

* Radicals play magic tricks with gender, race and biology

The comrades of the Angry Workers of the World collective wrote an article ("The limits of intersectionality, a book review of *Striking Women. Struggles and strategies of South Asian Women From Grunwick to Gate Gourmet*, by Sundari Antitha, and Ruth Pearson"¹) which I translated into French, and this translation inspired the following remarks. Their review is quite interesting and useful as it has been written by activists who are engaged in the class struggle, who work in factories and do not spend most of their time chatting in pubs or, worse, on the internet. But their analysis suffers also from some limitations because it uses a language which is fashionable among academics, including words like "race" (or "social race" !) and also the term "gender" which is not very useful to understand current society and even past societies.

* No to races ! No to social races !

Why should Europeans be called "whites", and Asians, Africans or West Indians "non-whites", "people of color"² or "blacks" (or even "browns"!) if we want to get rid of the racial and racist vocabulary that has brainwashed us for centuries ?

Constantly talking about race, even surrounding it with quotation marks, reinforces mental images based on phenotypes that have been the source of racial discrimination for several centuries (even before capitalism, no offense to Marxists). Racist stereotypes are always active and closely related to these phenotypes (real or tinkered), but also related to pseudo biological and racist theories since the nineteenth century. Racism, including institutional racism, must be denounced without using all the time a racial vocabulary. I have already addressed the "racialization of social issues" and the question of so-called "social races" in other texts³ so I will not deal with these issues in detail here.

Since about 2005, we have been able to see the harmful effect of this importation in France of Anglo-Saxon concepts partly inherited from the civil rights movement and the boiling of radical ideas and practices in the 60s and 70s (Black Panther Party, League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Big Flame, etc.), but also influenced by the works of French intellectuals like Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jacques Derrida who enjoyed great success in American universities teaching literature, "Gender studies", or "cultural studies"⁴.

In France, since the diffusion of these theories, the "non-whites" are neither more nor better organized. They are not getting better jobs, better education or better access to health. A minority of

¹ <https://angryworkersworld.wordpress.com/2018/09/13/the-limits-of-intersectionality-angryworkers-book-review-of-striking-women-struggles-and-strategies-of-south-asian-women-workers-from-grunwick-to-gate-gourmet-by-sundari-anitha-and-ruth-pe/>

² As if white was not a color! Only a European-born or an individual claiming to have European background can have the guts to call non Europeans « people of color » ! I can't find a better case of color-blindedness ! White is a color that determines all the other colors as inferior...

³ - "From the sloppy humanist "Black-White-Beur " slogan of the 1980s to the so-called "social race" : confusion grows among Gallic leftists". <http://mondialisme.org/spip.php?article2667> ;

- « Antiracism and class struggle in France : dialogue around the PIR (Parti des Indigènes de la République) » <http://mondialisme.org/spip.php?article2439> ;

- "France/USA : Workers dignity and racism. About Michele Lamont's book *The Dignity of Working Men*"; <http://mondialisme.org/spip.php?article1324> ;

- "France : how does racism functions on a daily basis at work" <http://mondialisme.org/spip.php?article1323> ;

- and the part called "The Racialisation Of Social Questions Leads Nowhere" in a longer article "French banlieues and urban guerillas" <http://mondialisme.org/spip.php?article1002>.

⁴ To explain the success of gender theories, the sociologist Eric Fassin correctly underlines that American universities are a market and therefore much more attracted by novelty (for the better and the worse, I would add) than French state universities.

non-European petty-bourgeois⁵ blocked by the glass ceiling which limits their entry into the main media, the high economic and political spheres, and the traditional bourgeois class, have built a field of research at the University or created specific organizations (CRAN, PIR, etc.) which are tiny in number but gifted for lobbying in the media and cultural field. As these fields promote the splitting of capitalist society into multiple minorities and identities that are potential markets, they have a disproportionate ideological influence.

These petty-bourgeois groups struggle only for themselves, not even for the full equality of democratic rights for non-European workers in France. They have imposed their concepts in the human sciences universities and the media influenced by the cultural or liberal left (state radios and French administration, in particular inside the State education system, under the influence also of international institutions like UNESCO, UN, etc.) but they left Asian, North African, African and Turkish workers in their isolation and misery. It should be noted that when the "undocumented" workers co-ordinations were the most powerful, including among Chinese workers, in the early 1990s, identity and racialist theories were not widespread in the Left or Left intelligentsia... and the coordinations did quite well without these ideologies !

*** Gender: a concept with dubious origins**

My reservations are of the same nature for the concept of "gender", even if the consequences seem less serious and harmful than for the systematic use and rehabilitation of the race by the left (even if it's named "social race" or surrounded with quotation marks). Academics love to have fun with new words; they think they can be considered as "scientists" provided they use a jargon incomprehensible to the layman. I have no reason to deprive them of these innocent pleasures; on the other hand, I do not appreciate that the "radical" activists' language or writings are polluted by these elitist and ephemeral fashions.

