

ETHNICITY AND SEXUALITY

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■ **Abstract** This paper explores the connections between ethnicity and sexuality. Racial, ethnic, and national boundaries are also sexual boundaries. The borderlands dividing racial, ethnic, and national identities and communities constitute ethnosexual frontiers, erotic intersections that are heavily patrolled, policed, and protected, yet regularly are penetrated by individuals forging sexual links with ethnic “others.” Normative heterosexuality is a central component of racial, ethnic, and nationalist ideologies; both adherence to and deviation from approved sexual identities and behaviors define and reinforce racial, ethnic, and nationalist regimes. To illustrate the ethnicity/sexuality nexus and to show the utility of revealing this intimate bond for understanding ethnic relations, I review constructionist models of ethnicity and sexuality in the social sciences and humanities, and I discuss ethnosexual boundary processes in several historical and contemporary settings: the sexual policing of nationalism, sexual aspects of US–American Indian relations, and the sexualization of the black-white color line.

INTRODUCTION

US Army photographers documented the liberation of France from German Nazi occupation by Allied forces in August 1944. The image captured in Figure 1 is a now-famous picture of two women who were accused of sexually collaborating with the Nazis in occupied France during the Second World War. In the photograph are visible the women’s shaved heads, shoeless feet, stripped clothing, and swastikas tattooed on the women’s foreheads. A young Frenchwoman, whose father was in the French resistance, described the fate of French women who were similarly identified as Nazi collaborators.

The war was not finished, but in Paris it assumed another form—more perverse, more degrading . . . The “shorn woman” of rue Petit-Musc . . . walked along with her wedge-soled shoes tied around her neck, stiff like those undergoing a major initiation. Her face was frozen like a Buddha, her carriage tense and superb in the midst of a shouting, screeching mob of faces contorted by hatred, groping and opportunistic hands, eyes congested by excitement, festivity, sexuality, sadism (Weitz 1995:277).



Figure 1

This picture was published in a pictorial history of World War Two (Ambrose 1997:492). On the adjacent page of that volume is another photograph. It shows a man on his knees with a blindfold over his eyes; he is just about to be executed with a shot to the head. He is also a French collaborator, but the difference in the images and the treatment of the women and the man speak volumes about the sexualized and gendered nature of patriotism, treason, betrayal, and the relation and relative importance of men and women to the nation.

First, we can see that national and sexual boundaries are mutually reinforcing, since implicit in the meaning of national boundaries (“who are we?”) are certain prescriptions and proscriptions for sexual crossings. In this case, “our” women

should not be having sex with “their” (particularly “enemy”) men. Second, is the ubiquitous double standard that applies to many sexual boundaries: “our” men can have consensual sex, rape, or even sexually enslave “their” women and not have their heads shaved, nor will they be tattooed and paraded around the town.¹

Indeed, in times of war, “our” women might even want to do their patriotic duty by making themselves sexually available to “our” men while the sexual police look the other way—as long as internal racial or ethnic boundaries are not violated (see Enloe 1990, Saunders 1995, Smith 1988). Another lesson to be learned from this tale of punishing women sexual collaborators is that their rule breaking was seized as an opportunity to reinforce and reestablish sexual, gender, and nationalist hegemony. By disciplining women collaborators, proper sexual demeanor and approved ethnosexual partners were publicly proclaimed. The national sexual order was reinstated—a place for every man and woman and everyone in their place.

In this paper, I review the growing literature in the social sciences and the humanities that documents not only the sexual substructure of nationalist identities, boundaries, and processes, but also the sexualized nature of race and ethnicity—two common building blocks of nationalism. I discuss the interrelatedness of race, ethnicity, nationalism, and sexuality, outline contemporary constructionist models of ethnicity and sexuality, and review some of the more recent literature linking race, ethnicity, and nationalism with sexuality.

CONSTRUCTING ETHNICITY AND SEXUALITY

My analyses in the pages that follow rest upon social constructionist models of ethnicity and sexuality that stand in contrast to primordialist views of ethnicity and essentialist views of sexuality (Masters & Johnson 1966, Shaw & Wong 1989, van den Berghe 1978). This difference in language—“primordialist” versus “essentialist”—reflects, in part, the different intellectual sites where the theorizing has occurred. Social constructionist models of ethnicity emerged in the social sciences, primarily in the 1970s (Barth 1969, Horowitz 1975, Yancey et al 1976). Although the early work of Foucault (1978) shaped subsequent constructionist thinking about sexuality, currently influential models emerged mainly in the humanities—cultural studies, gender studies, queer theory—primarily in the 1980s and 1990s (Butler 1990, de Lauretis 1987, Grosz 1994, Haraway 1991, Sedgwick 1990; for an earlier sociological constructionist model of sexuality, see Gagnon & Simon 1973).

I have found more similarities than differences in constructionist thinking about ethnicity and sexuality in the social sciences and humanities, but there is little

¹At least I have found no reports of this practice as retribution for male sexual misbehavior, and in fact, Japan has yet to make satisfactory restitution to Korean and Filipina “comfort women” who were sexually enslaved during the Second World War (see Hicks 1995, Howard 1995, Mydans 1996).

cross-referencing in the literatures. Disciplinary boundaries sometimes seem more impenetrable than the ethnic and sexual boundaries they describe. For instance, much queer theory fails to cite relevant sociological literature, and much sociological research on sexuality is uninformed by queer theory (for an exception, see Seidman 1996). Similarly, social science and humanities scholarship on racial, ethnic, and nationalist constructions seldom contains common bibliographies. Further hindering communication and shared discourse on ethnicity and sexuality between the social sciences and humanities are the significant differences in the vocabularies used by each, differences substantial enough to make interdisciplinary work a challenge. One goal of this essay is make humanities scholarship on both ethnic and sexual constructions more accessible to social scientists.

