the myth of the noble poor against the reality of her family as the "ungrateful poor" (13). Locating the relationship between these two allows her to deconstruct the myth and bring into relief a different, non-romantic portrait of the Southern, white working poor.

Despite her family's non-conformity to the myth of the "noble poor," Allison does not simply dismiss the power of these narratives. Instead, she excavates how the myths have informed her sense of self and history. For example, when her family left Greenville, South Carolina for Central Florida she also left behind a community who had known her family for generations and had already determined her future as worthless trash who would never finish high school. In Central Florida she could remake herself through the myth of the poor:
In that new country, we were unknown. The myth of the poor settled over us and glamorized us. I saw it in the eyes of my teachers, the Lion's Club representative who paid for my new glasses, and the lady from the Junior League who told me about the scholarship I had won. Better, far better, to be one of the mythical poor than to be part of the they I had known before. I also experienced a new level of fear, a fear of losing what had never before been imaginable. Don't let me lose this chance, I prayed, and lived in terror that I might suddenly be seen again as what I knew myself to be. (21)

By using a politics of location to read the signs of the mythical poor and map her relationship to it, Allison excavates her complicated relationship to this fictionalized identity. The myth erases the existence of her identity, feeding shame and contempt; at the same time, it allows her to be received in a new community with a degree of kindness from those who recognized her intelligence rather than her family background. Conforming to a culturally intelligible identity ultimately enables her escape—she is the first in her family to graduate from high school. This escape leads to years of unexamined contempt for an identity she feared; the escape also leads to the place where she deconstructs the myths, writes new narratives of the poor, and a new subjectivity for herself.

Allison maintains a complicated relationship to the myth of the noble poor; refusing to construe it as entirely negative or positive. She argues that the problem with myths is their propensity to feed simple dichotomies, vilifying the patriarchy or the middle and upper classes in order to create heroes out of the oppressed. She writes, "The difficulty is that I can't ascribe everything that has been problematic about my life simply and easily to the patriarchy, or to incest, or even to the invisible and much-denied class structure of our
society" (15-16). Thus she begins a complicated process of exploring the elements which have shaped her identity, an identity carefully crafted out of loyalty, rage, lies, secrets, and dreams of escape.

Mapping and Excavating Contempt

One of the primary elements connected to Allison's complicated identity is contempt, a contempt that moves in multiple directions: contempt felt for herself, felt for her family, and felt for a world that despises the "ungrateful poor." The mythical poor are thought to have a deep inner pride. Allison cannot claim this ennobled emotional response to suffering. Reading signs from her childhood, she writes, "What Mama taught us was to keep our heads up and refuse to act ashamed. She could not teach us how not to feel ashamed. She didn't know how to do that herself. No one in our family did. What they knew most deeply was the power of rage and silence" (240). Elsewhere she writes, "We had not been raised to love ourselves, only to refuse to admit how much we might hate ourselves" (237). Allison reveals the volatile combination of shame, rage, and silence at the root of contempt, and the subsequent desire to hide and run from a despised identity. In fact her running becomes a central location from which she is able to explain how much the contempt was woven into her identity.