The concept of gender initially had nothing to do with feminism. It was invented in 1955 by a psychologist/sexologist, John Money, who was interested in the psychological problems of hermaphrodites (called "intersexes" in today's politically correct world) and by a psychiatrist (John Stoller) who was interested in transsexuals. The solution advocated by Money was quite radical and did not apply only to people who had serious psychological problems with their biological sex.

Indeed, Money and his colleagues fought to impose the idea that the critical period to fix the psychological sex (the "gender") of an individual was between 18 months and two and a half years.

It sometimes had catastrophic effects: for example, in the case of two male twins, one of whom had his penis mutilated during a failed circumcision when he was 8 months old, John Money forced the parents to hide the biological reality from their children. One of them (Bruce) therefore arbitrarily became a "girl" (Brenda) with heavy operations and hormonal treatments for twelve years. Brenda rebelled at the age of 14 against the "gender identity" and chemical and surgical manipulations that John Money had imposed on "her". "She" rebelled and wanted to be a boy, and became Bruce again. The two twins died at age 29 (Bruce committed suicide shortly after the death of his twin brother by overdose) and the parents made John Money responsible for this suicide.

If the Wikipedia entry in English on John Money honestly recounts the criticisms about the thousands of surgical experiments caused by the theories of this dubious guy, Wikipedia in French

⁵ The wage-earning petty-bourgeoisie (that most people hypocritically call the "middle classes") is a class which, like the traditional petty-bourgeoisie (artisans, tradesmen) oscillates between its fear of falling into the proletariat and their desire for social climbing towards the bourgeoisie. This fear often accompanies a partial empathy for the popular strata when its members live by choice, or more frequently by obligation, in working-class neighborhoods, or when they come directly from the proletariat. In a period of serious social crisis, the petty-bourgeoisie can switch to the extreme right or extreme left... Moreover, by its university education, this class has important assets to climb the social ladder, that it is in the state administration, in the NGOs and the associations (humanitarian or not), or companies' management.

conceals them and "omits"⁶ to mention that John Money also invented a very weird between "emotional pedophilia" and "sexual pedophilia"...

The choice of the term "gender" in English was not at all innocent in the 1950s in the United States. **John Money did not use the word "sex" (for example, he could have underlined the difference between "biological sex" and "social sex") because he wanted to avoid shocking anyone in the Puritan America of that period.**

In the early 1970s, some Anglo-Saxon feminists⁷ took up the term developed by John Money to expand its content and objectives. Coming from the human sciences, this concept is a simple hypothesis ; its "scientific" validity will never reach the reliability of the concepts used in the hard sciences. We understand why the supporters of this fragile notion use all kinds of intimidation techniques to impose it: in short, if you do not agree to use this word systematically and its related "gendered" words, if you do not "genderize" spelling and grammar, you are necessarily an accomplice of "patriarchy" (if you are a woman) and a macho-sexist (if you are a man).

Exactly like many Marxist or Leninist activists have always propagated a binary form of thought : either you agree with my vision of the capitalist world and socialism (or communism), or you are a petty-bourgeois, an agent of the bosses, a cop, an American spy, a Mossad agent, a Zionist, etc.

In the twenty-first century, French Marxist intellectuals (whose predecessors still recently believed in the scientificity of historical materialism and dialectical materialism, as evidenced by the fame enjoyed by the "Science of Sciences" proposed by French Marxist-Structuralist Louis Althusser) jumped on the term "gender" – with a certain time lag.

In any case, Gallic intellectuals always had difficulty reading other languages than French ; for decades, those on the left found their inspiration in the philosophical writings of Jean-Paul Sartre (a fellow traveler of Stalinism and then Maoism) and the translations of the Nazi philosopher Heidegger. After Freudo-Marxism (that tried to prove that Marxism could integrate the achievements of psychoanalysis and remain the Theory – or at least the Method – which can explain everything), appeared "Marxist feminism" and now "intersectional feminism", often with a Marxist tone; it also pretends to account for all the forms of exploitation and domination, like its predecessors.

However, let us beware of activists who propagate dogmas in the name of fighting against... "norms"! They are strong normalizers in the ideological field, and even in matters of morality since they decided that the main enemy is not Capital but "heteronormativity" and the Straight Man (especially if he is "white")!

Indeed, the apology of the queer and the so-called "anti-normative" discourse which targets "heterosexuality", assimilated to a form of domination, converge in the same direction: a "*self-representation*" based on the (barely disguised) idea that non-heterosexual practices are **superior** to heterosexual practices, and are supposedly more favorable to "*self-determination and liberation*"⁸.