Constructing Ethnicity

Much current research on race, ethnicity, and nationalism in both the social sciences and humanities rests upon a model of ethnicity as a set of socially constructed boundaries in political, economic, cultural, social, and moral time and space (Cornell 1996, Leonard 1992, Nagel 1994, 1996, Waters 1990, 1994).²

While many studies focus only on race, ethnicity, or nationalism, the three concepts can be seen as intimately related—different facets of the same phenomenon—and are sometimes given a single name, such as cultural pluralism (Young 1976, 1993), multiculturalism or diversity (Modood & Werbner 1997), identity politics (Hasan 1994, 1998), or minorities (Yetman 1999). Some researchers privilege race as a core concept (Omi & Winant 1994), while others speak primarily in the language of ethnicity (Banks 1996). Which term is chosen often can be traced to the particular case or cases being studied. Research focusing on the United States, South and North Africa, or Great Britain often speak of race, while research on Canada, Europe, West and Central Africa, or the Indian subcontinent more often use the term ethnicity or variations on nationalism (ethnonationalism, subnationalism, ethnic nationalism).

I view ethnicity as the broader concept subsuming race—which generally refers to visible (often skin color) distinctions among populations (see Horowitz 1985). Ethnicity can be a signifier not only of somatic or physical (racial) differences, but also of differences in language, religion, region, or culture. Nationalism is commonly viewed as a particular kind of ethnically based social identity or mobilization generally involving claims to statehood or political autonomy, and most often rooted in assertions of cultural distinctiveness, a unique history, and ethnic or racial purity (Connor 1990, Hobsbawm 1990, Smith 1989, Weber 1978). Cornell & Hartmann (1998) acknowledge the interrelatedness of race and ethnicity, but distinguish them in terms of power and choice: Race is more likely to be an assigned attribute, and ethnicity is more likely to be volitional. Power differentials

²See Berger & Luckmann (1967) and Spector & Kitsuse (1977) for classical discussions of the social constructionist model; see Holstein & Miller (1993) for an assessment of the more current state of social constructionism.

are not restricted to racial boundaries, however, since much ethnic differentiation and conflict involve uneven power relations and often occur in the *absence* of racial (color) difference—e.g., recent conflicts in Rwanda, Northern Ireland, and the former Yugoslavia (see Denitch 1996, McGarry 1995, Smith 1998).³

Ethnicity is both *performed*—where individuals and groups engage in ethnic “presentations of self,” and *performative*—where ethnic boundaries are constituted by day-to-day affirmations, reinforcements, and enactments of ethnic differences.⁴

Ethnicity is thus dramaturgical, situational, changeable, and emergent. An individual’s ethnicity is presented and affirmed or not in various social settings; it is a transaction in which the individual and others exchange views about the true nature and meaning of an individual’s ethnicity, where negotiations are often necessary to resolve disagreements, where adjustments in ethnic self-presentation and audience reaction may occur over time, and where ethnicity is a dialectical process that arises out of interactions between individuals and audiences.

Power is important in creating and regulating both racial and ethnic boundaries. The relative power of various actors in ethnic transactions can determine an individual’s ethnic classification as well as the content and worth of the individual’s ethnicity. This power to name ethnically can be formal, where, for instance, the state designates particular criteria for ethnic or racial classification, or informal, where audiences in social settings attribute ethnic meanings to an individual’s social characteristics. Thus, my whiteness is an official fact in the US as reflected in documents like my birth certificate, driver’s license, and eventually on my death certificate. Unofficially, while I might take my English native language for granted as an uncontroversial, nonethnic fact, a trip to Quebec or a meeting with Latino community organizers can quickly transform my assumed-to-be-neutral linguistic background into an assigned ethnic identity imbued with meanings over which I have no control and limited knowledge: Anglophone or Anglo.

In any society, we can identify boundaries dividing the population along ethnic lines. We can observe differences in language, religion, skin color or appearance, cultural practices or beliefs, or national origin. Sometimes these differences are benign and unimportant; at other times they can become the basis for segregation, conflict, and genocide. Thus, color, language, religion, or culture become *potential* bases for ethnic identity, community, or conflict, not inevitable or automatic bases

³It is important to acknowledge the prominence, some would say preeminence, of race in historical and contemporary US ethnic relations, in particular the volatility and controversy associated with the black/white ethnic boundary. But race should not be considered as the *most* or *only* volatile or violent basis of ethnic division. A quick review of the sites of ethnic conflict catalogued above—Northern Ireland, the Indian subcontinent, many African states, or the republics of the former Yugoslavia—reveals great conflict and bloodshed along nonracial ethnic divisions, although many of these differences get articulated and vilified in ways that have a familiar “racial” ring (see Eisenstein 1996).

⁴See my discussion of Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) below for further elaboration of the concept of performativity; see Jagose (1996:83–93) and Clough (1994:142–59) for translations of Butler.

for ethnic differentiation. As Duara (1996:168) notes, "Every cultural practice . . . is a potential boundary marking a community. These boundaries may be either soft or hard . . . Groups with soft boundaries between each other are sometimes so unself-conscious about their differences that they do not view mutual boundary breach as a threat." As international and historical examples easily demonstrate, people are not always mobilizing or conflicting along ethnic lines, only sometimes . . . when boundaries harden. This leads to questions of when ethnic boundaries will become sites of conflict, movements, or revitalization.⁵

If we see ethnicity as a series of crisscrossing boundaries dividing populations into multiple groups differentiated by religion, color, language, culture, and if we note that these boundaries are changeable and permeable (with some boundaries weakening and other boundaries strengthening and with people crossing over from one group into another), then we can begin to move away from primordialist, essentialist understandings of ethnicity and race as biological or genetically inherited or as historically or culturally determined (Anderson 1983, Bhabha 1994, Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). For instance, recent scholarship on the construction of whiteness as a basis for identity and group formation in the US and in a number of other national settings reminds us that white and black are not natural categories but are historically based and culturally constructed (see Allen 1994, Ignatiev 1995, Lipsitz 1998, Roediger 1991, Saxton 1990).