For example, she narrates years spent deliberately and thoroughly disassociating from her history and family—going to college and imitating the mannerism, dress, and ambitions of the middle class people she met, telling only stories of her history that fit into the mythical norm of the noble poor, living in a lesbian collective and becoming a feminist activist working for social change. She writes, "I worked as hard as I could to make myself a new person, an emotionally healthy radical lesbian activist, and I believed completely that by
remaking myself I was helping to remake the world" (22). Using a politics of location to read and excavate contempt allows Allison to reveal the degree to which she believed she could mold herself into an acceptable version of the normative subject within the lesbian community, a subjectivity built upon denial and homogenization. In retrospect Allison realizes that the compartmentalization of her life only resulted in a "splintering" (16), that the contempt she felt for her identity as poor white trash and the lies through which she constructed an acceptable lesbian identity would never lead her to a place where she could have a chance to live out her feminist politics and name her own life. She explains, "Dividing yourself up, lying to yourself and the rest of the world, being afraid of who you might really be—none of that could possibly be of any use to the person I wanted to become" (85-86). Running and hiding were central to her identity; they changed nothing by feeding the systematic forces that encouraged the self-destruction of her people: "It has taken me most of my life to understand that, to see how and why those of us who are born poor and different are so driven to give ourselves away or lose ourselves, but most of all, simply to disappear as the people we really are" (34). Using her experiences running from her history and identity allows Allison to collectively generalize how any culture that fears difference deeply impacts those who do not conform to normative subjectivity. In conjunction with her call for others to write their stories, Allison’s excavation of an inherited identity, her refusal to "wear the coat the world has made for [her]" (Two or Three 71), operates as a discursive strategy pointing the direction to collective change in re-writing subjectivity, a change that calls others to refuse to reside in the dictates of a culture that fears difference and heterogeneity.
As Allison excavates the implications of her history on her sense of self she also examines how her desire to escape is not merely a result of contempt; it is also connected with how her identity has shaped her notion of change itself. That is, she learned that change, the ability to reconstruct her subjectivity in relation to others, is not possible; thus the only option is abandonment of the despised identity:

the life you have lived, the person you are, is valueless, better off abandoned, that running away is easier than trying to change things, that change itself is not possible. Sometimes I think it is this conviction—more seductive than alcohol or violence, more subtle than sexual hatred or gender injustice—that has dominated my life and made real change so painful and difficult. (19-20)

And yet, Allison adds another level of complexity to how her identity has shaped her desire and belief in social change; she asks, "If I had not been raised to give my life away, would I have made such an effective, self-sacrificing revolution?" (31). Similar to Pratt, Allison invokes a politics of location to explore the messy and contradictory way in which her notion of change is connected to her social identity.

Much like Lorde and Pratt locate emotion as an entry point to excavation, Allison identifies an unexpected moment of grief and rage—emotions that could not be silenced or hidden—as the genesis, or the punctum, that allowed for a shift in consciousness about her identity and the years of brutal contempt she felt for her family. The grief and rage were consequences of speaking to two different groups in the period of one week: an Episcopalian Sunday school group and a women's juvenile detention center (31-34). The juxtaposition of her two speaking engagements, the sense of love and comfort she feels in response to the raucous curiosity of the women in the detention center and the rage she experiences in
response to the looks of outright contempt from the guards in the center and the polite contempt from the Episcopalians brings her to a breaking point, "I no longer knew who I was or where I belonged. I had run away from my family, refused to go home to visit, and tried in every way to make myself a new person" (33). Understanding how completely she had accepted the shame connected with her identity motivates Allison to begin writing stories in the hope to "reverse the process," to reclaim her family, history, and despised identity (34). Writing, then, changes her understanding of feminism and activism:

It is only as the child of my class and my unique family background that I have been able to put together what is for me a meaningful politics, to regain a sense of why I believe in activism, why self-revelation is so important for lesbians. There is no all-purpose feminist analysis that explains the complicated ways our sexuality and core identity are shaped, the way we see ourselves as parts of both our birth families and the extended family of friends and lovers we invariably create within the lesbian community. (35)

Much as Anzaldúa excavates her complicated and contradictory relationship to her family and culture, Allison comes to realize that writing stories from the specificity of her experiences is not "frivolous" to the "revolution"; without the ability to claim the complexity and contradictions of her identity, there could be no hope for social change because she would continue to work within categories not of her own making. Offering a non-innocent representation of herself in the hope of more accurately representing the lives of other women is at the root of Allison's use of a politics of location to excavate her identity as a white, Southern, working class woman.
Moving from macro to micro, Allison maps and excavates how the contempt associated with her working class identity does not stop with the dominant culture; it is deeply rooted within the lesbian community as well, which fed Allison's self-hatred and desire to hide. She writes,

I know that I have been hated as a lesbian both by "society" and by the intimate world of my extended family, but I have also been hated or held in contempt (which is in some ways more debilitating and slippery than hatred) by lesbians for behavior and sexual practices shaped in large part by class. My sexual identity is intimately constructed by my class and regional background, and much of the hatred directed at my sexual preferences is class hatred—however much people, feminists in particular, like to pretend this is not a factor. (23)