In the 1960s, The Gay Revolutionary Action Front (FHAR in French) claimed that capitalism and its state could never accept homosexuals and lesbians and should therefore disappear. Now that capitalism is progressively (but slowly) integrating them on the international scale, the new heroes are the *queers* ; but this new "vanguard" has significantly revised its claims downward compared to the FHAR and the grouplets linked to this milieu. It does not claim anymore to destroy Capital and state, it just wants personal "liberation"...

⁶ The feminist sociologist Eric Fassin goes even farther, when he compares the history of the term gender in the United States and France ; he hides the name of John Money, the fact that he invented the new meaning of the word gender, and he quotes only Robert Stoller.

In « Le genre aux États-Unis et en France » *Agora débats/jeunesses*, n° 41, 2006, https://www.persee.fr/doc/agora_1268-5666_2006_num_41_1_2280

⁷ See Ann Oakley, *Gender and Society*, Farnham, 2015 (1st edition 1972). According to Oakley, "*The word 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females: the visible difference between their genitals and the corresponding difference between their reproductive functions. 'Gender' is a question of culture: it refers to the social classification in 'masculine' and 'feminine'.*"

⁸ These expressions come from <https://interligne.co/> a French-Canadian feminist website.

* "Gender Trouble" or gendered confusion ?

The notion of gender starts from a questionable hypothesis: biological differences between men and women are only of secondary importance, they have no decisive social role. Only ideological discourses built on sexual difference have a reality and should, therefore, be "deconstructed" to be replaced by supposedly "liberating" discourses. The psychiatrist Robert Stoler who took up the concept of "gender" in the 60s, the Socialist MP Julie Sommaruga, the sociologist Eric Fassin or the philosopher Judith Butler hold more or less the same positions as shown by the following quotations.

Robert Stoler: "*The gender aspects of sexuality are essentially determined by culture, that is, learned after birth*⁹."

Julie Sommaruga: "*Substituting the concept of gender for categories such as sex shows that the differences between men and women are not based on nature, but are historically constructed and socially reproduced.*"

Eric Fassin: "*Being a woman, or a man, is not a fact of nature but culture.*"

Judith Butler: "*Somebody might well say: isn't it the case that certain bodies go to the gynecologist for certain kinds of examination and certain bodies do not? And I would obviously affirm that. But the real question here is: to what extent does a body get defined by its capacity for pregnancy? Why is it pregnancy by which that body gets defined? One might say it's because somebody is of a given sex that they go to the gynecologist to get an examination that establishes the possibility of pregnancy, or one might say that going to the gynecologist is the very production of 'sex' –but it is still the question of pregnancy that is centering that whole institutional practice here*¹⁰."

This ideological attitude leads, through convoluted reasoning like in Butler's quotation, to utter nonsense (is a gynecologist **only useful for pregnancy** issues? If gynecologists determine the sex of women, what kind of doctors determine the sex of men?). Thanks to the multiple contradictions generated by this attitude, at any time, in a surreptitious way, the biological dimensions that are noisily hunted by the door return quietly through the window.

This ideology rests on an artificial dichotomy between nature and culture¹¹, which are inter-related and evolve together; on the desire to magically remove the contradictions between these two dimensions; and on an inability to think these contradictions.

* Eight remarks about the inextricable contradictions of "gender"

1) **The term "feminism" has little meaning, at least if one defends Simone de Beauvoir's famous proposal: "One is not born but rather becomes a woman."** If we take this hypothesis seriously, at birth, human beings belong to a "neutral" gender or sex (at least according to many feminists around the world). They try to persuade us that the biological evolution of human beings has been determined until now by the only **will** of men and women – and that it could also be the case in the future. So we could become men, women, or "neutral" (at least if the so-called "patriarchal" norms did not "format" us), according to our desires, and adopt all the sexual orientations that are designated under the initials LGBTQIA+ or even better LGTBQQIAAP¹². In short, almost all human beings are not heterosexual...

But why do feminists invoke the term "feminism" if the woman does not exist? if she is only a figure of sexist discourse? if it is only a "cultural norm" and not an important biological reality?

2) **Who does the word "femicide" describe apart from biological women?**

As the dictionary indicates, this term refers to "*the murder of a woman, of a girl, because of her sex*".... This is one of the root causes that feminists rightly put forward and it concerns all of humanity –

⁹ Restranslated from the French to English

¹⁰ <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/interview/judith-butler>

¹¹ In « The Straight Mind » (1979), Monique Wittig even wrote "*it has been accepted in recent years that there is no such thing as nature, that everything is culture*" !

¹² Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Allies, Pansexual !!!

not just women. **The fight against femicide is vital.** But where does gender intervene in these crimes committed by men (regardless of their so-called "gender identity" or "sexual orientation") against women (regardless of their "gender") ?