In the humanities the language of ethnic construction is often phrased in terms of borders, borderlands, and border studies (Anzaldúa 1990, Darder & Torres 1998, Gutierrez-Jones 1995, Saldivar 1997). This scholarship is more likely to draw on literary sources to illustrate border processes and identities and to emphasize cultural aspects of and differences among ethnic individuals and communities. Scholars working in literary studies, cultural studies, gender studies, queer studies, ethnic studies, and area studies raise questions about the validity of "natural" essentialist racial and ethnic divisions (black/white, Anglophone/Francophone, American/non-American). They point out discontinuities, disputes, and disruptions within these bounded groups, and they explore such issues as challenges to individual or subgroup ethnic authenticity, historical changes in boundaries or meanings, diversity among ethnic group members, or disagreements over core notions of membership, group history, or cultural practices (Amit-Talai & Knowles 1996, Ginsberg 1996, Kawash 1997).

⁵Researchers suggest several conditions under which ethnic conflict or mobilization erupts on ethnic boundaries: during times of ethnic competition for land, resources, jobs, or access to political decisionmaking, during periods of international tension when diaspora populations become scapegoats or targets of hate crimes, during periods of high migration when large numbers of visibly or culturally distinct ethnic migrant populations appear to host residents as "invading" or "overrunning" host societies and changing the character of neighborhoods or communities, or during periods of political upheaval when opportunistic politicians "play the ethnic card" by targeting ethnic communities as a threat in order to consolidate and expand their constituencies (see Horowitz 1985, Young 1976, Banton 1983, Human Rights Watch 1995, Olzak 1996, 1998).

There are several sources of ethnic boundary stability and instability; arguably the greatest among them are gender, class, and sexuality. While ethnic boundaries and identities are built by self and others from such social materials as color, language, religion, and culture, they can be seen to rest on gendered and sexualized foundations, and they often are associated with differences in social class. The race/gender/class nexus has been the focus of a great deal of scholarly interest in recent years (see Anderson & Collins 1992, Chow et al 1996, Dines & Humez 1995, Horowitz 1991, Rothenberg 1992), and now sexuality has become the subject of conceptual and empirical attention as well, but mainly in the humanities (Arguelles 1998, Hodes 1999, Hurtado 1999, Parker et al 1991, Stavans 1998). The remainder of this paper reports on efforts to sexualize the sociological analysis of ethnicity by pointing out the intersections between ethnicity and sexuality, by outlining current constructionist models of sexuality and their relevance to theorizing and understanding ethnicity, and by reporting findings from some recent scholarship on ethnicity and sexuality.

Ethnosexual Frontiers

Ethnicity and sexuality are strained, but not strange, bedfellows. Ethnic boundaries are also sexual boundaries—erotic intersections where people make intimate connections across ethnic, racial, or national borders. The borderlands that lie at the intersections of ethnic boundaries are “ethnosexual frontiers” that are surveilled and supervised, patrolled and policed, regulated and restricted, but that are constantly penetrated by individuals forging sexual links with ethnic “others.”

Of course, more than one kind of sexual boundary exists inside ethnic, racial, and national communities. It is the issue of multiple sexualities in ethnosexual contact that I think brings most clearly to light contradictory tensions in the relationship between ethnicity and sexuality. Across a wide variety of ethnic groups appropriate enactments of heterosexuality are perhaps the most regulated and enforced norms. In particular, correct heterosexual masculine and feminine behavior constitutes gender regimes that often lie at the core of ethnic cultures. Our women (often depicted as virgins, mothers, pure) v. their women (sluts, whores, soiled). Our men (virile, strong, brave) v. their men (degenerate, weak, cowardly). These heteronormative ethnosexual stereotypes are nearly universal depictions of self and other as one gazes inside and across virtually any ethnic boundary. Because of the common importance of proper gender role and sexual behavior to ethnic community honor and respectability, a great deal of attention is paid to the sexual demeanor of group members (by outsiders and insiders) in inspection and enforcement of both formal and informal rules of sexual conduct.

For instance, Rudrappa (1999) reports tensions experienced by young Indian-American women as they try to reconcile the two gender-sexual worlds in which they live: the more traditional expectations of their often-immigrant families against those of the larger US culture. White women who are depicted as weak or promiscuous are often foils against which ethnic group members in the United

States and abroad construct moral superiority (see Espiritu 1997, Harden 1997, Ortner 1996, Schein 1995). Even nonheterosexual or non-sexually-conservative groups and settings (e.g., lesbian, gay, transgendered, or desire communities) are marked by ethnosexual expectations for behavior, and insider critics point out the prevalence of ethnosexual stereotypes (e.g., the hypersexualization of black masculinity by white gay men; see Hemphill 1991) and the invisibility of non-heterosexuals in ethnic communities (e.g., the feelings of enforced silence by lesbian women of color; see Moraga 1983). Even in the face of great international diversity of sexual practice, where sexual expression does not follow Western models of heteronormativity, rules for sexual behavior often are found to be rigidly defined, strictly enforced, and ultimately used to uphold heteronormative family relations (e.g., Herdt's (1981, 1982) research on Papua New Guinean "Sambian" male homoeroticism, which underpins a misogynistic, patriarchal system of gender relations).