Allison excavates the intersectionality of her sexuality and working class identities, and the contempt associated with both. Deconstructing and rejecting the contempt of lesbians who deem her politically incorrect and a "pawn of the patriarchy" (105), Allison recognizes that her familiarity with contempt from her class background has given her resilience and strength to understand that attempting to please her critics would "only further engage their contempt, and my own contempt as well" (24). In locating contempt for the unacceptable elements of her identity she reveals a continuum in which someone else consistently works to delimit the parameters of who she can be. The realization of this system provides the tools for reconstructing her subjectivity. That is, reading and excavating the complex and contradictory ways in which her identity has been informed by contempt allows Allison to deconstruct and reclaim her identity "from the cauldron of hatred" (23), to insist that others
imagine her as she is rather than who they wish her to be. She writes, "to make any contribution to other lives, I know that I must first begin in the carefully examined specifics of my own" (213). The work of creating her own subjectivity and encouraging others to do the same is as much a part of the "revolution" as political canvassing.

Allison's excavation also requires her to map how her identity and family history are built upon overt contempt for others, specifically in the form of anti-Semitism and racism. For example, she explores the work ethic her mother and aunts taught her, one not based on ambition and self-respect; instead:

Work was just work for them, necessary. You did what you had to do to survive. They did not so much believe in taking pride in doing your job as in stubbornly enduring hard work and hard times. At the same time, they held that there were some forms of work, including maid's work, that were only for Black people, not white, and while I did not share that belief, I knew how intrinsic it was to the way my family saw the world. Sometimes I felt as if I straddled cultures and belonged on neither side. I would grind my teeth at what I knew was my family's unquestioning racism while continuing to respect their pragmatic endurance. (26)

Racism and pragmatism are complexly woven into her non-innocent identity as a working class white woman. Utilizing a politics of location to excavate embedded meanings of her identity, Allison gleans what is positive from this history and rejects the negative. She writes, "We learn prejudice and hatred at the same time we learn who we are and what the world is about...The real choice is whether we will simply swallow what we are given, or whether we will risk our whole lives shaking down and changing those very bottle-fed
convictions" (116). In utilizing a politics of location to map and excavate her sense of self, Allison asserts discursive agency similar to Anzaldúa's, who argues for the creation of una cultura mestiza by refusing the injurious aspects of her culture and family and reclaiming the positive, life affirming aspects: "I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes, to fashion my gods out of my entrails" (Borderlands 22).

Allison's use of a politics of location to examine the complexity of her identity reveals the importance of excavation and the impossibility that simply stating a social position will elucidate anything. She shows that we cannot know exactly "what we are given" until we engage in the hard work of locating the origins of our convictions about who we are and how those convictions continue to impact our sense of self and vision of the world. Ultimately, in locating the impact of contempt on her life, Allison returns to her theory of a "politics of they" built upon binary thinking and fear of difference:

The horror of class stratification, racism, and prejudice is that some people begin to believe that the security of their families and communities depends on the oppression of others, that for some to have good lives there must be others whose lives are truncated and brutal. It is a belief that dominates this culture. It is what makes the poor whites of the South so determinedly racist and the middle class so contemptuous of the poor. It is a myth that allows some to imagine that they build their lives on the ruin of others, a secret core of shame for the middle class, a goad and a spur to the marginal working class, and cause enough for the homeless and poor to feel no constraints on hatred and violence. The power of the myth is made even more apparent when we examine how, within the lesbian and feminist communities where
we have addressed considerable attention to the politics of marginalization, there is still so much exclusion and fear, so many of us who do not feel safe. (35-36)

In utilizing a politics of location to map larger systems of stratification which inform her complicated identity as a white, working class woman, Allison makes a call to her audience to excavate how fear and hatred are woven into our own communities and identities. Allison shows that there can be no simple heroes or villains; yet, there are systematic forces which limit and constrain our lives. She moves from the particular to the general, thus embodying one of the key elements of a politics of location—linking her social location to something greater and returning again to the specificity of her experiences, thus constructing an accountable and non-innocent subjectivity.