It's the same with the crime of rape, which is linked to the male sex and not to an imaginary male gender.

3) **Whenever we approach the concrete discriminations and oppression which touch the so-called feminine "gender", the biological returns galloping, even with "intersectional feminists"** like S. Anitha, R. Pearson, and M. McDowell. For example, in their article, which summarizes the book written by two of them (Anitha and Pearson), they write: *"There is considerable evidence from other research on women workers in a range of production situations – manufacturing, assembly, horticulture – that managerial control over women's access to toilets is a frequent gendered strategy that is rarely deployed with male workers who have more autonomy over their physical mobility as well as different biologically-based needs"*¹³. Even though they speak of "gendered strategy", when they refer to "biologically-based needs », they are forced to return to biological determinations.

Similarly, in a series of articles recently published in the daily *Le Monde* about "menstrual precariousness" on different continents, we see that the concept of gender has little use if one wishes to study and denounce this important aspect of discrimination against women. To denounce "menstrual precariousness" and all its negative effects inside the family, at school, at work, even in the public space, we must start from a concrete **biological** fact: women have monthly periods during dozens of years, never men. This biological difference rests on a **material** basis, not simply on sexist "speeches" that could be "deconstructed", or on a thousands-years-old "patriarchate".

I could also take the example of the heated discussions about assisted reproductive technologies and surrogacy, which (in the real world) deal with material elements like sperm (coming from men) and ova (coming from women)... So we can watch here the word "gender" magically appear and disappear, according to the moment of the discussion, helped by modern capitalist technology which enables some people to (sincerely ?) believe same-sex couples can "produce" new human beings...

4) **Material and objective foundations of non-mixed gatherings ?**

What material (if not biological) criteria are used to allow, or prohibit, the access to changing rooms or toilets¹⁴, and how are non-mixed gatherings organized ? Is the selection, at the entrance, based only on the "speeches" made by the people concerned ? **In concrete circumstances, gender always disappears to make way for biological sex.**

What may appear attractive, even radical, in the ethereal sky of university research, or small circles closed on themselves, has catastrophic practical consequences as the United States often gives us the example.

5) **The same is true about what feminists have chosen to call "reproductive rights"** and no more the abortion and contraception rights. This new term is very ambiguous because it can be understood as the right of any individual to reproduce himself/herself. But it is consistent with the negation of the elemental biological fact that institutes the original sexual difference between men and women.

Nevertheless, we do not see why all women and men on this earth should have a "right" to reproduce themselves, whatever the circumstances¹⁵. The choice to have a child is not just an individual and

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From Grunwick to Gate Gourmet: South Asian Women's Industrial Activism and the Role of Trade Unions," Sundari Anitha, Ruth Pearson and Linda McDowell, *French Journal of British Studies*, XXIII-1, 2018» <https://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/1790>

¹⁴

This issue of access to cloakrooms, women's toilets, non-mixed, "safe" spaces for men of "feminine gender" provoked very violent polemics (and even physical clashes) between feminists and transgender people. These clashes prove that even the *queerest* man is perceived as a **physical threat** in places reserved for women! And the perception of this threat, or at least this **strong mistrust**, has a **biological foundation** without any link with "gender".

¹⁵ Probably the best and shortest analysis (90 seconds) can be found in «Monty Python's The life of Brian - I want to be a woman»: : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFBOQzSk14c...>

private "right", but an existential, personal but also **social choice that entails responsibilities for a lifetime**.

People who fight for an absolute right to reproduction by all available technical means often denounce, at the same time, the effects of progress in the field of biotechnology and consider current medical research should be more ethically controlled. Often the same people proclaim that the planet ("Mother Earth") is too populated and that its material resources can not feed all humanity... "Protecting the planet" for some environmental feminists is actually synonymous with a restriction of the right to reproduce for all "genders".

All these contradictions are neither assumed nor discussed in radical or militant circles.

6) Sexual differentiation or gender equality ?

On one hand, some feminists claim that there are no fundamental differences between the sexes; on the other hand, they want sex equality... It is indeed difficult to defend *gender* equality, as gender is an ephemeral phenomenon, subject to arbitrary changes. "Sex equality" has much more meaning but it contradicts the gender dogma.

On the one hand, feminists denounce the biological fathers' refusal to share household chores, to really take an interest in their children (health problems, school difficulties, games and readings – all traditionally falling within the "reserved" domain of the mother-woman), but also the refusal to pay alimony to support the maintenance of their offspring, or to respect the custody arrangements set by the courts ; on the other hand, feminists want (with good reason) the father to go to prenatal classes with the future mother and attend the delivery of their child; to take parental leave equal in duration to that of the mother; to carry the baby on his belly in the street; to get up at night to change diapers or give a feeding bottle, etc.