Researchers have also uncovered ethnosexuality underlying what would appear on the surface to be non-ethnic and/or non-sexual institutions and processes. For instance, recent scholarship on colonialism and postcolonialism is filled with discussions of the sexualization of exotic others by colonial authorities (Bulbeck 1998, McClintock 1995, Manderson & Jolly 1997, Ogden 1996, Stoler 1990, 1995, 1997), and researchers have documented sexualized aspects of citizenship (Bredbenner 1998, Evans 1993, Stychin 1998, Ward et al 1992), organizations (Hearn et al 1989), education (Barreca & Morse 1997), the US civil rights movement (Evans 1979, McAdam 1988, Rothschild 1982), the US white supremacist movement (Daniels 1997, Ferber 1998), US foreign policy (Weber 1999), tourism (Ware 1997), photojournalism (Lutz & Collins 1997), the Peace Corps (Zimmerman 1999), and livestock (Nelson 1999).

Constructing Sexuality/Sexualities

Skin color, language, religion, or ancestry do not "automatically" serve as the basis for ethnic identities or groups, result in variations in cultural content, or generate interethnic conflict. The production of ethnic differences requires social and often political recognition, definition, and reinforcement as well as individual and collective assertion and acceptance to become socially real. Similarly, male and female bodies do not automatically result in socially meaningful "men" or "women." Rather the gender identities, meanings, cultures, and social divisions between men and women are social constructions, arising out of historical conditions, power relations, and ongoing social processes (Hartsock 1983, Ortner 1972, 1996, MacKinnon 1989, Scott 1988).

These same insights about the social construction of ethnicity and gender apply to sexuality. Male and female genitalia do not automatically result in predictable types of sexual men and women, in particular forms of sexual behavior or practices, or in specific kinds of sexual desire. The early work of anthropologists, with all of

its admitted flaws, unveiled as many different sexual practices and sexualities as there were cultures to inspect.⁶

Despite Gagnon and Simon's (1973) pioneering work on sexual "scripting," sexual social constructionism did not become a dominant paradigm in sociology in subsequent decades, as did social constructionist conceptions of ethnicity. Much sociological work on sexuality has remained in the tradition of sexology (frequencies and types of sexual activity, see Kinsey et al 1948, 1953, Masters & Johnson 1966, 1970, Michael et al 1994, Laumann et al 1994).

Some of the most interesting contemporary work deconstructing and challenging assumptions about the nature and content of sexuality is by feminist and queer theorists (for a sampling of this literature, see edited works by Fuss 1991, Lancaster & di Leonardo 1997, Seidman 1996, Warner 1993). Perhaps most intriguing of all is queer theory's challenge to the essentialist sexual binary of male/female and its imbedded assumption of heteronormativity or "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich 1980). In a section of her book, *Gender Trouble*, entitled, "'Women' as the Subject of Feminism," Butler (1990:1) wonders whether or not there really are "women," i.e., a gender category with a common meaning, position, interests:

For the most part, feminist theory has assumed that there is some existing identity, understood through the category of women, who not only initiates feminist interests and goals within discourse, but constitutes the subject for whom political representation is pursued.

Butler and others ask what dangers might lie in assuming women's existence? They conclude that women bring men into being by their "otherness," and that women's abject (marginal, invisible) status affirms men's dominance and normalcy. The view of women as "not men" leads to a focus on women's lack of rights, women's troubles, women's marginality, and thus can be seen to be an affirmation, a reinforcement, and even a constitution of hegemonic manhood—men's dominance, men's privilege, men's centrality (Grosz 1994, Irigaray 1985; see also Hale 1996, Sedgwick 1990, 1993, Wittig 1992).

It is not only the existence of women that queer theorists question. What is so normal, they ask, about heterosexuality? What is so natural, predictable, assumable about women sexually desiring men or the reverse? In fact, what is so normal about women and men serving as the two basic building blocks of sexuality, sexual identity, or sexual desire? Ingraham (1996:169) refers to these assumptions about normal sex and sexuality as the "heterosexual imaginary"—and criticizes feminist theory for not questioning its own premises about the naturalness of the

⁶For the classical sexual inspection reports, see Malinowski (1927, 1929), Mead (1923, 1935), Evans-Pritchard (1940); for critical discussions of these and other anthropological "texts," see Crapanzano (1986), Fischer (1986), Clifford (1988); for a neoclassical approach that demonstrates both the strengths and weaknesses of anthropology's approach to sexualities, see the work of anthropologist Gilbert Herdt and his associate, psychoanalyst Robert J. Stoller (Herdt, 1981, 1982, 1994, 1997; Stoller & Herdt 1985; Herdt & Stoller, 1990).

categories “men” and “women” because such a dichotomy tends to affirm “institutionalized heterosexuality . . . [as] the standard for legitimate and prescriptive sociosexual arrangements.” Feminist critiques of patriarchy, since they arise out of this false essentialist assumption, Ingraham argues, inadvertently reinforce one important invisible structure of domination— phallogentric sexuality or heteronormativity (see also Jackson 1996).

Feminism is not the only target for criticism by queer theorists. Ironically and interestingly, so is the gay and lesbian rights movement and the sexual “identity” politics it has engendered. Critics argue that imbedded in a conception of gay rights as minority rights is a set of assumptions about another binary. Just as feminism’s focus on women reifies the male/female binary, gay and lesbian identity and rights claims reify the heterosexual/homosexual binary. The fight for gay rights, like the fight for women’s rights, has the unintended consequence of acknowledging and “naturalizing” a system of heteronormativity (see Seidman 1997). The gender/sexual landscape painted by queer theory is a scenario of sexualities in social flux. Even queerness is in question. On the back cover of *PoMoSexuals: Challenging Assumptions about Gender and Sexuality* (Queen & Schimmel 1997), transsexual Kate Bornstein writes:

Ever wonder if you’re the only one who doesn’t quite fit into one of the sanctioned queer worlds? Like, are you really a lesbian? Are you really a gay man? Maybe you fall outside the “permitted” labels, and maybe you’re the only one who knows you do, and so you feel a bit guilty? Well, I’ve got news for you. You’re not guilty, you’re simply postmodern.