Locating Accountability

As Allison excavates her working class identity she explores the inter-relatedness of oppressions without collapsing important differences. For example, Allison speaks of reading Irena Klepfisz's poetry and experiencing "a frisson of recognition" with Klepfisz's Jewish lesbian identity. However, Allison clarifies "It was not that my people had been 'burned off the map' or murdered as hers had. No, we had been encouraged to destroy ourselves" (17). As she maps her identity in relation to others, Allison maintains accountability for the specificity of her experiences while recognizing the connection to something greater than the individual. Allison also speaks of how This Bridge Called My Back called her to examine the racism in her life in new ways because the contributors to the collection were so different from her, and yet, shared similar hopes and dreams. Mapping herself within a coalitional framework with women who are different from her, Allison
recognizes the vulnerability exposed on the pages of *Bridge* and is propelled to share her own vulnerabilities in writing. There is a connection for Allison between the hard work of representing the specificities of differences between women and maintaining a "shared vision of feminism" (115). This shared vision seeks the creation of new relations, new forms of subjectivity that do not require the sacrifice of any one woman's life, which Allison situates within a larger culture:

As feminists, many of us have committed our whole lives to struggling to change what most people in this society don't even question, and sometimes the intensity of our struggle has persuaded us that the only way to accomplish change is to make hard bargains, to give up some points and compromise on others. What this has always meant in the end, unfortunately, is trading some people for others.

I do not want to do that.

I do not want to require any other woman to do that.

I do not want to claim a safe and comfortable life for myself that is purchased at the cost of some other woman's needs or desires. (114)

Excavating her identity and mapping relations across differences and similarities leads Allison to maintain an acute attention to very real desires and lives of women at the heart of feminist politics, lives which too often are erased in the search for large scale revolution or theoretical purity.

Another significant element of Allison's sense of accountability is her insistence on naming and excavating the complex interweaving of love and betrayal in her family (particularly between her mother and sisters) and the connection to contempt, shame, and
silence. She points out that theories of the "patriarchal order" do not help her understand the complexity of the choices her mother made, how she "had, and had not, saved [Allison] as a girl" (34), and the subsequent impact of the interweaving of love and betrayal on Allison's identity. Maintaining accountability for her complicity in this interweaving, Allison writes, "I come at my mother's life from my own, remembering that I loved my little sisters but wanted them to sleep closest to the door " (54-55). One consequence of a combination of love and betrayal and a history of physical and sexual abuse is a life and identity shaped by lies: "The world lied, and we lied, and lying becomes a habit' (55). Thus Allison invokes a politics of location to examine the degree to which lying (and fear of the truth) has shaped her identity. In reconstructing her subjectivity she commits herself to confront fear and tell the truth, the whole, complicated, and painful truth from her partial perspective because this is the only way to resist the "splintering" and compartmentalization that constrained her for years.

Allison also recognizes the partiality and interestedness of her representation. For example, after spending years judging aunts and cousins with contempt for engaging in "amateur prostitution" as waitresses who always kept "sugar-daddies" on the side, she explains, "There was a certain truth in this, though like all cruel judgments rendered from the outside, it ignored the conditions that made it true" (26). Context—so little to share, and so vital. Allison maintains a degree of accountability for the non-innocence of her representations and the partiality of her perspectives because it is commensurate with her political vision—a politics in which the personal is intimately tied with the collective in such a way that strives not to deny complexity of anyone's subjectivity.
Locating "Safe" Spaces in the Future

Allison's experiences in self-hatred, contempt, running, and finally finding that she could not escape her identity all shape her vision of a better world. Although Allison explains she has never felt safe, she maintains a desire for an imagined space of safety, which she describes as "the ability to love without fear of betrayal, the confidence that we can expose our most hidden selves and not have the women we love literally disappear from our lives" (119). In the context of a lesbian community that rejected her as a sex radical, a "pawn of the patriarchy, an antifeminist writer, and a pimp for the pornographers" (105), prophetic love is that which propels Allison to imagine a different world. Linking her ostracism with her desire for a safe place in which women can construct their own subjectivities, she suggests that:

None of us is safe because we have not tried to make each other safe. We have never even recognized the fearfulness of the territory [of sex]. We have addressed violence and exploitation and heterosexual assumptions without first establishing the understanding that for each of us, desire is unique and necessary and simply terrifying...I want to once again start by saying that as women we don't know enough about each other—our fears, our desires, or the many ways in which this society has acted upon us. (113)

Allison points out that we all are accountable for creating this space, we are all potentially complicit in allowing what is terrifying to dictate a set of exclusionary practices that determine "acceptable" or "legitimate" expressions of subjectivity. This is particularly cogent in the context of a lesbian feminist community that has worked to change so many of the restrictions on women's subjectivities, but which is also built upon a "politics of they."
Allison reveals how the struggle for the envisioned world in which women can assert agency in the construction of intersubjectivity is a continuous battle and begins with the particulars of women's needs and desires.

Despite her alienation from a particular sect of the lesbian feminist community that was important to the early development of her consciousness, Allison never loses hope for an imagined space of safety. Further, she begins to create the safety for which she yearns by writing what is most terrifying about her own desires and fears, thus creating a dialogue through which other women can begin to articulate their subjectivities. She also shows that no matter how she might have tried to escape her identity, it was written on her life in ways that she would have no control over, no agency to change, until she claimed the whole of it, both the positive and the negative.

Because contempt, secrets, shame, and dishonesty have been written into her identity in such complex ways, Allison understands the struggle to reconstruct her subjectivity is in a continuous process of be-coming. She explains, "Trying always to know what I am doing and why, choosing to be known as who I am—feminist, queer, working class, and proud of the work I do—is tricky as it ever was. I tell myself that life is the long struggle to understand and love fully" (250). Equally important, Allison points out that a politics of location has as much to do with the present as with the future. In encouraging others to write their stories, she urges, "Imagine me. I was born to die. I know that. If I could have found what I needed at thirteen, I would not have lost so much of my life chasing vindication or death. Give some child, some thirteen-year-old, the hope of the remade life. Tell the truth" (219). While Allison's work may seem to be a self-centered and reductionist political sensibility, it is, I believe, an exemplary use of a politics of location to reconstruct her
subjectivity. She clearly reveals that we cannot make generalizations without examining the specificity of our inherited identities. We cannot recreate our subjectivities or a different world without examining how much the "politics of they" pervades our collective and individual consciousness.

Allison's politics of location reveals how much remains unnamed and unnamable because a politics of they pervades all communities, including radical, lesbian feminist communities. She maps the multiple directions that contempt, rage, and hate flow, insisting that we embrace the messiness of our inherited identities even as we reject relations of domination. Through locating and excavating the meaning of her own complicated identity, she insists that a different future and a sense of intersubjectivity rests on our capacity and desire to honestly explore and respect the contradictory intersectionality of our identities.

**Implications of Reclaiming a Politics of Location**

I return to Chela Sandoval's statement that we must reclaim "theory from the halls of the academy where it has been intercepted and domesticated" (7) and look to the methodology of the oppressed for clues about how subjects survive and thrive in the context of a changing and changeable postmodern world through differential consciousness. This differential consciousness refuses to be bound by dictates of theoretical or ideological purity; instead, it is marked by movement and change, using whatever tactical means are necessary to intercede in relations of domination and reconstruct more equitable social conditions:

The differential mode of social movement and consciousness depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self-consciously choosing and adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations...Differential consciousness requires grace,
flexibility, and strength: enough strength to confidently commit to a well-defined structure of identity for one hour, day, week, month, year; enough flexibility to self-consciously transform that identity according to the requisites of another oppositional ideological tactic if readings of power's formation require it. (60)