These demands are aimed at transforming the biological fathers (the **spawners**) into responsible males and making them assume both material tasks of raising children and maintaining the home. They have also broader objectives : men should share the material, mental and psychological concerns that have been the preserve of women for millenials ; if these demands were put into practice, eventually they would lead to radical anthropological changes that would benefit both men and women.

These claims are contradictory to the assertion that there is no fundamental biological difference, only cultural differences, between men and women.

They are contradictory to the assertion that the biological father or mother does not matter, and that it is only a "cultural" and "social" issue. Indeed, the close ties that most mothers maintain with their children are not simply linked to social norms, ideological "formatting," or supposedly superficial or volatile feelings: they are determined by a **biological** fact, specific to women, since the fetus lives in their own body for several months, "leaves" after cutting the umbilical cord and a number of them breastfeed their baby¹⁶... which will never be the case of men. And it is for **biological** reasons that egalitarian practices such as haptonomy have been invented.

If they were coherent, partisans of gender theories should advocate a society where women have no connection with children they would give birth to, as well as men. There are still some traditional communities today (e.g., on Lifou island, in French New Caledonia) and some sects (the Mormons) where the "elders" (who are all males) decide to assign the children of a widow to a woman other than their mother, and another social father; or to assign the child of a woman who has had several children to another who is sterile. But such practices are precisely the fact of communities... dominated by men – which does not seem very auspicious...

Gender-based analyzes claim to both "deconstruct" stereotypes and sexist prejudices (which in the first place seems to strengthen the struggle against the oppression of women by men) while pretending

¹⁶ In certain feminist circles, some activists believe that humanity may not have grown from its origins in the context of heterosexual relationships but through another "mode of reproduction" unknown, or hidden, by malicious supporters of "patriarchy". Why not parthenogenesis ? That's what a young feminist told me in a libertarian bookfair a few years ago ! She did not know the theologian Grégoire de Nysse (331-394) but this medieval intellectual thought that, before committing the famous "*original sin*", human beings may have reproduced themselves, as angels do, without having sex. This "*mode of multiplication*" is, of course, "*unspeakable and unimaginable according to human conjectures*". Welcome to the Radical World of Feminist Angels !

that biological differences¹⁷ can disappear or decrease – which is at least absurd. Unless one believes in the laboratory manufacturing of new human beings ("transhumanism"), I do not see how biological differences could disappear and especially **what would be the benefit for humanity**.

They imagine a humanity where all inhabitants would be "neutral" at birth, and the differences between them would have disappeared reflects at the same time:

- they fear conflicts and contradictions (well in phase with the dominant ideology which tries to make us believe that all political and philosophical ideas are respectable and interchangeable),
- and they believe in a totalitarian utopia of a world where we would all be transparent, without mystery, without secrets. And where all the contradictions between individuals, even between social groups, would have disappeared...

7) Sexual harassment and *metoo*: where did the "gender" go ?

The *metoo* campaign did not target people with a male "gender", but men with a penis, especially men of power. These men harass women to force them to give them what is called, no doubt by antiphrasis, sexual "favors". Whether it is sexual harassment by men at work, in public transports or on the street, we are dealing with oppressive relations, physically and psychologically violent, between men and women and not between so-called "genders".

8) Who dissociates eroticism from feelings ? And who benefits from it ?

Feminists all refer to Simone de Beauvoir as a precursor to "gender studies". Yet this philosopher, who tried to deny the links between biological sex and human behavior, wrote about feminine eroticism in *The Second Sex* (19149) : "*A man can easily experience non-committed embraces that are enough to calm his flesh and relax him morally*"; he can "*bluntly dissociate eroticism and feelings, flesh and conscience*". As regards the woman, she "*is seldom entirely sincere when she claims to consider only a non-committed adventure, while hoping for pleasure ; nevertheless, pleasure, far from liberating her, attaches her; a separation hurts her, even if it is a supposedly amicable one.*"

Beyond pointing to these contradictions, we should study the evolution of the relations between the sexes and related it to the transformations which occurred in advanced capitalist societies.

Capitalism has succeeded in recuperating the least revolutionary feminist claims by favoring a certain type of equality that is profitable to it: henceforth capitalism promotes the model of the female executive who is a real "killer" at work, as any careerist guy. The Korean *www* series, which describes the competition between the directors of two fictional search engines, introduces women executives obsessed with the profit of their respective companies. Their methods and mentality have nothing to envy to those of any male exploiter. And the social roles are reversed: a talented young male musician absolutely wants to get married while his senior executive girlfriend refuses any stable and legal links; a husband, whom his wife never loved, languishes for his spouse who is also a merciless boss; and a business-woman and lobbyist is thrilled to become a widow because her husband was useless for making money – and she can now enjoy being treated as an equal by male politicians and male bosses.