In addition to framing and spreading the good news about decentered individual and collective notions of sexuality, queer theorists have shown themselves to be quite adept at deconstructing gender binaries, heterosexuality, and opposite-sex desire. They are less successful when it comes to providing systematic accountings of the ways these core social categories and regimes emerge as stable structures. Butler’s (1990, 1993) notion of “performativity” is a step toward a general model of how hegemony (sexual and nonsexual) comes into being—through a series of iterations or repetitive acts that are largely unconscious, affirming, and constitutive. Butler’s description of the performative construction of reality rests heavily on discursive acts, i.e., on the power of naming and speech to define reality:

the policeman hails the passerby with “hey you there” and the one who recognizes himself and turns around (nearly everyone) to answer the call does not, strictly speaking, preexist the call . . . The passerby turns precisely to acquire a certain identity, one purchased, as it were, with the price of guilt. The act of recognition becomes an act of constitution: the address animates the subject into existence (Butler 1997:25).

A parallel example, more germane to the constitution of gender and sexuality, is Butler’s birthing scenario where the doctor slaps the baby on the back and

performatively proclaims, "It's a girl!" Extending this image to the arena of race, ethnicity, or nationalism, it is easy to envision such parallel performative constructions as "white," "black," "Cherokee," "Jewish," or "American"—similarly constituted through official and unofficial acts of discourse, classification, and registration, and to see these ethnic categories as equally unstable and volatile creations, subject to challenge, change, and controversy—Is he really an Indian, is she really black, are they really Jews (Pewewardy 1998, Williams 1998, Boyd 1997)?

The power of performative acts, verbal and otherwise, to constitute the social order lies not only the discursive pronouncements of authorities, but also in actions—theirs and others, insiders and outsiders, hegemonic and counterhegemonic. In these claims and counterclaims we can see revealed the power of boundaries, edges, and borders to define and expose the center. Butler (1990:31) points out the "presence" of so-called heterosexual conventions within homosexual contexts," such as sociosexual roles of butch and femme and cross-dressing or drag. She argues that these replications of heterosexual conventions by nonheterosexuals reveal "the utterly constructed status of the so-called heterosexual original. Thus, gay is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy." But do these homosexual enactments, even parodies of heterosexuality, really subvert the heteronormative order, or do these simulations simply reinforce it? A few years later, Butler (1993:125) expressed some doubts, suggesting that drag may both "denaturalize" as well as "reidealize" (reinforce) heterosexual gender norms.

We can see in the notion of the reidealization of heteronormativity an important clue about the utility of queer theory to instruct us about the construction of sexuality and sexual desire in general, not just in the queer case(s). Although queer theory's central project is devoted to challenging the naturalness of heterosexuality and to positing an equally genuine (natural?), more flexible and variable model of sexualities, theorists note the entrenched power of phallic-centered heteronormativity to stay on top (so to speak) and reproduce itself: "heterosexual privilege operates in many ways, and two ways in which it operates include naturalizing itself and rendering itself as the original and the norm" (Butler 1993:125–26). Not only is heterosexuality deeply socially imbedded and institutionalized (in the law, military, family, religion, education, notions of beauty, in everyday life), but it is a resilient system capable of absorbing and appropriating challenges on its edges in order to strengthen itself. Thus, sexual "deviance" from the heterosexual norm can provoke gender and sexual policing and panics that, in the end, strengthen and further naturalize particular forms of heterosexuality (see Steinberg et al 1997).

Indeed conventional heterosexuality seems to be an extremely elastic social fact, capable of enormous staying power even in the face of constant, widespread noncompliance. Take the norm and prevailing expectation of monogamy in marriage. While there is much variation and unreliability in sex surveys (see Erickson 1999, Jones 1997), adultery appears to be a fairly common phenomenon in marriages and other monogamous relationships (e.g, 20% to 50% of respondents report extra-monogamous sexual activity; see Kinsey et al 1948, 1953, Michael et al 1994). In fact, high rates of marital dissolution and remarriage in the West

often involve sex outside of marriage, and this reality can be seen as leading to a kind of institutionalized adultery in the form of “serial monogamy.” Yet, despite widespread rulebreaking, monogamy persists as an almost sacred norm both in the law and in public opinion (if not actions; see Floris 1990:603). Although there is certainly historical change in sexual norms and actions (Rubin 1990), one can find similar discrepancies between ideology and behavior in other forms of contemporary US heteroconventionality, such as the appropriate age and general acceptability of premarital sex, number of acceptable serial or simultaneous sexual partners, types of sexual behavior, locations for sexual activity, nudity, and public attire (for provocative discussions of the norms governing sexual intimacy, see Berlant & Warner 1998, Kipnis 1998, Warner 1999, Weeks 1995). The race and ethnicity of sexual partners is another frequently transgressed, though often quite actively inspected, highly regulated, and potentially volatile sexual norm.

ETHNOSEXUAL INTERSECTIONS

Following the above analysis of heteronormativity, we can best expose the sexualized foundations of ethnicity by examining the ways in which the rule breaking, policing, and punishment of sexual deviants serves both to challenge and to reinforce racial, ethnic, and nationalist boundaries and hegemonies and to strengthen ethnosexual regimes. By returning to the discussion of the photograph at the beginning of this paper, we can see more clearly the usefulness of women sexual collaborators to French nationalists: by disciplining these sexual traitors, proper female sexual demeanor and approved ethnosexual partners were publicly proclaimed and local moral control over violated nationalist boundaries was reestablished. The US Army photographer who shot this photograph did *not* capture a rare image on film. The literatures on historical and contemporary sexualities are filled with examples of sexuality in the service of racial, ethnic, and nationalist agendas of various sorts: reproducing the nation or ethnic group, controlling women and men inside ethnic boundaries, reinforcing ethnic segregation, maintaining ethnic inequalities, intimidating and subjugating ethnic others under colonialism or imperialism and in times of war, extending and/or establishing sexual and ethnic regimes in post-colonial settings (see Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1992, Clark & Nagel 2000, Enloe 1990, Hansen 1996, Massad 1995, Nagel 1998, Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1992). This list points to links between ethnicity and sexuality in many times and places. The following examples further illuminate the ethnicity/sexuality connection and illustrate the utility of examining this intimate bond to understand racial, ethnic, and nationalist identities, boundaries, conflicts, and movements.