I contend that a politics of location is one methodology of the oppressed that allowed radical, lesbian feminists to resist forces of oppression and normalized subjectivity and re-write fluid, mobile, intersubjectivities during the 1980s and early 90s. As indicated in chapter two, the rupturing of hegemonic feminism by radical women of color and the proliferation of small feminist publishing houses and local feminist bookstores in the late 70s provided the socio-historical and material contexts for the creation of a collective set of intervening practices of illegitimate subjects that created spaces for change, both individual and collective. Chandra Mohanty argues that "Sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender; it must be forged in concrete, historical, and political practice and analysis" ("Under Western Eyes" 178). A politics of location constitutes one set of concrete political practices for forging coalitions across differences. That is, maintaining accountability through partial, non-innocent, reflexive narratives, struggling with language and the politics of representation to make fluid connections between local and general claims to knowledge, celebrating difference as a creative force, and centering hope and desire, or prophetic love, as the motivating force behind social change all constitute a politics of location, a set of discursive and political practices for interrupting normative subjectivity, re-writing a fluid intersubjectivity, and creating a differential consciousness.
As a collective set of discursive practices, a politics of location forged new ground for both writers and readers to envision and realize intersubjectivity. I concur with AnaLouise Keating who proposes an interactional, performative theory of reading in which "borders between writer, reading, and text dissolve: Words have concrete physiological, ideological, and psychic effects" (183). Reading political essays of self-representation, much like Sandoval's technologies of sign reading, deconstruction, and reconstruction, can lead to transformation:

Each time we read, we engage in new convers(at)ions—transformational dialogues between writer, reader, and text. As we recognize ourselves in the various others we encounter as we read, and these others in ourselves, we define ourselves differently. Binary oppositions between self and other break down. We cross over, rewriting culture, rewriting self, as we go. (Keating, *Women* 186-187)

As radical, lesbian feminist writers in the 1980s and early 90s, such as Rich, Anzaldúa, Lorde, Pratt, Frye, and Allison, invoked a politics of location to re-write their subjectivities, they also called readers to a space of non-innocent accountability and created transformational possibilities for readers to move into differential consciousness and reconceive their subjectivities as fluid, mobile, and inter-connected. Equally significant, these texts infuse theories of multiplicity, fragmentation, and partiality with hope, life, and desire through the hermeneutics of love, which counters the paralysis of some poststructural theories of subjectivity and social change.

While it's important to historically situate a politics of location within the socio-material context in which it emerged in the 80s and 90s in order to understand its impact as
set of intervening practices, I believe it can continue to be a significant rhetorical and political strategy. First, texts that invoke a politics of location can potentially continue to impact readers in productive ways that lead to a third-space understanding of subjectivity, agency, and accountability. Second, reclaiming a politics of location as one of the skills of the oppressed for coping in a postmodern world is significant given the tendency to collapse (and hence dismiss) a politics of location with identity politics. Third, documenting the rhetorical strategies of radical, lesbian feminists is an important move in avoiding what Emma Pérez calls "cultural and political suicide" that homogenizes and censors the voices of marginalized others ("Irigaray's" 88). Representing and theorizing the tactics of resistance and creativity by lesbians and making those theories available to others can counteract the sense of invisibility and loneliness that too many lesbians continue to face.

There are also more specific implications for the field of feminist rhetorics in reclaiming a politics of location as a discursive political strategy. First, and perhaps most obvious, is the importance of reclaiming the rhetorical strategies of a group of radical feminists that enabled the interruption of normative subject of hegemonic feminism. Also important in the context of contemporary rhetoric studies is reclaiming a set of discursive practices that displaces the normative (disembodied, rationalist, unified) subject of rhetoric. These intervening practices of illegitimate subjects thus contributes to the growing body scholarship in feminist rhetorical theory. Second, I believe the non-innocent subjectivity and sense of accountability created through a politics of location in the context of a radical, lesbian feminist community contributes to our understanding of a feminist ethos. Nedra Reynolds makes a similar argument. In her article "Ethos as Location" she proposes that we expand our notion of ethos beyond individual characteristics and instead situate ethos within
social contexts: "ethos is not measurable traits displayed by an individual; rather, it is a complex set of characteristics constructed by a group, sanctioned by that group, and more readily recognizable to others who belong or who share similar values or experience" (327). This expansion can help us perceive that character is not an essential trait of certain rhetors, but a set of habits formed through a community. Reynolds suggests that "writers earn their rhetorical authority by being responsible—by stating explicitly their identities, positions or locations, and political goals" (330). While I agree with Reynolds that ethos can be created within specific social context through taking responsibility for our social positions and the ways in which these locations inform our perceptions of reality, I tend to disagree with her claim that stating identities establishes credibility and responsibility. To reiterate a point made in chapter one, I believe a politics of location has been dismissed because it is often misunderstood as that rhetorical move to self-disclose one's positionality at the beginning of a text in order to create an ethos through either a call to experience ("I've been there, grant me credibility) or self-reflexivity ("I am aware of my subject positions, so grant me credibility"). This move has been critiqued as an empty gesture because it leaves unquestioned how a rhetor's social locations inform and limit her or his claims to knowledge. However, as I have illustrated, a politics of location is more than a reflexive moment of self-disclosure in a text; that is, it is more than a horizontal listing of adjectives that indicate the identity positions of a rhetor, such as race, class, and sexuality. It is an unearthing of the subject positions into which writers have been interpellated and a critical interrogation of how those subject positions inform relationships with other subjects. The accountability and non-innocent subjectivity created through the specific socio-historical practices of radical, lesbian feminists mapping and excavating their identities, I believe, establishes a degree of
responsibility and credibility that can expand our notion of a feminist ethos by pointing to a third-space, a space between the individual and collective, between the particular and the general as a generative space for unearthing new forms of accountability and authority that are fluid and always in processes of be-coming.