In the sentimental field too, the classic model of the male "predator", or at least the male allergic to any sentimental ties, is now imitated, in a minor mode obviously, by women. There is now exotic sex tourism for petty-bourgeois women; escort agencies for richer women ; and certain female behaviors are quite similar to those of males frightened by the sole idea of establishing any stable ties with the other sex.

In short, the evolution of the male/female relationship does not seem to go in the direction of sex equality, but rather the generalization of the "non-committed embraces" to "calm one's flesh", described by Beauvoir. On this point, don't you think that radical feminists, Marxists, and anarchists, when they

¹⁷ A comrade pointed out to me that my insistence on the existence of biological factors could lead to ambiguity: "*It seems to me that there are also a lot of other links, both material and psychological, between the biological and the purely ideological. A lot of aspects of women's oppression are not automatically related to their biology, without being purely 'ideological', in the sense of mental constructs that would need to be changed. A lot of material, sociological and psychological factors play their part in so-called feminine behaviors and they do not seem to me directly reducible to biology.*" I totally agree.

denounce the "sentimental" attachments between human beings, or criticize seduction games as "alienating" and "gender manipulations", bring water to the mills of Capital ?

* Gender and race: the same retrograde fight

In the discussions around these two categories, "gender" and "race" (or so-called "social race"), we find the same ambiguities and the same absurd situations: on what criteria (if not pseudo-biological) do we differentiate a "white" from a "non-white" when one claims to organize a meeting reserved for "racialized" people ?

Categories such as "gender" or "social race" actually allow for the maintenance, and even the reinforcement, of ethnic/racial discourses on the one hand, and "feminist" discourses on the other. A dominated "race, or "gender", enjoys all the qualities, while the dominant "social race" or "gender" are generously given all the defects. Mother Nature¹⁸ and Lady Biology return to the forefront of the scene, but dressed up in Revolutionary Icons.

Cheering the regular crossing of the borders between several "genders" and sexual orientations does not pose any **political** problem. **Only the individual is concerned ; society does not have to control his/her fantasies.** At least as long as these comings-and-goings do not end in operations (adding a uterus, a penis, and the corresponding ablations) ; in this last case, their definitive, irreversible¹⁹, and positive effects are difficult to identify and society is concerned because it has to protect individuals against themselves, or charlatans, be they psychiatrists, or surgeons.

Indeed, no psychiatrist can guarantee that the mental equilibrium²⁰ of an individual invoked to justify these surgical interventions (apart from the case of hermaphrodites born with two sexes – and even in this case the success is not a given) would be **guaranteed** by this type of operation.

Collective political reflection is here needed even if some psychiatrists and doctors are categorical: according to Lawson Wilkins, a pediatrician and endocrinologist who collaborated with John Money, *"the gender – male or female – in which a child is raised, is the dominant factor that determines the future psychosexual orientation,"* but biology university teacher Michal Raz, who quotes him, adds: *"provided, of course, that his external genital organs conform, or become conformable, by the interventions of the chosen sex"*²¹. We are dealing here with a "psychological sex" (much clearer than "gender"), whatever are the surgeon's skills !

Moreover, **no operation will ever turn a biological man into a biological woman, and vice versa.** One can not confuse a change of identity card or passport (which only implies replacing the words "male", "female" or "neutral"²² on a piece of paper or plastic) with biological change (which is science fiction). The fact that this type of surgical operation becomes a militant claim, or is even presented as a human right, shows how much its promoters are engaged in a dynamic perfectly coherent with the mercantile capitalist system, social fragmentation, identitarianism, and mad individualism that it promotes.

As for the pompous term "intersectionality", at least for its leftist and anarchist partisans, it appeals to the fascination and the perpetual quest for a theory that would explain all social phenomena through a

¹⁸ This return of the cult of Nature (adorned with all the qualities which are traditionally judged "feminine") goes frequently together with a quasi-religious defense of ecology (or, better, of a form of ecologism) and of the virtues of the "indigenous peoples", supposedly closer to Nature.

¹⁹ Proponents of a constantly changing "gender identity" and sexual orientation defend at the same time irreversible operations that will prevent their "benefactors" from enjoying the "freedom of choice" that these same feminists claim to cherish so much...

²⁰ In terms of psychological suffering, heterosexuals (regardless of the so-called "gender) **do not enjoy any "privilege"**... Suicide statistics and psychiatric hospitals testify to this abundantly.