Sexualities and Nationalisms

At least as familiar a picture from World War II as women sexual collaborators with shaved heads, is the pink triangle homosexuals were forced to wear in Germany

and Nazi-occupied territories, and considerably more familiar than either image is the six-sided Star of David forced by the Nazis on Jews. Pink triangles and Stars of David served to distinguish publicly outcast non-Aryans from Aryans, and these symbols communicated potent and degenerate sexual stereotypes about their wearers. For instance, Mosse (1985:36) reminds us that early twentieth-century views of female sexuality (consistent with Freudian theory) depicted women's sexual passions as out of control (hysterical); thus sexual deviants were often feminized since their urges were seen as feminine failures of self-restraint. Mosse reports that while Jews were seldom accused of homosexuality in fascist and European racist discourse, they were considered "sexual 'degenerates'" and "inferior races." Sexualized racism, homophobia, and misogyny were all foils against which propagandists contrasted the superior morality and sexuality of fascist nationalists across Europe (Boyarin 1997, Spackman 1996). Depicting "others" as feminine is useful in other ways, to delegitimize or trivialize grievances or dissent (Brown 1996), to denigrate or dismiss opponents or colonized people (Ortner 1996, Petkov 1997, Sweet 1993), or as a critical discourse act against a dominant group (Mac An Ghaill 1994).

Nationalists' preoccupation with and fear of homosexuality were not confined to the Nazi targeting of homosexuals during the Second World War. The Cold War represented another period of homosexual panic (Sedgwick 1990:184–85) when many gay men working in Western governments, particularly in the British Foreign Office and US State Department, were fired or reassigned because they were considered to be security risks. In the United States, Senator Joseph McCarthy was not only interested in finding and flushing out communists in various arenas of American life, he was also interested in homosexuals, presumably because of their vulnerability to communist influence or blackmail (Epstein 1994, see also Corber 1997, Fried 1997, Patton 1997). The fact that one of his most vicious lieutenants, Roy Cohn, was a gay man, was the McCarthy era's best kept secret and most ironic breach of Republican security.

The issue of sexualities continues to complicate enactments and definitions of the nation—its boundaries and components. Davis (1995:297) recounts the queer saga of the struggle over the sexual meaning of Irish Americanness in Boston. In 1992 the Queer Nation/Boston formed the Irish-American Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Pride Community (Later GLIB) and sought the right to participate in the annual St. Patrick's/Evacuation Day parade organized by the South Boston Allied War Veterans Council. The Veterans Council objected and the case ended up in the court. Boston City Councillor James Kelly, who represented the district in South Boston where the march was organized, opposed GLIB's inclusion in the march:

GLIB, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual group of trouble makers who hate the Catholic Church and its teachings, are not welcome in South Boston's Evacuation Day Parade. If parading is so important to them, let them raise their own money, organize their own parade, and apply for a permit to march in downtown Boston to express their sexuality (Davis 1995:301).

Scholars studying the dispute argue that the resistance to the inclusion of GLIB in the march exposed an assumption about the heterosexuality of Irishness. Stychin (1998:41) characterized the subsequent court battle as a dispute that centered “directly on the *sexuality* of national identities and speaks to *both* the construction of the sexuality of an Irish American and to an American identity.”⁷

The punishment of women for sexual contact with an enemy and suspicions about the patriotism of homosexuals reflect a particularly sexualized, indeed, heterosexualized, envisioning of masculinity and femininity and of men’s and women’s proper places in the gender, sexual, and national order (see Enloe 1990, Guttman 1996, Mosse 1996, Savran 1998, Stychin 1998).

Indian-White Ethnosexual Frontiers

US history offers many examples of racial and sexual intersections, sometimes in unexpected terrain. The settling of the US west was not only a saga of competitive positioning by colonial powers, conflicts with indigenous peoples, and spreading settler populations across the continent. The “conquest” of the west involved a series of sexualized encounters resulting in a confrontation of sexualities and sexual systems along various ethnosexual frontiers. Among the writings of the first European explorers were reports of native cannibalism, warlike behavior, and sexual excesses. Gutierrez (1991) reports that early accounts of Spanish soldiers and Franciscans were filled with commentary about Pueblo peoples’ sexual practices. The Franciscans in particular were prolific in their documentation of what they saw as Pueblo “lewd” behavior and sexual promiscuity. The new printing press circulated these and other reports across Europe and, despite the offended tone of the text, the floodgates opened as mostly male Europeans eager to settle this sexually savage, brave new world swarmed across the Atlantic.⁸

Scholars question the biases and agendas of many of these and later reports because they served as justifications for colonial and later American policies of annihilation, pacification, and assimilation of native populations (see Berkhofer 1978, Brown 1996). For instance, the journals of Lewis and Clark, who set out on their westward explorations in 1804, are filled with references to encounters with native peoples along the way; many of these (both the encounters and the references) were of a sexual nature, and many emphasized trade:

⁷St. Patrick’s Day is also known as “Evacuation Day” in commemoration of the ouster of British and loyalist troops from the city in 1737. While the Massachusetts state courts permitted GLIB to march in the parade in 1992 and subsequent years because of some public funding of the parade, in 1995 the US Supreme Court decided against GLIB (*Hurley and South Boston Allied War Veterans Council v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Group of Boston*), ruling that the parade was a private function of the Veterans Council.