Finally, I believe a politics of location continues to be a salient rhetorical and political strategy, albeit somewhat changed given a different socio-material context at the turn of the century. For example, in their introductions to This Bridge Called Home: Radical Visions for Transformation (an extension of This Bridge Called My Back) Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating both locate in space and time their claims to knowledge thus asserting non-innocent subjectivity, they center desire as central to social transformation, they insist that representation and coalition involve struggle, and they show how subjectivities remain in a continual processes of be-coming. However, Anzaldúa points out how the context and has changed since the publication of This Bridge Called My Back: "Twenty-one years ago we struggled with the recognition of difference within the context of commonality. Today we grapple with the recognition of commonality within the context of difference" (2). Anzaldúa suggests that we must move beyond easy identifications with racial and gender categories in order to create "bridge identities" because race and gender are understood as more permeable almost a quarter of a decade after the first publications of Bridge:

[This Bridge Called Home] questions the terms white and women of color by showing that whiteness may not be applied to all whites, as some possess women-of-color consciousness, just as some women of color bear white consciousness. This book intends to change notions of identity, viewing it as part of a more complex system covering a larger terrain, and demonstrating
that the politics of exclusion based on traditional categories diminishes our humanness. (2 emphasis in original)

Much like Allison's use of a politics of location to represent her complicated and contradictory positioning, Anzaldúa and Keating insist that we can no longer rely on easy identification with centered or marginal identities. Keating argues that while labels and traditional categories continue to be necessary in particular contexts, "holding tightly to labels, even when self-chosen, can be destructive—erecting walls that separate us from each other" (18-19). The contemporary context of feminist politics calls for a different kind of struggle with language and representation, which Keating names as a living in the contradiction between spiritual activism and identity politics. She defines spiritual activism as a vision of the radical interconnectedness "that recognizes the many differences among us yet insists on our commonalities and uses these commonalities as catalysts for transformation" (18). Despite the shift from a "context of commonality" to a "context of difference," it is the third-space, the spaces between, that Anzaldúa and Keating define as generative locations for radical social change.

In "Notes Toward a Politics of Location" Adrienne Rich writes, "a movement for change is a changing movement" (225). This Bridge Called Home exemplifies how a politics of location continues to be vital and how it has changed. Location cannot be defined through easy identity categories that reproduce binaries of margin and center in this new anthology; instead, location is marked by nepantla, which Keating defines as "a point where we're exiting from the old worldview but have not yet entered or created a new one to replace it…nepantla represents a threshold, a place of potential transformation: Do we choose to enter into and cross over this threshold, or do we continue clinging desperately to the place
we're now at?" (19). A politics of location as invoked during the 80s and 90s allowed for rupturing of hegemonic feminism through the mapping, naming, and excavating of women's identities and the creation of fluid and multiple intersubjectivity. In the new millennium, although changed in texture and form, I believe a politics of location remains vital to feminism as we continue to create bridges that fuel a hopeful vision of political practices committed to existing in the tensions between our differences and commonalities.
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