²¹ Quoted and therefore translated from an article in French about the reception of the concept of gender among French doctors in charge of intersexes : "La réception ambiguë du terme de genre dans la gestion médicale de l'intersexuation en France (1955-1975)", https://ojs.uclouvain.be/index.php/emulations/issue/view/15_construction_sexualite

²² Several countries already recognize neutral gender or even sex (Australia, Germany, Argentina). But Facebook has taken the lead since it recognizes 52 gender identities !

single explanation kit (here class / race / gender²³). Some reactionary critiques think that the theories about "gender" and "intersectionality" offer a new "grand narrative" that may fascinate those who are in lack of political mythologies. Feminists are politically too heterogeneous to fit in this model, but this hypothesis probably applies to many leftists or anarchists.

The will to explain all the forms of exploitation and domination from the origins of humanity until today by using a single theory, or a single theoretical approach, even if it claims to be a revolutionary theory, seems to me a vain or even harmful attempt²⁴. Intersectionality is also teeming with contradictions since its supporters advocate a permanent fluidity of sexual identities but at the same time want to impose us rigid racial identities (Blacks/Whites/Browns, and other racialist stupidities)!

For Patricia Hill Collins, "*all groups have varying degrees of privilege and disability*" and, "*depending on the context, an individual may be an oppressor, a member of an oppressed group, or simultaneously an oppressor and an oppressed*". " [...] "*The overarching matrix of domination houses multiple groups, each with varying experiences with penalty and privilege that produce corresponding partial perspectives, situated knowledge, and, for clearly identifiable subordinate groups, subjugated knowledge. No one group has a clear angle of vision. No one group possesses the theory or methodology that allows it to discover the absolute "truth" [...]*"²⁵ "

If we follow this approach, social struggles would boil down to legal battles led by an infinity of mini-groups or even individuals with specific peculiarities who will probably never achieve common goals and even less probably universal goals. In such a framework, each person defends unique and conflicting interests that can only be satisfied by fighting an individual battle within the legal framework and attempting to change the mentality of the oppressors one by one... **while at the same time being part of the oppressors**²⁶! How can such a quagmire be inspiring for radical collective struggles ?

And bell hooks leads us in the same deadlock when she describes the interaction between capitalism and race, class and gender oppression : "*The ideological ground that they share, which is a belief in domination, and a belief in the notions of superior and inferior, which are components of all of those systems. For me it's like a house, they share the foundation, but the foundation is the ideological beliefs around which notions of domination are constructed*"²⁷ ."

Such a perspective about oppression, which rests on intangible foundations and is furthermore dictated by individual interests, is **incompatible** with a political perspective according to which capitalists and workers are engaged in a permanent struggle based on irreconcilable class interests. Even

²³

The advocates of intersectionality are not interested in the various forms, or the history, of Judaeophobia and anti-Semitism. This knowledge would provide to them fundamental elements to understand other racisms and related discriminations. But Anti-Semitism does not fit into their model that would explode if they were to seek to seriously explain anti-Semitism and fight it.

²⁴ This statement is too general. Feminist Fightback activists adopt a very modest tone, open to discussion, when they describe the reasons why they abandoned in 2007 the "feminist socialists" label for that of "intersectional feminists". Nevertheless, renouncing to the "socialist" reference marks a setback, even if this regression is presented as a means to better understand (and better fight against) the various forms of oppression and exploitation. The examples provided by the authors to illustrate how intersectionality has allowed them to defend a clearer position in feminist struggles are not convincing at all, even if the tone of these comrades is very far from the usual arrogance of the leftists when they explain their theoretical positions and changes. (See <http://www.feministfightback.org.uk/is-intersectionality-just-another-form-of-identity-politics/>).

²⁵

Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (Unwin Hyman, 1990) <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/252.html>.

²⁶ In "Towards a new vision: race, class and gender as categories of analysis and connection" (available on line) Patricia Hill Collins quotes this sentence from another Afro-American feminist, Audre Lorde (1934-1992): "The true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us." (*Sister Outsider*, p. 123). Such an individual vision of oppression and domination makes it difficult for anybody to realize the positive effects of collective class struggles.

²⁷

Talking back : Thinking Feminist, Thinking Back, South End Press, 1989.

if some feminists use a Marxist language, they support, in practice, **interclassist alliances**, which they call "transversal"²⁸. These alliances can only lead to the social domination of the petty-bourgeois elements among the "representatives" of these movements.

Many feminists want to enforce existing laws (increasingly favorable to women on the global scale) but also to impose new laws that would push further equality with men ; to this end, they want to give more strength to the judges and to repressive, corrective and punitive institutions (prison, voluntary re-education in the form of internships where people are encouraged to think about their offenses and crimes, etc.). Changing individuals, one by one, by relying on institutional, moral and educational pressures will probably have some positive effects – let's be honest about it. But we must ask ourselves whether collective struggles, involving men and women, on a universalist and class basis, would not have more lasting and profound effects than this **generalized policing of mores and mentalities** that most feminists (including the most radical ones) propose.