⁸For parallel discussions of European settlers’ preoccupations with Australian indigenous sexuality and sexual liaisons with aboriginal Australians, see Povinelli (1994) and Bell (1980).

Thursday, November 21 1805: An old woman & Wife to a Cheif of the *Chunnooks* came and made a Camp near ours. She brought with her 6 young Squars I believe for the purpose of Gratifying the passions of the men of our party and receiving for those indulgences Such Small [presents] as She (the old woman) thought proper to accept of. Those people appear to View Sensuality as a Necessary evel, and do not appear to abhor it as a Crime in the unmarried State (Bergon 1989:324).

Hurtado (1997, 1999) paints a less sanguine portrait of freely given Indian sexual favors. Acknowledging wide variation across indigenous communities, conditions, times, and places, Hurtado points out the relative powerlessness of many native women, and reports that sexual exchanges were often coerced, involving rape, forced prostitution, and slavery (see also Butler 1987:9ff, Godbeer 1999, Limerick 1987:50ff, Smith 1987, 1990).

Despite their frequent relative powerlessness, Indian women sometimes used whites' sexual desires against them. Brown (1996:67) recounts the story of George Cawson, a colonial man, who, in 1607, "met his death after [Powhatan] village women 'enticed [him] up from the barge into their howses' and delivered him to his executioners." She goes on to tell of the sexual trick of another Powhatan woman:

Opposunoquonuske, a clever werowansqua of another village, similarly led fourteen English men to their demise. Inviting the unwary men to come "up into her Towne, to feast and make merry," she persuaded them to "leave their Armes in their boat, because they said how their women would be afraid of their pieces" . . . Her genius lay in persuading them to rely on other masculine "pieces" . . . [and] the men were easily killed. (Brown 1996:67)

Many negative reports about native life and sexuality were popularized in the form of Indian captivity narratives in which whites were the targets of native sexual aggression (*Garland Library* 1977). While most white women captives did not, for fear of public humiliation, report being sexually attacked themselves, they widely reported the sexual assault of other captives by native men. For instance, Mary Smith and her husband were allegedly captured by Kickapoos and Chickasaws in 1814. In her memoir, *An Affecting Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, she reports that the Indians "ravished, rifled, murdered and mutilated the inhabitants without distinction of age or sex, without any other provocation or incitement than brutal lust and wantonness of barbarity!" (Derounian-Stodola & Levernier 1993:66). Not all captives escaped when they had the chance; in some cases they became members of tribes. So-called transculturated or white Indians married and chose to stay with their captors, some because of the shame of returning home as sexually damaged goods, others because of native generosity and sympathy for their plight (see Brooks 1997:107, Derounian-Stodola & Levernier 1993:73–85, Ebersole 1995, Kestler 1990). Namias (1993:109) describes an erotic ambivalency toward native men—an ethnosexual romantic longing that led captivity narratives to be popular reading among white women.

To what use were put these centuries of sexualized depictions of indigenous peoples? What were the social, political, economic, and policy consequences of these mainly uncomplimentary sexual descriptions of Indians—as wanton savages and brutal rapists? Certainly this portrayal of natives as sexually dangerous was a convenient justification for warfare against indigenous societies and for removing native communities from areas chosen by whites for settlement. Sexualized depictions of and beliefs about native peoples became part of the imagining of the US west, served as justifications for military, political, and economic policies, and ultimately, these images provided a rationale for seizing native resources to better manage and use them and to improve native individuals and cultures through programs of civilization and assimilation. Reports of Indian depredations and savagery also became a means of justifying white misbehavior and atrocities and provided opportunities for white self-aggrandizement. Smith (1990:68, 148) reports that massacres of indigenous women and children were defended by demonizing native women, and that frontier soldiers often described native men as skilled warriors, in part to explain a defeat or because “a successful campaign against a formidable foe rather than a weak one could enhance a soldier’s reputation back home” as well as guarantee continued support for a frontier military presence. Such sexualized depictions were part of the ideological basis of US Indian policy, and their contribution to justifying and implementing policies that destroyed native cultures and expropriated indigenous land and resources cannot be underestimated, given the loaded, inflammatory power of sexual threats and discourses.

Black-White Ethnosexual Boundaries

No ethnic boundary is more sexualized, surveilled, and scrutinized in US society than the color line dividing blacks and whites. Looking back to the very earliest days of European settlement in North America, from the early sixteenth century when the first Africans arrived on the continent as indentured servants and later into the seventeenth century when these involuntary immigrants were formally enslaved, we can find frequent sexualized descriptions of Africans. Detailed early accounts of African sexuality echo those untamed, hypersexualized characteristics assigned to Native Americans, and such accounts were equally convenient justifications of enslavement and exploitation of Africans by Europeans and later Americans (Hartman 1997, Jordan 1968). What is particularly interesting about the African American case are the historical changes in the sexual depictions of Africans and scholars’ tracing of the demonization of black male sexuality to the reconstruction period following the Civil War. Prior to the Civil War, during slavery, both black men and women were described as sexually promiscuous, but it was not until after the war, when freed blacks began to enter into commerce and politics, that black men were reconstructed as a sexual predators, as threats to white southern womanhood (Carby 1986, Fredrickson 1988, Gunning 1996:19–47, Williamson 1984). An 1872 US Senate inquiry into the conditions in the post–Civil War South

and the activities of the Ku Klux Klan suggested that the bugaboo of white female vulnerability to black male sexual aggression served as a cover for white efforts to stop political competition between whites and blacks, and as an excuse for white men to reassert their control over black men (Ferber 1998, Hodes 1993, 1997).

In the twentieth century black sexuality remained a preoccupation of white America with lynchings and castrations of black men and the arrests of both black men and women for sexual misdeeds (e.g., for rape, “white slavery,” prostitution), social controversies over entertainers and public figures who crossed the color line (e.g., boxer Jack Johnson—who defeated the “great white hope,” Jim Jeffries—in the early 1900s, NAACP executive director Walter White in the 1950s, singer Sammy Davis, Jr. in the 1960s), and gendered and sexualized racial subtexts (“playing the race card”) in electoral politics and policy discussions (e.g., the Republic focus on black felon, Willie Horton, during the 1988 US presidential campaign, the racialized image of welfare queens and teenage mothers during welfare reform policy debates in the 1990s) (see Bederman 1995, Cohen 1997, Davis et al 1989, Gabriel 1997, Giddings 1984:253, Gunning 1996:17–47, Hunt 1997, Luker 1996, Mumford 1997, Wiegman 1993). Although the black/white ethnosexual frontier is a somewhat less deadly zone today than it was a century ago, and despite increasing rates of black/white intermarriage, the color line is still a dangerous and controversial intersection, with vocal critics of miscegenation speaking out from both sides of the US racial divide (see di Leonardo 1997, Hodes 1999, Wallace 1990: 9–10) and where black male sexuality is still defined as dangerous (see Hutchinson 1997).

A final point about black-white ethnosexual boundaries in the US can be made by “queering” the heteronormative assumptions and focus of the preceding discussion. The above examples all involve heterosexual racial crossings and controversies, and these examples reinforce what many lesbians and gay men of color have noted with much irony and bitterness—that they are erased at best, stereotyped and demonized at worst, both inside and outside their ethnic communities. For instance, lesbian and gay African Americans report that a variation on the admonition not to mix race and sex often greets them in their home communities: don’t mix race and sexualities (Beam 1986, Collins 1990, Hemphill 1991, Riggs 1991). One important feature of ethnic boundaries involves questions of membership—who *is* and who *is not* a bonifide member of the group; in the case of African Americans, who *is* and who *is not* black (see Davis 1991). In *Soul on Ice*, Eldridge Cleaver, articulated the meaning of black macho as exclusively heterosexual when he attacked James Baldwin’s homosexuality as “somehow un-black” (Page 1996:101) and equated both heterosexual and homosexual black/white sexual crossings as reflecting a “racial death wish” (Cleaver 1968:102).

Nero (1991) finds support in the work of black scholars for Cleaver’s assertions about the incompatibility of blackness and homosexuality, including Frantz Fanon’s psychoanalytically based conclusion in *White Skin, Black Masks* that homosexuality was “an attribute of the white race” and did not exist in the Caribbean because blacks there don’t experience the oedipal tensions that putatively give rise

to same-sex desire (Fanon 1963:84; see also Asante 1980, Hare & Hare 1984, Poussaint 1978). Similarly, Beam (1986:231) laments the exclusion of black homosexuals in their own communities in the United States:

When I speak of home, I mean not only the familial constellation from which I grew, but the entire Black community; the Black press, the Black church, Black academicians, the Black literati, and the Black left. Where is my reflection? I am most often rendered invisible, perceived as a threat to the family, or I am tolerated if I am silent and inconspicuous.

Homophobia in the black community combines with the racism of gay whites to further isolate black homosexuals. Hemphill (1991:xviii) comments that “the contradictions of ‘home’ are amplified and become more complex when black gay men’s relationships with the white gay community are also examined.” Hemphill describes as a “colonial fantasy,” white photographer, Robert Mapplethorpe’s “Man in a Polyester Suit,” which features a black male torso in a business suit, unzipped with his uncircumcised penis exposed. Hemphill wonders *who* is the man in the photo and *why* is his head missing? (see also Julien & Mercer 1986:6, Mercer 1991). The writings of black, Native Americans, Asian American, and Latino gay men resonate with those of African Americans reporting feelings of exclusion from home communities and from the white gay world. Lesbians of color have similar analyses of isolation and criticisms of white lesbians and feminists for insensitivity to the differing needs of lesbian and straight women of color:

I think about all the white women I knew in San Francisco. Women with Master’s degrees from Stanford University & cars that daddy bought, women with straight white teeth & clear skins from thousands of years of proper nutrition. They chose to be poor . . . I no longer believe that feminism is a tool which can eliminate racism—or even promote better understanding between different races & kinds of women . . . Perhaps white women are so rarely loyal because they do not have to be. There are thousands of them to pick up & discard (Chrystos 1981:68–70; see also Anzaldua 1990, Jacobs et al 1997, Leong 1996, Moraga & Anzaldua 1981, Ratti 1993, Plummer 1995).

CONCLUSION

The sexualization and sexual denigration of racial and ethnic others in the service of policy formulation and justification and racial ideological legitimation are not unique to the cases of western nationalism or US race relations. The sexualization of ethnicity is a ubiquitous, I would argue, universal feature of ethnic relations. And for good reason. It is the sexualized nature of things ethnic, racial, and national that heats up discourse on the values, attributes, and moral worth of “us” and “them,” that arouses passions when there are violations of sexual contact rules, that raises doubts about loyalty and respectability when breaches of sexual demeanor occur,

that stirs emotions when questions of sexual purity and propriety arise, and that sparks retaliations when threats to sexual boundaries are perceived or detected. I can think of no more potent an image to justify violence and subjugation than the “rape” of one’s homeland or women, and no more convincing an argument for intervention to civilize or pacify than “other” sexual excesses or violence. Extending Foucault’s (1977, 1985, 1986) observations about the sexual substructure of social life in general to the study of race, ethnicity, and nationalism holds the same promise to reveal ethnosexual regimes of discipline and punishment, of hegemony and domination, but also of revelation and reinvention.

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