I wonder why the comrades of Angry Workers of the World are so cautious and diplomatic about academic jargon and pompous theories about gender and intersectionality. If they do not want to appear sectarian and show pedagogy towards the leftist academic milieu, I fear that their approach (inspired by the "operaist" Marxism, turned towards workers' inquiries and concrete participation in the class struggles) will never seduce young left men and women who believe they understand and can change the world by jabbering like the academics who trained them – or are training them right now.

* Petty-bourgeois nature of identitarian movements

As one comrade writes, "one might wonder if this fashion (or perhaps even this heavy trend) is not based on a social foundation: many young lower-ranking academics, in the humanities sector, are looking for a socially recognized place; therefore they publish articles in specialized journals but also try to make themselves known in wider media – all the more so because they are too numerous on the job market. As they do not want to 'lower themselves' to be primary teachers or social workers, or any jobs of this kind, which are yet useful but not very well paid jobs, they are trying to forge niches on the identitarian market using jargon and radical proclamations."

This is also the conclusion to which some British anarchists also arrived: « *Identity politics is a tool of the middle classes. It is flagrantly used and abused by articulate, well-educated group representatives to entrench and maintain their power through politicking, dogma and bullying. The comfortable background of these activists is betrayed not only through their use of academic language but through their sense of entitlement and confidence in using other activists' time and energy to switch the focus towards them and their feelings*²⁹. Indeed, a lack of work ethic, a certain fragility, and a preoccupation with safety and language rather than material conditions and meaningful change are other aspects which reveal the class background of many identity politicians.

We see this in the ease with these individuals 'call out' other people at the slightest deviation from the code of practice they have unilaterally imposed, assuming that everyone ought to think as they do, or have the time to devote to learning it. Thus ignoring the reality of daily class struggle.

There is a false equivalence between membership of the Unquestionably Oppressed and being working class. On the contrary many in the Unquestionably Oppressed espouse liberal values rooted in capitalist ideology rather than being truly liberatory.

A politic that is based on having the right language and access to the right tone and codes is one that is inherently a tool of oppression. It is certainly not being representative of those who it claims to speak for, those at the bottom of society. An anarchist analysis recognizes that though someone may be from an oppressed group, their politics, or the demands made on behalf of the Unquestionably Oppressed, may nevertheless be purely liberal, bourgeois and pro-capitalist³⁰. »

²⁸ For example, Patricia Hill-Collins writes that feminist researchers "*consider that these material conditions, common to all women, transcend the divisions created by race, social class, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, thus the existence of a feminine point of view that is charged to relay a feminist conscience and epistemology*" ("The social construction of the black feminist thought").

²⁹ Everything is "felt" today : the "felt-air temperature", the inflation which is less "felt" than wage-cut, and even crime.

³⁰

<https://wokeanarchists.wordpress.com/2018/11/25/against-anarcho-liberalism-and-the-curse-of-identity-politics/>

And I'll end with a comment from another comrade:

"It seems that the University is a closed world from which one can escape only by exporting its methods and applying them in the same way as one has received them through one's teachers. This is how one reproduces this relation of domination : "I know, you do not know ; then listen and learn." To this attitude is added the obedience to an unsaid desire: the relationship to the masses, which we must seduce, as shown by militants' attraction to standing on the platform during meetings.

"But today things have changed, the educated middle class has become important enough to form a mass as such, and then class relations are waning. Hence the arrival of theoretical, quasi-terroristic injunctions, which ignore the relations of production, preserving only those related to domination. They denounce, in a completely justified way, the relations of domination but they conceal the relations of domination produced by the State. And these prosecutors ask the State to liquidate these relations ! In my opinion, here is the major contradiction of all these theoretically absolute behaviors. For them, outside theoretical texts, gender studies, and intersectionality, there is no salvation. "

To fight for a social revolution obviously implies speaking a language different from the so-called university and state "elites" ; we can't believe, nor make anyone believe, that speech creates reality nor that we should just modify words, grammar and spelling to change of society. We have also to oppose and criticize certain practices such as lobbying; the promotion of specialists, leaders or bosses coming from "minorities"; the permanent media coverage that encourages careerism; the race for municipal or government grants that facilitates integration into the political class, etc. Outside collective struggles constantly controlled from below, there is no salvation! And as one of my interlocutors points out:

"Avoiding the question of the relations of production, hence of class relations, avoiding, circumventing the question of the State, these groups are not criticizing the general situation; they are not looking for a more just society; they are simply claiming a place in the sun for themselves and against others; it is basically a very libertarian attitude, neoliberalism applied to minorities. "

Y.C., *Ni patrie ni frontières*, August 5, 2019